

# Sports heroes fight racism

By Monica Moorehead

Under a capitalist society, the ruling-class-biased media attempt to isolate almost every development challenging the divide-and-conquer system that puts profits before human needs. For instance, whenever the police murder a youth or disabled person of color, the media will either defend the police or even say there are “good” cops and “bad” cops. The media will never say that the police as a force exist to repress the workers and oppressed in order to protect the private property of the super-rich.

This premise holds true for mass culture, such as sports, which is more than just leisure and entertainment — it is connected to politics. Sports cannot be divorced from capitalist society with its racism, sexism and LGBTQ2+ oppression, or from growing movements fighting for social justice. The heroic stance that Colin Kaepernick took three years ago when he took a knee against racist injustice is a perfect example of this stark reality.

While there are many examples of this connection, some more prominent than others, here are three examples.

## Lamar Jackson Jr.

Next August will officially mark the centennial of the founding of the National Football League — a major milestone since professional football remains the most popular sport in the U.S. Like many other sports in this country, football was not immune from racism, sexism and other forms of bigotry. Running back Kenny Washington, a classmate of the great Jackie Robinson, was the first Black player to sign an NFL contract in 1946 with the Los Angeles Rams — over a third of a century after the NFL’s founding.

It would take another 22 years before Marlin Briscoe took the field as the first Black quarterback as a Denver Bronco. The quarterback, as the playmaker and



Megan Rapinoe, center back row, is an anti-racist lesbian, co-captain of the U.S. women's national soccer team and supporter of Colin Kaepernick. She is pictured with Harlem's Mott Hall Girls Soccer Team after she received an award.

leader of the team, is considered the most prestigious player. Quarterbacks are revered more as being highly intellectual than being gifted with physical abilities. Based on racist stereotypes, Black college quarterbacks have been forced into other positions, such as receivers or defensive backs if they were drafted into the NFL, because their intellect was considered inferior by white NFL owners.

Lamar Jackson Jr., the 22-year-old Black quarterback for the Baltimore Ravens, is considered the most dynamic player in the NFL today. A 2017 winner of the Heisman Trophy, which annually recognizes the best college player, he is the frontrunner to win the Most Valuable Player award in the NFL for the current

regular season.

A white San Francisco 49er play announcer, Tim Ryan, made the following statement about Jackson the day after the Ravens beat the 49ers on Dec. 1: “He’s really good at that fake, Lamar Jackson, but when you consider his dark skin color with a dark football with a dark uniform, you could not see that thing. I mean you literally could not see when he was in and out of the mesh point.” (KNBR radio, Dec. 2)

The 49ers suspended Ryan for one game following the racially insensitive comment. Many fans felt he should have been fired. Many commentators, both Black and white, stated that the suspension was an overreaction — that his

statement was “stupid” and “ignorant” rather than being racist because he is a “nice” guy.

Saying someone is a nice person or being oblivious to their comment’s impact amounts to obscuring the real issue. Whether an insensitive statement

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## UNIONS FIGHT BACK

Autoworkers seek change

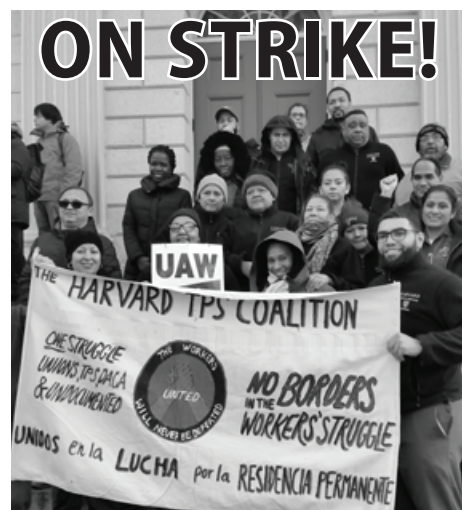
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WW PHOTO: WW BOSTON BUREAU

Striking Harvard University grad student workers get support from SEIU Local 32BJ and UNITE-HERE Local 26 at Dec. 5 rally. More on p. 3.

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# ‘The Murder of Fred Hampton’ still resonates today

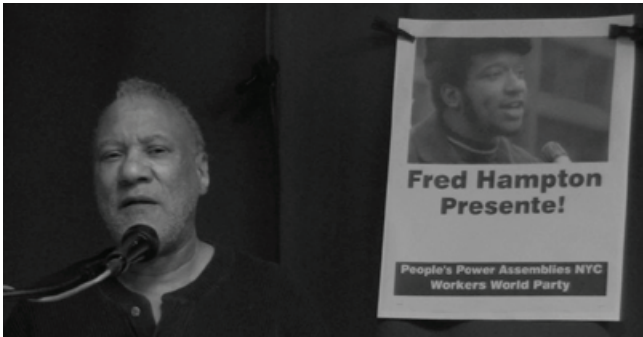
A packed hall of mainly young activists attended a showing of the remastered 1971 documentary, “The Murder of Fred Hampton,” at the Solidarity Center in New York City on Dec. 7. The film showing was co-sponsored by the People's Power Assemblies/NYC and Workers World Party.

Hampton had been the chairperson of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party and deputy chair of the national BPP. At the age of 21, he was assassinated by police on Dec. 4, 1969, while asleep next to his partner, Deborah Johnson, who was eight months pregnant. Following this cowardly act on the part of both Chicago and state police, demonstrations sprang up around the country calling to “Avenge Fred Hampton.”

Makasi Motema, a leader of the PPA, introduced the film by providing historical background on the Panthers. Motema talked about the Panthers’ stance on self-defense against racist state terror and also their programs that provided free breakfasts for children, free medical care and free revolutionary education for Black communities around



Makasi Motema.
PHOTO: PEOPLE'S VIDEO NETWORK



Larry Holmes.
PHOTO: PEOPLE'S VIDEO NETWORK

the country. The film showed the interaction between the Panthers and the people they were serving.

Larry Holmes, First Secretary of WWP, praised the Panthers for their position on fighting racism and for upholding the right to self-determination of all oppressed peoples, an ongoing global class struggle today.

Holmes remarked that the Panthers were the most dynamic Black Liberation organization during the mid-1960s and early 1970s, which sought to unite with other like-minded revolutionaries and movements. For example, on Aug. 15, 1970, one year after the historic Stonewall Rebellion in New York City, BPP Minister of Defense Huey P. Newton stated: “Homosexuals are not our enemies.”

After the film showing, Fred Hampton, Jr. spoke to the audience by telephone, quoting his dad’s revolutionary message: “Dare to struggle, dare to win.”

— Report by Monica Moorehead

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## No publication Dec. 26

To conform to postal regulations related to our yearly publication schedule, Workers World/Mundo Obrero will not publish an issue dated Dec. 26, 2019. Weekly publication will resume Jan. 2.

## WORKERS WORLD

## Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the 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

people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

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

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

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

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# Graduate student workers on strike at Harvard

By Phebe Eckfeldt  
Cambridge, Mass.

On Dec. 3, 4,000 graduate student workers went on strike at Harvard University at both the Cambridge and Boston campuses.

These members of Harvard Graduate Student Union-United Auto Workers are fighting for a contract that includes better pay; comprehensive, affordable health care; improved family leave stipends; and protections against sexual and racial harassment and discrimination.

Graduate student workers teach classes, conduct research, take care of laboratories and grade papers — all while doing their own schoolwork. Many only make the Massachusetts minimum of \$12 an hour. They are unable to afford the health care that Harvard offers, particularly for family members; it costs them \$4,000 a year for each child and almost \$8,000 for a spouse. There are about 400 children with a parent who is an HGSU-UAW member.

Some grad workers report that they are supposed to work 15 to 20 hours a week but normally end up working 30-plus hours. In speeches and chants, HGSU-UAW points out that Harvard University has an endowment of \$80 billion and should be able to pay their workers a living wage, plus provide them with affordable health care.

All the administration is offering is “funding pools” of \$250,000, \$75,000 and \$250,000 for health insurance, dental coverage and child care. If spread among



Harvard strikers rally on Dec. 5.

PHOTO: WW BOSTON BUREAU

all 4,000 members of the bargaining unit, the funds would only shave off a fraction of real medical costs — \$19 to defray dental expenses, for example.

Graduate students also want an increase in paid family/medical leave benefits. Currently the university only allows 12 weeks of leave with a stipend of \$6,646 (a paltry \$554 a week) for having a child.

## Sexual harassment, a huge issue

HGSU-UAW is demanding an independent investigation process to address sexual harassment and discrimination cases. The union made this issue a major focus after a former professor had 18 separate

complaints against him in the spring of 2018.

Justin Bloesch, a HGSU-UAW member, said this is important “because often our advisers and supervisors hold the keys to our entire careers. A single [bad] letter of recommendation or any sort of disciplining can totally end someone’s academic career.” Relying on an internal process “where someone who’s a Harvard employee makes a final decision,” he continued, is not enough when the stakes are so high. (Harvard Magazine, Nov. 12)

“They want to preserve absolute power over determining who is a harasser, who has committed discrimination. ... The fox

is guarding the henhouse. It’s absolutely ridiculous,” added Bargaining Committee member Ege Yumusuk. If won, the independent grievance procedure would also benefit victims of other types of biased treatment, such as racist and pregnancy-related discrimination.

University spokesperson Jonathan Swain argued: “The University has proposed significant opportunities for HGSU-UAW members to have an ongoing role in making recommendations on how to strengthen policies and processes aimed at preventing and addressing harassment and discrimination.”

That is typical management doublespeak.

What the student workers are demanding is not exceptional. They are only asking for the same independent grievance-handling language that other Harvard unions have in their contracts and other universities have for graduate student workers.

Intransigence by the administration on these key issues has surprised some graduate students and angered many more. Pro-union sentiment has risen since the spring of 2018 when the union won a close election with just 56 percent voting in favor of UAW representation.

The union picked an optimum time to launch a strike: final exam period. Because many of the grad student workers teach classes, exams might not get administered or graded, and grades for the semester may have to be held.

As Bloesch says, “Really, the power that we have is in the ability to strike.” □

## WW COMMENTARY

# The fascist face of ‘law enforcement’ in W. Va.

By Otis Grotewohl  
Wheeling, W.Va.

An unsettling picture surfaced throughout social media on Dec. 4, depicting 30 West Virginia corrections officers giving a Nazi salute — with their faces blurred.

The photograph was taken during the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation Basic Training #18, held from Oct. 21 through Nov. 27. A caption on the photo reads, “Hail Byrd!” — a reference to one of the session trainers.

Shortly after its release, the image began to circulate online and made international news. Progressive journalist Shaun King was able to get a photo of the training class with unblurred faces and posted that. Several anti-fascist activists in the state are trying to use that image to identify participants in the Nazi salute and find as much information about the fascist officers as possible.

Three days later, state authorities fired two of the trainers and one of the officers, while everyone in the photo was placed on suspension.

## Justice not served

Even though some action was taken by the state government, many conversations going on in West Virginia indicate that people think this has not been enough. Some who are usually “pro-cop” are actually saying all participants should be fired and barred from ever being hired in a police job. It remains possible that the three individuals terminated will be employed somewhere else within so-called law enforcement, while those suspended will most likely be able to go back to work without any punishment.

Time and time again police and corrections officers fired from one town, county, state department or prison get rehired somewhere else. It is very rare for cops to face any jail time even for rape or murder. In fact, they are often rewarded with employment in another location.

Oppressed people in the state were especially impacted by the picture. As Danielle Walker, an African-American state legislator, commented on social media, “If I hear one more person claim there is no racism or discrimination in this

state or the USA, I’m going to say, ‘Look around.’”

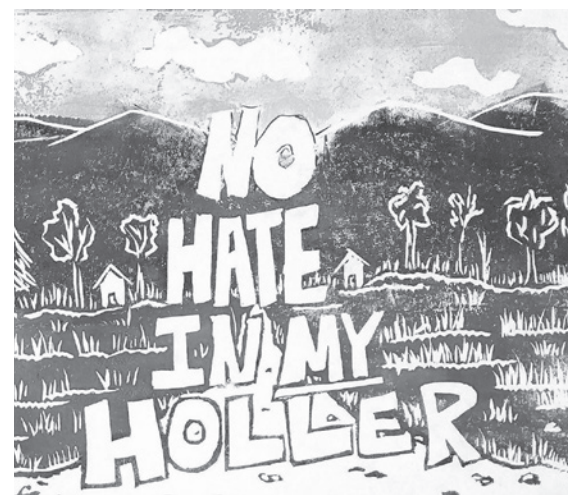
Owens Brown, the state president of the West Virginia NAACP, told this writer, “The picture is another black eye for the state. It reinforces the national perception that [West Virginia] has a hostile environment for Black and Brown people.”

## Racist symptom of a capitalist system

While many people who saw the picture were in disbelief, anti-racist activists and revolutionaries were not surprised by what they saw. The police in the U.S. were created as slave patrols and strike-breakers. The police, along with their correctional colleagues inside the prison system, have targeted, harassed, abused and brutalized people of color in the U.S. for centuries.

In the era of the Trump administration, racists and fascists have been given a green light to be open about their bigotry. President Trump has even gone so far as to call neo-Nazis “good people.”

Anyone who has ever been to a protest against police brutality or white supremacy is probably familiar with the chant, “Cops and Klan go hand in hand.” This is no exaggeration. Not only do the police always protect hate groups in the streets, with police weapons pointed toward the anti-fascist demonstrators, the police and corrections officers have an historical connection with white supremacist groups. This writer has heard formerly incarcerated individuals comment on how correctional officers in particular have close relations with the neo-Nazi prison group



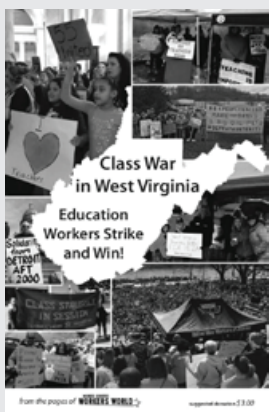
‘No hate in my holler’ became a rallying cry in Appalachian states during the 2017 protests against white supremacist, neo-Nazi marches.

known as the Aryan Brotherhood.

West Virginia state government officials, such as Gov. Jim Justice and U.S. Senator Joe Manchin, have denounced the picture as “disgusting” and “disturbing.” But neither Justice nor Manchin should be viewed as allies in the struggle against white supremacy. Both of them are backers of Trump and should therefore face some of the blame as accomplices in a sick system that lays the groundwork for such ultra-racist and neo-Nazi behavior to exist.

The system of police and corrections officers in the U.S. is inherently racist, created to protect the property of the owning class and to suppress any individual or collective uprising against an unjust system.

The release of the ugly image from West Virginia once again ripped off the mask of the “criminal justice system” under capitalism. A socialist revolution is the only true solution to abolish the threat of fascist police. □



## Class War in West Virginia Education Workers Strike & Win!

Published in 2018.

In West Virginia, famous for pitched battles between union miners and the coal barons, class war is raging. This time it’s teachers and all school employees on one side and right-wing capitalist politicians on the other. To quote the old labor song, “Which Side Are You On?” — “there are no neutrals.”

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# UAW at the crossroads

By Martha Grevatt

The United Auto Workers is in a serious crisis—perhaps the biggest in its 84-year history. A federal investigation has exposed widespread corruption at the highest levels of leadership, involving misappropriation of member dues, kickbacks from vendors and accepting bribes from Fiat Chrysler Automobiles. Some officials and staff have pleaded guilty or been convicted.

The International Executive Board filed charges under the UAW Constitution against Gary Jones and Vance Pearson, until recently the union’s International President and Region 5 Director, respectively. The IEB charged the two with misappropriating funds while Jones was Director and Pearson Assistant Director of Region 5. Union funds, disguised as expenses related to trainings, were reportedly spent on golf equipment and clothing, expensive meals, alcohol and cigars, as well as lavish condo rentals—accommodating the bourgeois aspirations of officials and their staff.

Jones and Pearson resigned their positions and membership in the UAW. Rather than find a replacement for Pearson out of scandal-ridden Region 5, the IEB—now under the leadership of new President Rory Gamble—disbanded the Region.

Gamble has instituted a number of measures to strengthen ethics oversight. A home constructed at the union’s northern Michigan training center for previous President Dennis Williams—also implicated in Region 5 corruption charges—is to be sold. While these steps are positive, much more can be done.

At the 2018 UAW Constitutional

Convention, delegates (under pressure) approved huge salary increases for the IEB and International staff, raising the president’s salary to over \$200,000 a year. Under the recently negotiated contracts, a newly hired temporary employee at Ford, General Motors and FCA would have to work over 12,000 hours a year to earn that much.

Couldn’t the IEB, as an anti-corruption gesture, take a voluntary pay cut?

## Keep the feds out!

The biggest danger now—much bigger than rampant financial misconduct—is that U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider has made an ominous threat to 400,000 UAW members to impose federal oversight on the UAW using federal racketeering law.

Schneider is no friend of labor. He was appointed by former Attorney General and known bigot Jeff Sessions. As attorney for then Gov. Rick Snyder during the Detroit bankruptcy, Schneider argued that city workers’ pensions were not legally protected.

“I don’t think that [Gamble’s changes] means that [the UAW is] cooperating with the Justice Department so we can bring justice to the victims who are the UAW members, so far,” said Schneider. (Detroit News, Dec. 2) That statement is pure, unadulterated hypocrisy.

The timing of the threatened federal racketeering lawsuit—after the six-week strike against GM and with contract negotiations at the Detroit Three auto companies winding down—is hardly coincidental.

The entire union movement should be speaking out loudly against any intrusion

into the day-to-day operations of the UAW by the viciously anti-union Trump administration. So far, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka has been silent.

Grassroots UAW activists have taken independent initiatives. Several locals have passed resolutions calling for a Special Convention. Its stated purpose would be to establish a process for members to elect the IEB by direct election—“one member, one vote”—instead of by Convention delegates, who are pressured to vote for candidates of the officialdom’s “Administration Caucus,” which all current IEB members belong to.

## Class struggle or suicide

In 2010, in a three-article series titled: “Two choices for the UAW: Class struggle or suicide,” this newspaper stated, “The militant tradition of the sit-downs of the 1930s and the lengthy, valiant strikes of the following decades must be revived.”

Instead, the failed strategy of labor-management “cooperation” has become more entrenched, saddling the membership with concessions, while feeding the bourgeois aspirations of well-paid bureaucrats. Now, ugly, embarrassing corruption scandals have raised the specter of a state takeover.

After UAW Ford workers ratified—with sizable opposition—a new contract, President Gamble said, “Ford’s commitment to job security and assembly in the United States is a model for American



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

On Detroit Labor Day 2019, UAW members made it clear they were ready to strike.

manufacturers.” Ford, in turn, stated: “Working with the UAW, we have added flexibility to our operations while keeping labor costs in line.” (Detroit News, Nov. 15)

Keeping wages “in line” was accomplished by maintaining the divisive pattern of setting lower pay scales for future workers. This followed the pattern agreed to with the GM contract that ended the strike. Last came an even weaker contract with FCA; voting on that will be completed Dec. 10.

Top-down measures to increase ethical oversight are not enough. The rank and file must be given the go-ahead to restore integrity to their union, which for decades has functioned on a moribund model of top-down, corporate-model business unionism.

This model must be dismantled, not modified. The monopoly of power, held by the Administration Caucus since the McCarthyite purges of left-wing leaders in the late 1940s and early 1950s, must end. The “partnership” with the corporations must be completely broken up.

Fortunately, workers on the plant floor—who showed their will and capacity to fight the bosses during the GM strike—have started a movement to turn things around. □

## Portland, Ore.

By Lyn Neeley

A militant picket line of 50 workers and supporters marched outside Oregon Public Broadcasting on Dec. 6, chanting ‘Union busting? That’s disgusting!’ They were demanding that OPB negotiate a decent contract and stop trying to gut their union. The workers are represented by Service Employees Local 570. The union’s chief negotiator called OPB’s recent offers the most anti-union proposals seen in the state.

Union research shows that every job position at OPB is assigned a wage under market rates. Merit raises in 2019 were 2.88 percent, while the cost of living in

Portland increased to 3.59 percent. OPB also wants to eliminate guaranteed merit review raises for union workers; non-union workers don’t have guaranteed raises.

OPB is currently rejecting the workers’ power to bargain for wages or health care and wants to eliminate strike dues deductions. The company is also preventing basic data sharing, denying the union’s right to know who is in the union or how to contact them.

“Many people don’t actually know we have a union,” said Ikesha Owens, president of Local 570. “We do have a union. It’s important because we have more power when we organize together.”

The union first requested negotiations in February. In May they agreed to extend their contract for six months so OPB could complete a \$5 million renovation to the station. That contract extension expires Dec. 31 and workers are tired of waiting.

Steve Bass, CEO at OPB, makes \$394,921 a year. He’s the third highest paid CEO in Oregon. About 64 percent of OPB funding comes from listener donations; with 120,000 subscribers, OPB is one of the best-supported public broadcasting services in the U.S. Another 29 percent of OPB financing is from corporations and federal support through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Like other mission-driven nonprofits, OPB is part of the capitalist system. Even if it is not technically creating profit, management is being well paid while forcing oppressive conditions on the workers.

## Nonprofit workers’ growing movement to unionize

Union victories are on the rise in so-called “liberal” and cultural workplaces—prestigious publications, museums, theater companies and service organizations.

After workers at Webnews, DNAinfo and Gothamist voted in 2017 to join the Writers Guild of America East, their boss Joe Ricketts shut down the websites and laid off 115 employees to punish them. In response, WGAE organized a demonstration in New York City where more than 300 people joined the “fight against the billionaire war on journalism.” (Workers World, Nov. 22, 2017)

In August, “more than 300 library workers—librarians, library assistants, clerks and information technology professionals—across 19 branches of Pittsburgh’s



WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY

Oregon Public Broadcasting workers on the picket line, Dec. 6.

Carnegie Library system voted 60 percent in favor of joining the United Steelworkers and won a union.” (WW, Sept. 4)

In Utah early in 2019, more than 80 percent of workers at the Salt Lake Film Society voted to join the Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees. The workforce of cleaners, ticket sellers and projector operators—demeaningly called “popcorn people” by management—included mainly young people, people of color, women and LGBTQ2+ people. In April, the union became official.

Boots Riley, writer and director of “Sorry to Bother You,” congratulated the theater workers who came together to form a union: “It’s not just the fight ... that exists in front of you; it’s about the story that is being told to millions of other people that will be finding out about what you’re doing ... not just theater workers, but fast food workers, anyone, retail workers—so what you’re doing is very important. And I’m inspired by you.” (WW, June 9) □

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# Sports heroes fight racism

Continued from page 1

made by a white person about a person of color is overt or covert, it is still racism, pure and simple. It cannot be taken out of the historical and political context of white supremacy emanating from ruling class ideas that permeate every fiber of U.S. society.

**Megan Rapinoe**

Megan Rapinoe is arguably one of the most famous and influential soccer players in the world. She is co-captain of the U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team, which won the World Cup title in July. Rapinoe is an out lesbian who has been outspoken in demanding that U.S. women soccer players receive the same pay and benefits as their male counterparts. Even before winning the World Cup, Rapinoe declared, “I’m not going to the fucking White House,” which has been a tradition for most championship teams. (si.com, Dec. 9) In fact, none of the team went to visit Trump.

Rapinoe, who is white, began to kneel during the playing of the national anthem before games in 2016 to protest racist police brutality, inspired by the actions of Black, former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick.

She won one of Glamour magazine’s 2019 Women of the Year awards Nov. 12 in New York City. Other winners included Black film director Ava DuVernay and environmentalist Greta Thunberg.

In her acceptance speech, Rapinoe said: “So while I’m enjoying all of this unprecedented — and, frankly, a little bit uncomfortable — attention and personal success, in large part due to my activism off the field, Colin Kaepernick is still effectively banned from the NFL for kneeling during the national anthem in protest of known and systematic police brutality against people of color, known and systematic racial injustice and known and systematic white supremacy.

“I see no clearer example of that system being alive and well than me standing before you right now. It would be a slap in the face to Colin, and to so many other faces, not to acknowledge, and for me personally to work relentlessly to dismantle that system that benefits some over the detriment of others, and frankly is quite literally



Lamar Jackson, Jr.



Tommie Dean kneeling, front and center, Sept. 30, 2017.

tearing us apart in this country.” (USA Today, Nov. 12)

Rapinoe also won the prestigious women's Ballon d'Or award in France on Dec. 2 due to her dominant role in the World Cup win in July. Instead of talking about the award, 34-year-old Rapinoe verbally took to task the three biggest male soccer players in the world — Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi and Zlatan Ibrahimović — for remaining silent on issues of racism and sexism.

She told France Football, “I want to shout: ‘Cristiano, Lionel, Zlatan, help me!’ These big stars do not engage in anything when there are so many problems in men’s football.

“Do they fear losing everything? They believe that, but

it is not true. Who will erase Messi or Ronaldo from world football history for a statement against racism or sexism? They grew up in a bubble because of their exceptional talents. They were cut off from the real world and had everything at 20.

“I am both sad and angry. I would describe discrimination to them. I would also tell them we need support from men, even if they are not the first affected. They must be our allies.

“Imagine the impact if Cristiano Ronaldo said: ‘We must invest in female football.’ It would be enormous [if Messi left the pitch because of racist chants]. The referee would not dare to send him off.” (ESPN, Dec. 2) So far, none of the three players has responded to Rapinoe.

On Dec. 9, Rapinoe was named sportsperson of the year for 2019 by Sports Illustrated magazine.

**Tommia Dean**

On Sept. 30, 2017, five African-American cheerleaders at a Georgia college took a knee during a football game to protest police brutality and racial inequality. This was just one of many protests that were taking place on and off the field during this period, inspired by Colin Kaepernick.

As a reprimand, Kennesaw State College banned the cheerleaders from appearing at the next two home games. One of the cheerleaders, Tommie Dean, brought a lawsuit in September 2018 against the former president of the college, two members of the athletic department, a Cobb County sheriff and a former Republican state legislator, charging them with violating her constitutional right to protest.

This October, Dean, who cited the emotional stress she suffered because of the suspension, was awarded a settlement of \$145,000 from the Georgia Department of Administrative Services. One of her lawyers, Bruce P. Brown, stated: “Kneeling during the national anthem is respectful and a completely appropriate protest that should be protected by the university under the First Amendment. It should not be prohibited or punished, ever.” (New York Times, Dec. 7) □

## Food stamps on the chopping block

# A tale of two budgets

By Deirdre Griswold

The gang of flunkies for the super-rich running the show in Washington, D.C., are proposing to cut 700,000 people off food stamps. Here are some facts to keep in mind when assessing the magnitude of their latest crime against humanity.

The U.S. has the most arable land in the world — some 914 million acres. This is more than any of the other largest countries, including India, China, Russia and Brazil.

The U.S. has 2.1 million farms, averaging 435 acres per farm.

Armed with this knowledge alone, most people would conclude that with so much food being farmed, everyone in the country enjoys an adequate and nutritious diet — and that more mountains of food are available to export to the rest of the world.

But they’d be wrong. Because in 2017, 40 million people in the U.S. struggled with hunger. The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines “food insecurity” as the lack of access during part or all of the year to enough food for all household members. In 2017, an estimated 15 million households were “food insecure” — a government euphemism for hungry.

Officially, more than 40 million people in the U.S. live in poverty. One-third of them are children.

About one in six people in this country rely on some form of government-funded food assistance — food stamps; Meals on Wheels; the Women, Infants, and Children program; free and reduced-price school lunches; and other programs.

Without these services, millions would feel an increase in hunger and end up eating cheap, unhealthy foods just to fill their bellies.

**Racist power dynamics and hunger**

Food stamps are now known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. “SNAP is a bridge for people who’ve hit a financial crisis,” said Debbie Norman, outreach coordinator at United South Broadway Corporation, a community service agency based in New Mexico, where a large number of the poor rely on food assistance.

In New Mexico — Indigenous lands colonized by Spain and then stolen by the U.S. in 1848 through a vicious war — many of the poor who depend on food stamps are descendants of those who inhabited the lands at that time, but were reduced to extreme poverty by subsequent U.S. conquest of the territory.

In the U.S. South, as well as major urban areas in the North, descendants of enslaved African people suffer the highest poverty rates. They make a disproportionate number of those who will suffer real

hunger without the government programs that are now on the administration’s chopping block.

Trump and his lackeys, professing to care about the people they are knifing in the back, say that “private charities” can pick up the slack. These charities currently provide only about 5 percent of the food services that people in poverty rely on.

**Hunger takes a back seat to warfare**

The amount the government would “save” by this draconian measure is a mere pittance compared to the hundreds of billions of dollars lavished on the military-industrial complex, not to mention payments on the astronomical and ever-increasing national debt.

The Pentagon budget for 2019 is just shy of \$700 billion. The next largest military budget in the world, that of People’s China with more than four times the population of the U.S. to defend, is just \$177.6 billion.

In contrast to the vast sums showered on the Pentagon, the federal budget for SNAP and other related food assistance programs for fiscal year 2018 was \$68 billion.

This is also far, far less than the interest



the federal government pays (out of our tax money) to the banks on the national debt. In fiscal 2019, this interest is projected to surge to the mind-boggling sum of \$389 billion, according to the Congressional Budget Office. And it will only grow in the future, leaving the bankers ever richer and the workers ever poorer — and in need of food assistance.

Yet this excrescence called Trump lies through his teeth, telling his racist and clueless base that he is saving them money — by taking food out of the mouths of babies and stuffing it in the maws of his fellow capitalists.

Is it any wonder that 70 percent of millennials said they’d vote for a socialist in a recent YouGov poll? Voting won’t unseat this class of deadly parasites, but it’s a start. □



# What road to socialism?

By Scott Williams

*This article is based on an edited talk, “What Road to Socialism?” given at a Workers World Party Forum on Nov. 23 in New York City,*

The question of “What road to socialism?” can be posed as “What road to survival for the human species and for the rest of life on the planet?” But it is also an immediate and practical question which impacts all our everyday work.

Workers World Party takes inspiration from the massive upsurges in Haiti, Lebanon, Chile, Colombia, the resistance to the fascist coup in Bolivia and the steadfast struggle of the Bolivarian revolution. The people of the world are in the streets demonstrating against capitalism, imperialism and oppression.

While these massive uprisings are tremendous, the impacts of imperialism and neoliberal capitalism will not end without the growth of the world communist movement. As we have seen throughout history, massive resistance to capitalism and oppression, led by revolutionary communist organizations with deep connections in the masses, is the route to socialism.

We are starting to see signs of a rejuvenated workers movement in the U.S. Chicago teachers struck against racism and inequality. Education workers, low-wage workers, women, people of color — and more of the working class — are flexing the strike muscle. We saw the longest General Motors strike in decades. Unionizing campaigns across the U.S. continue to win. The left is rising.

Support for socialism is also on the rise. According to recent polls, 70 percent of millennials, people 23 to 38 years old, would vote for a socialist. One-third of millennials view communism favorably compared to capitalism. Communism’s popularity is growing quickly.

Millennials’ support for communism has increased by 8 percent in the last year, and 35 percent of millennials view Marxism favorably. Twenty percent of millennials believe the world would be better off if private property were abolished. The tide is turning toward us.

These are the youth of Black Lives Matter, the Occupy movement and the global climate strike movement. These youth face a declining life expectancy and deteriorating living standards in a crumbling, racist, genocidal empire.

While socialism is growing more popular, so are right-wing terrorism and white-supremacist fascism, organized by the president himself. The call for solutions is everywhere. We have to show that we have the answers. Through our ideological efforts and our work in the struggle, we need to prevail.

## Social democracy’s dead-end road to socialism

We are not the only group that has a proposed road to socialism. One of the most popular programs of social democracy today is the recently publicized Labor Party Manifesto 2019, put out by the British Labor Party led by Jeremy Corbyn. In the lead-up to the Dec. 12 parliamentary elections, Corbyn dropped what he called “the most radical” Labor platform ever.

While the document looks radical during this period of neoliberal capitalism, in many ways it is a classic example of a social democratic program in an imperialist country.

Corbyn’s program is bound to be popular among working-class people in



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

From left to right: Larry Holmes, Makasi Motema, Stephanie Tromblay (who chaired the forum), Scott Williams and Taryn Fivek at the New York branch of Workers World Party public and livestream forum Nov. 23 on “What Road to Socialism?”

Britain. It promises a Green New Deal to tackle the climate crisis — nationalizing the energy industry, creating 1 million unionized green jobs, expanding the National Health Service, increasing funding for education, creating a minimum wage equivalent of \$13 an hour, improving workers’ rights and ending precarity at work. Interestingly, Corbyn could win with this program. This would be a step forward. But will the Labor Party lead workers toward socialism?

British social democracy has many serious problems. Labor’s support for imperialism, the police and the border patrol should shock a revolutionary reader. Isn’t Corbyn the notorious anti-imperialist? Some may remember him as the politician who flew to the Washington, D.C., demonstration against war in Iraq in 2003 — called by Answer and supported by WWP. He has been seen as an anti-imperialist because of his defense of basic Palestinian rights and his opposition to war. Yet the Labor Party’s program does not oppose war and empire.

In the final section of the Manifesto, Labor outlines its foreign policy approach in a piece entitled “New Internationalism.” It includes proposals such as the following: “Conduct an audit of the impact of Britain’s colonial legacy to understand our contribution to the dynamics of violence and insecurity across regions previously under British colonial rule.”

In talking about the British Empire that killed millions of people across the world, the word “reparations” doesn’t appear once. An audit alone will not begin to solve the crisis of “Britain’s colonial legacy”!

In reality, the Labor program seeks to maintain the Empire. It reads: “We have a duty to stand up for the security and sovereignty of our overseas territories, including the Falklands.” This statement couldn’t be a clearer call to defend the Empire. The Malvinas Islands (called the Falklands by Britain) belong to Argentina, not the British. [The Malvinas are 288 miles east of mainland Argentina and 8,000 miles from England.]

Some of the proposals in this section appear progressive, such as suspending the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia and calling for an end to the Israeli blockade, occupation and settlements in Palestine. In the same sentence that defends Palestine’s right to exist, the program violates the Palestinian people’s right to

self-defense, calling for “an end to rocket and terror attacks” by the Palestinians.

## Labor Party’s stance on war exposed

This “New Internationalism” is as treacherous as the Second International’s encouragement of World War I. It reads: “Labour will increase funding for UN peacekeeping operations to £100 million” (\$131 million), meaning more funding for troops like those in Port-au-Prince which repressed the movement in Haiti. And there’s this: “Labour supports the renewal of the Trident nuclear deterrent.”

So much for stopping war. Corbyn and the Labor Party want to keep nuclear missiles pointed at Russia. In other proposals, Labor promises to expand the military-industrial complex.

Labor proposes to increase the number of frontline police by 2,000 and blames the Conservative Party for underfunding the police and causing crime. Their program calls for “closer counter-terrorism co-ordination between the police and the security services” and calls for more border patrols.

Unfortunately, the global working class doesn’t seem to exist for the Labor Party. Rather, the Empire should be reformed to provide better services for its working-class citizens.

For socialists in the U.S., the question of international solidarity is even more critical. Jacobin, a leading social-democratic publication in the U.S., covers the Labor Manifesto very positively, with no mention of its support for the police, border patrol or military forces.

The Labor Manifesto is not a road to socialism, but a dead end toward defending and modernizing empire. In reality, socialism will not be attained through elections. It will develop as part of a massive upsurge of working-class action. Where are the strikes and demonstrations promoting Labor’s program? Without a mass movement, this parliamentary socialist program is destined to disappoint.

## Impeachment and the 2020 election

Perhaps no one is more responsible for the growth in popularity of socialism in the U.S. than Sen. Bernie Sanders. His program has connected to these young radicals and given a voice to progressive politics in a way that few politicians have.

Yet in the unlikely event that Sanders wins the presidential election, he would need the working class mobilized to win

the basic elements of Medicare for All, the Green New Deal, College for All, taxes on the rich and other parts of his program.

Meanwhile, the U.S. ruling class is in decline. It is not likely to make compromises. It is more likely to be repressive, smash working-class unity and get increasingly violent abroad to defend its increasingly fraught system.

The impeachment proceedings have been a hidden attack on the Sanders movement. This is an attempt to take people off the streets and focus their attention on boring legal proceedings in Congress.

The message is clear: Nancy Pelosi and the corporate Democrats will provide “resistance” to Trump. In reality, the dubious, irrelevant charges against the racist, sexist, imperialist Trump may mobilize the right wing and effectively enable him to win a second term.

Another term for Trump is good for business. As the next economic crisis looms, the ruling class will demand austerity, more privatizations, more blood and more fascistic violence. They don’t want worker militancy or a President Sanders who will join workers on a picket line.

In the case that Sanders wins, his presidency would be met with capital strikes, stock market crashes and capitalist sabotage, paired with fascistic mobilizations to threaten any chance of a progressive presidency.

## A proposed beginning to a route toward socialism

How do we defeat the rise of fascism in a country built on genocide, white supremacy, slavery, patriarchy and anti-communism? How do we support struggles against capitalism, racism, sexism and all forms of oppression and turn them into a movement for a revolutionary socialist future?

This overly simplified proposal includes three parts: a renewed ideological campaign, continued mobilizations and a turn toward deeper organizing.

First of all, we need an ideological initiative in which we clarify and highlight our program. We did this to an extent in 2016 with the Workers World Party presidential campaign.

Our candidates, Monica Moorehead and Lamont Lilly, raised demands such as abolishing the police and Immigration Customs and Enforcement, and dismantling the Pentagon. We called for global reparations for the crimes of the U.S. empire. We addressed the Black Lives Matter movement in a way that no other campaign did.

We have to support the struggles for reforms while explaining the need for revolutionary change. In the future, we need to explain why Medicare for All, an important reform, doesn’t go far enough as long as the capitalists own all the hospitals, medicines and, increasingly, more medical practices.

We need to clarify that by abolishing capitalism, we mean the establishment of workers’ control over every major industry — energy, education, finance, transportation and more — and that this is possible and necessary. We need to get this program out further than ever before.

A revolutionary program is not enough. We know publishing our ideas will not stop the U.S. empire from killing Indigenous peoples and destroying human life — and all life — on the planet. We know that the real power is in the streets.

Our party has successfully mobilized around several key struggles in the past year. Building solidarity with im/migrants, connecting to the upsurge

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‘As strong as ever’

# 50th annual National Day of Mourning

By Stephanie Tromblay

Indigenous people and supporters gathered on a windy, rainy cold day at Plymouth, Mass., on Nov. 28 for the 50th National Day of Mourning. The undaunted crowd included Indigenous peoples of the nations the Pilgrims menaced and murdered — Mashpee and Aquinnah and other bands of the Wampanoag, Massachusetts, Narragansett, Nipmuc, Pequot, and other Native Nations from the immediate region, and Native peoples from across Great Turtle Island and the Land of the Condor — in a vibrant show of Indigenous resilience despite the genocide begun by those colonial settlers.

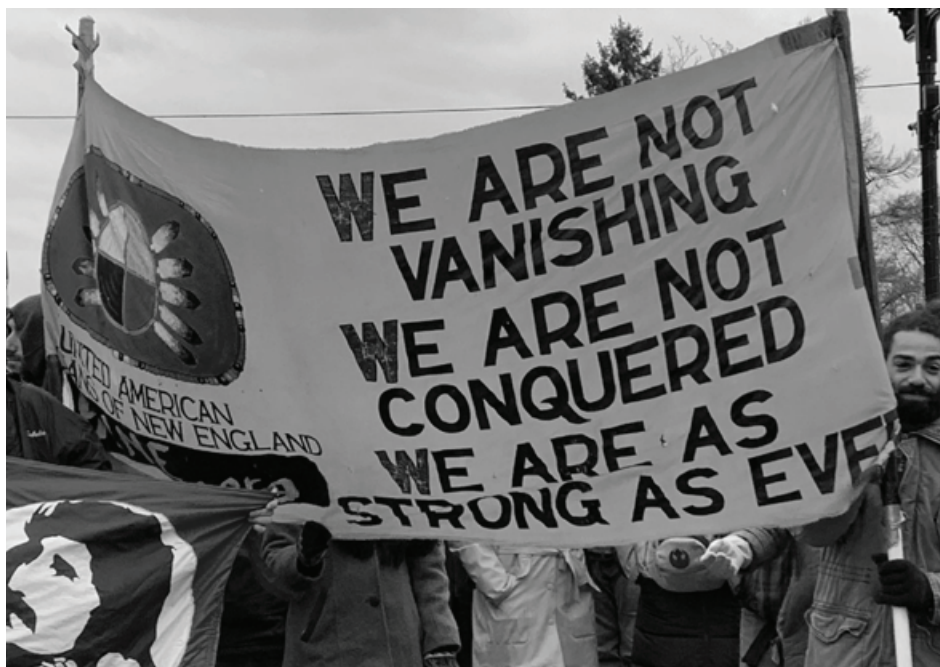
Moonanum James, Wampanoag, co-leader of United American Indians of New England, opened the rally on Cole’s Hill: “The first National Day of Mourning was held in 1970 in response to the refusal to let an Aquinnah Wampanoag man, Wamsutta Frank James, speak the truth at a fancy Commonwealth of Massachusetts banquet celebrating the 350th anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims. Wamsutta and hundreds of Indigenous people and supporters gathered in Plymouth and observed the first National Day of Mourning, which UAINE has continued every year since.”

James said, “Over the years we repeatedly disrupted the ‘Pilgrims’ Progress’ parade, a tradition we continued until 1996. In 1997 we were blocked ... and arrested for simply trying to march. The resulting defense of the Plymouth 25 led to the plaque you see over here on Cole’s Hill and the Metacom plaque we will visit when we march.” The English settlers killed the historic Wampanoag leader Metacom, also known as King Philip, and displayed his head on a spike for 25 years.

James pointed out: “The Pilgrims are glorified and mythologized because the circumstances of the first English colony in North America, Jamestown, were too ugly to hold up as an effective national myth.” School children now learn about the African slaves kept at Jamestown, and those first white settlers there actually turned to cannibalism to survive.

James went on to take apart the official, untrue story of the Pilgrims seeking religious freedom, which they already had in the Netherlands. He noted they came as partners of a commercial venture, seeking profits — “nothing more than a group of white men wanting to ensure they would get a return on their investments.”

The first actual thanksgiving dinner was proclaimed in 1637 by Governor Winthrop to celebrate the massacre at Mystic of



WWW PHOTO: STEPHANIE TROMBLAY

The banner of the United American Indians of New England, Nov. 28, Plymouth, Mass.

hundreds of Pequot women, children and men by men from the Massachusetts colony. James recounted the words of Winthrop, who gloatingly described the Pequot people being run through with swords and burned alive.

James called for support for the Mashpee Wampanoags’ petition and pending legislation in their current battle against the U.S. Department of the Interior, which ruled that their nation should not be able to take their own ancestral territory into trust. This is a direct attack on the self-determination and sovereignty of all Native Nations throughout the country.

Wampanoag elder Bert Waters, 89, read the annual National Day of Mourning statement from long-standing Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier. American Indian Movement leader, father and artist Peltier has been imprisoned since 1976. (whoisleonardpeltier.info)

UAINE co-leader Mahtowin Munro spoke to those present: “We acknowledge the many struggles that you have carried with you today on your backs, from the many efforts to stop pipelines to protect the waters, to the ongoing work to free Puerto Rico from U.S. colonialism, to the attempted desecration of Mauna Kea by scientists who lack respect for Indigenous sacred places, and to occupied Palestine. Defending tribal sovereignty is as much an issue today as it was at the original National Day of Mourning in 1970.”

Both of the federally recognized tribes in Massachusetts, the Penobscot and the Aquinnah Wampanoag, have had their tribal sovereignty restricted and been

denied the use of their own lands by settler governments. Massachusetts, Nipmuc and others continue to fight for their sovereignty without recognition.

Munro spoke of attacks on Indigenous people from Bolivia to Brazil, Australia, Honduras, Chile and Nova Scotia, everywhere Indigenous people continue to struggle to protect their lands: “We are all united in our fight against settler colonialism. And we must remember that what happens to one of us, happens to all of us.”

Munro also raised the ongoing attack on the 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act. Before the ICWA was passed, about one-third of Indigenous children were removed from their families and adopted into white families. Right-wing forces want to return Native nations to that genocidal practice. And as Munro noted, over 70,000 children were detained and caged at the U.S. border this year alone, but “no one is illegal on stolen land!”

Munro gave details on the struggle around Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirits. Indigenous Nations are fighting against pipelines, fracking, mining and the “man camps,” which are connected to the murders of Indigenous women: “Attacking the Earth and attacking Indigenous people are intertwined, following centuries of murder of Native and African people by European invaders. Sixty percent of the world’s land animals have been wiped out since 1970. ...

“Only by listening to Indigenous people and dismantling the capitalist system, which allows climate collapse to happen in the first place, will we be able to save the

planet. Indigenous peoples have always been the caretakers of the lands, waters and the life there, despite the efforts of settler governments to stop us from doing so. ‘We are not vanishing. We are not conquered. We are as strong as ever.’”

Indigenous struggles against corporate and settler government assaults on clean water, air and lands were addressed by speakers from throughout the hemisphere, from the fight against the mega hydrodam that threatens Labrador and Newfoundland lands and homes to the recent attacks on Indigenous peoples of Brazil in the Amazon.

Many speakers spoke about Bolivia, where a U.S.-supported fascist coup forced the first Indigenous president, Evo Morales, from office following his popular election. Fascist elements have carried out attacks on and murders of Indigenous people, who are 65 percent to 70 percent of the Bolivian population.

The gathering marched to Plymouth’s formerly named Post Office Square to hear some words at the plaque commemorating the history of Metacom. This plaque and that on Cole’s Hill were won in the 1998 UAINE settlement on the dropping of the charges against the Plymouth 25, along with the right to march without a permit every year on National Day of Mourning and some small reparations for educational purposes.

Then marchers continued down to the pebble called “Plymouth Rock” for final words before adjourning for the post-rally potluck social 2 miles away at a Lutheran church. The ruling-class Mayflower Association had bought the former Unitarian church, where marchers usually gather, and forced UAINE out this year.

As James said to the crowd on Cole’s Hill, “We will continue to gather on this hill till corporations and the U.S. military stop polluting the Earth. Until we dismantle the brutal apparatus of mass incarceration. We will not stop until the oppression of our Two-Spirit siblings is a thing of the past. When the homeless have homes. When children are no longer taken from their parents and locked in cages. When the Palestinians reclaim the homeland and the autonomy Israel has denied them for the past 70 years. When no person goes hungry or is left to die because they have little or no access to quality health care. When insulin is free. When union-busting is a thing of the past. Until then, the struggle will continue.”

*Tromblay’s heritage is Huron non-status and mixed Southeast nations undocumented.*

## What road to socialism?

Continued from page 6

in workers’ struggles and fighting U.S. imperialism’s attempts to conquer Venezuela and Bolivia have been significant developments.

We have continued to build solidarity against racism and mass incarceration. And we apply the party’s unique perspective on the centrality of fighting national oppression and racism as key to the success for revolution in the U.S.

We need to be bolder. We need to keep organizing major mobilizations which come at key points for our class, recognizing that it is multinational, multigenerational

and multigender, and includes our im/migrant sisters and brothers. These need to be openly anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-racist and pro-im/migrant campaigns and coalitions which build global working-class solidarity.

Think about these demonstrations as a global strike against capitalism and imperialism. Every time there is a crisis and the Democrats won’t call a protest action, we need to plan to shut down the system with our allies, including those on the left.

Mobilizations are not enough. For our party to succeed, we need to sink our roots deeper into the working class. The comrades we win through our mobilizations

and ideological initiatives need to become trusted fighters for our class. We need to be seen as the best community organizers, the most principled union fighters and the clearest thinkers.

We need a strategy in which people will dedicate their lives to building the working-class organizations which will carry out the revolution here. Those include unions, workers’ and people’s assemblies, community organizations and study groups. Deep organizing, the work of building relationships with the leaders of our class, is our only weapon.

Finally, we need to continue to be the loudest voice for Marxist-Leninist unity.

We must keep on being a principled, non-sectarian party which attempts to build broader Marxist-Leninist unity and solidarity among fellow communist organizations. Our comrades in Bolivia and throughout Latin America deserve no less.

We need real, practical unity. The crises of this period require a greater level of communication, deliberation and unity among the most advanced forces in the left.

Finally, let’s not give up hope. Demoralization can be the gravest of illnesses for a communist party. I believe that we will win, and I hope you do as well.

Build a Workers World! Socialism or death! □



# Mumia message to event

## ‘It’s not about me, it’s about us’

By **Ted Kelly**  
**Philadelphia**

Over 100 activists and community members from across the country came together in Philadelphia Dec. 7 for an event that linked the struggle to free Black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, imprisoned in the U.S. for the last 37 years, with the international struggle against empire and capitalism. The event, hosted by Mobilization for Mumia and the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, featured speakers from various progressive and anti-imperialist organizations. They included Ant Smith and Megan Malachi from Philly for REAL Justice, Glen Ford from Black Agenda Report, William Camacaro from the Bolivarian



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE  
Janine Phillips Africa, MOVE member and political prisoner released in 2019 after nearly 41 years, speaks at the Dec. 7 forum.

Circle of New York, and Yahne Ndgo from Black Alliance for Peace. MOVE member Ramona Africa, sole survivor of the 1985 bombing in West Philadelphia by Philadelphia and state police, helped open the event by reading the names of fallen revolutionary soldiers and organizers. Johanna Fernandez of the Campaign to Bring Mumia Home provided an update on the legal side of Mumia’s case. (For more on this, see “New stage in the struggle to free Mumia,” Workers World, Dec. 5.)

### Mumia calls in from prison

Mumia Abu-Jamal was able to speak directly to those in attendance, calling in to the event from SCI Mahanoy, the Pennsylvania state prison where he is serving a life sentence for a crime he did not commit. With his trademark wisdom, humor and real talk, Mumia kept the audience at rapt attention. “It’s an ugly time,” Mumia said. “The air is foul. The water is foul.” Referring to the MOVE founder who was killed when police bombed their house, Mumia said, “John Africa was an environmentalist. He said that water is a potion that gets poisoned when the system gets ahold of it. “They want it all. Think about this. Never in my life have I seen so many billionaires

running for public office. Think about it! Why would they want to do that? They want to be president, they want to be mayors, they want to be senators, they want to be governors. Why? They want it all. “It’s not about me, it’s about us,” Mumia added. “If we don’t start thinking that way, shit is about to get real.” Between panel discussions, attendees participated in workshops hosted by various event organizers. Workers World Party hosted a class and discussion based on Mumia’s recent two-volume work, “Murder Incorporated,” and laid out why anyone who struggles to fight racism must also fight imperialism. The Philadelphia branch of WWP will be hosting monthly anti-imperialism discussions focused on reading the writings of Mumia and other freedom fighters. Other workshops included “A Conversation on Black Liberation,” hosted by Gabriel Bryant, and a discussion about Latin America and the Caribbean featuring Carmen Guerrero of the Coalición Fortaleza Latina and Taryn Fivek of the International Action Center. “The movement to free Mumia has consistently fought for his freedom over the last 38 years,” said Megan Malachi of Philly for REAL Justice. “This movement is funded by the hard labor and funds of the people. The



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE  
Mike Africa Jr., exhorting the Philadelphia forum, was ‘born on the MOVE’ to political prisoner Debbie Holloway Africa while she was jailed.

oppressed. We are up against a rotten and decadent system with seemingly unlimited resources. A system of violence and avarice, but we are brave and we will win. “We are going to bring Mumia home and all our incarcerated people home, but we need your help. We leftists don’t like to discuss money, but in this capitalist system, we need funds to free our people. We humbly ask that you donate what you can.” Workers World urges readers to visit mobilization4mumia.org and donate what you can to the struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, as well as Chuck and Delbert Africa. □

## 30 years after the Camp Hill uprising

# Repression in Pennsylvania’s prison system

By **Jerome "Hoagie" Coffey**  
**SCI Albion, Erie, Pa.**

On Oct. 25, 1989, a three-day uprising took place at Pennsylvania’s State Correctional Institution Camp Hill in response to overcrowding and administrative changes impacting visits, food from families, medical care and the termination of prison programs. The prison, originally called White Hill, opened in 1941 as an industrial school for juvenile prisoners on 52 acres of property in Cumberland County. In the 1970s it was accredited by the state to house adult prisoners and certified as SCI Camp Hill. When the uprising happened, the facility designed to house 1,826 prisoners was overcrowded with 2,600 men. By the time the uprising was put down on Oct. 28, over 100 people were injured, including guards and inmates; 14 prison buildings were destroyed, with an estimated damage of \$57 million. In the weeks that followed over 1,200 prisoners still housed at Camp Hill were kept in leg irons and handcuffs and denied showers until an American Civil Liberties Union lawsuit forced prison officials to back down. Four days after the Camp Hill uprising, then Pennsylvania Gov. Robert P. Casey held a press conference announcing he was appointing an independent



PHOTO: CUMBERLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Fire rages in one of the multiple buildings damaged or destroyed during the Camp Hill uprising in October 1989.

commission to investigate Camp Hill. In the three decades that followed, conditions for Pennsylvania prisoners have only deteriorated as draconian state and federal measures, pushed by the agenda of criminal justice policyholders, including the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), were introduced. Privatizing prisons and breaking resistance ALEC is a Washington, D.C.-based public policy organization that supports conservative legislators. Launched in 1973 by Paul Weyrich (a Heritage Foundation founder and major New Right figure), ALEC exemplifies the overlap between the corporate sector and public policy. With over 40 percent of state legislators as members, ALEC represents a force in state capitols across the U.S. Of more than 6,000 state legislators, approximately 2,500 are members of ALEC, including scores who hold key leadership positions. William Barr, currently President Trump’s hit man as U.S. Attorney General, in 1995 was a hardcore ALEC member and poster boy who used Pennsylvania [as the launching site] for ALEC policies. Barr, Sen. Steward Greenleaf (minority chairman of the Pennsylvania Senate Judiciary Committee), and Rep. Jeff Piccola (Republican chairman of the House Judiciary Committee) did a press conference together about so-called crime to announce the agenda. In March 1995, Gov. Thomas Ridge appointed Martin F. Horn as Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PADOC), giving him carte blanche to make dramatic changes in the state’s prison system. Both Ridge and Horn were staunch members of ALEC and shared its prison policies agenda. On Oct. 24, 1995, six years after the uprising, Ridge and Horn spent over \$2 million and authorized a joint federal and

state task force to carry out an attack on predominantly African-American prisoners at SCI Graterford, the largest maximum security prison in the state. The state’s attack took place just nine days after the Million Man March in Washington, D.C. Making an example out of Graterford, Secretary Horn established operational manuals impacting policies in all state prisons and opened the way to privatize PADOC’s infrastructures, including medical service, phone and cable service, food packaging, commissaries and emails. Horn’s policy manuals included physical removal of prisoners to areas sufficiently isolated to effectively break or seriously weaken close emotional ties; segregation of all natural leaders; use of cooperative prisoners as leaders; and prohibition of group activities not in line with brainwashing objectives.

### Clinton’s ‘crime bills’ and Pennsylvania

In the early 1970s Pennsylvania state prisoners had filed a successful class action lawsuit challenging oppressive prison conditions. It resulted in a consent decree that established policies restricting prison officials handling of prisoners’ mail; guaranteed prisoner access to outside publications; established health care and sanitation standards; imposed restrictive standards for prison officials’ use of force; and prescribed detailed procedures for conducting cell searches. In 1996 President Bill Clinton signed the Prison Litigation Reform Act that terminated the consent decree and stripped prisoners of their civil liberties. In 1994 Clinton had signed a \$30 billion crime bill, the largest in U.S. history, creating dozens of new federal capital crimes. On April 24, 1996 — political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal’s birthday [on death row at that time] — Clinton signed the Antiterrorism and Death Penalty Prevention Act which made capital appeals nearly impossible.



Fast forward to 2011 when “one-term Tom,” i.e., Pennsylvania Gov. Thomas Corbett, appointed his personal friend and fellow Board of Pardon member John Wetzel as Secretary of PADOC. Wetzel pledged to boss Corbett that he would reduce the state prison population and save money. In fact, Wetzel, in the lucrative business of exploiting prisoners by selling cells, brought Pennsylvania prisoners back from other states to which they had previously been transferred. The move was designed to take advantage of federal stimulus money, which Wetzel used to pay correctional officials overtime while shaving the PADOC budget. In 2017 the Vermont DOC paid the PADOC \$7 million per year for three years to house 270 prisoners, until two died at Camp Hill. In January 2019, under an interstate corrections compact, 224 inmates from Delaware prisons were moved to PADOC jurisdiction. In conclusion, 30 years after the Camp Hill riot, the PADOC is not only “behind the times” — it has gone from bad to worse. Wetzel is putting the finishing touches of oppression on prisoners, glorifying the prison-industrial complex and allowing racist Jim Crow policies to be implemented by the policing industry. □



# Workers must say: ‘Move over, we're taking over’

## Sam Marcy’s analysis of 1995 struggle in France

By Sam Marcy

*Adapted from a speech Workers World Party Chairperson Sam Marcy gave to a party meeting on Dec. 15, 1995 — the same day that the then French government withdrew its plan to cut pensions after militant worker demonstrations. Marcy’s evaluation followed a period of months of massive class struggle in France, with strikes in the public sector including a general strike in transport. Many reports from France’s current class struggle in December 2019 describe today’s strikes as the biggest since 1995. Marcy died in 1998.*

There was a time in this country when the French revolutionary experience of 1789 was discussed as avidly as the Russian experience of 1917 has been over the last several decades. Paris was the center of revolutionary action and revolutionary inspiration.

It is hard to believe that so much of it has gone by without leaving much of a trace, because the French Revolution was the first really great struggle against feudalism that brought the masses out into the streets. It challenged not only certain feudal practices, like over-taxation, but the whole system. In doing so, they began to question the whole system of private property.

The French Revolution of 1789 is really the beginning of the modern era of socialism in some ways, if you don’t take that literally. Marx and Engels, later Lenin and Trotsky, studied the French Revolution very hard. Many of my generation did, too, because until 1917 it was THE revolution, the model.

They took pride in trying to understand what the differences were among the leaders, why the leaders fought among themselves and why there was so much bloodshed.

Hollywood had to have its say, too. In the movies of the early 1920s there was always some reference to the bloody struggles in Paris. All the mean people were on the revolutionary side. All the good people were well-dressed and seemed more like U.S. Americans.

### First revolutionary struggle of masses

The French Revolution was the beginning of the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed masses everywhere. Its lessons are as important today as 50 or 100 years ago.

For instance, what were the aims of the revolution? Liberty, fraternity and equality were great slogans, but in the end what did they mean to which class?

As Marx and Engels later pointed out, the French revolution helped the establishment of the bourgeoisie as against the feudal class. It destroyed feudalism once and for all.

Nowhere were feudal remnants so quickly and completely destroyed as in France. This terrorized the rulers all over Europe. For instance, when the queen in France was executed, all of England shuddered.

Nevertheless, the British ruling class was afraid not to report that the French had executed their queen. And the very printing of this news aroused the British working



The French Pension Strike of 1995.

class. It did not bring about the great revolutionary turmoil there that existed in France, but that’s because the earlier English Revolution of 1640 had done a lot of the work that the French didn’t do in the 1640s or 1740s — that was left for 1789 and thereafter.

The French Revolution is the example of class struggles unparalleled in history until the Russian Revolution. Whoever wants to understand the relationship of exploiter to exploited and how the interests of the classes are masked, first of all has to study French history. Everything else seems to be an echo of what took place there.

Of course, that’s not true in the United States. The colonies got their independence earlier, in 1776, and didn’t feel they needed a real revolution. They were quick to make friends with the French monarchy. As you recall, Benjamin Franklin went over to France trying to represent U.S. interests. The U.S. American Revolution never took on the character of a revolutionary overturn in property relations.

### What’s happening today

What we see today [1995] in France is in some ways a continuation of the struggles begun in 1789 — class struggles that ushered in a new propertied class, the bourgeoisie, which got strengthened and became the ruling class.

And now the big question is whether the new struggle is sounding the knell for the ruling class, the bourgeoisie.

What we see in France today is not a revolutionary situation, not yet. It is an important strike, but it is limited by the nature and ideology of the leadership now in control — and also by the conditions.

The important thing in France today is that the masses are willing to listen to ideas for their liberation. They have taken to the streets, they’ve gone beyond what the trade unions have asked them to do. But the big question is, will they go further than that?

Strikes alone do not lead to the revolution. Going out in the streets is an indispensable step, but in itself does not lead to the revolution.

It has to be followed by the next step: the seizure of the means of production, the seizure of the properties.

Walking out of the factories is one aspect of the struggle. The next and indeed most revolutionary act is to come back to the factories and take over their management.

In France, the workers have walked off their jobs, especially in the all-important state sector. The next thing is for them to come back and take them over.

Just walking out does not do it. It raises an important and significant protest and it scares the hell out of the bourgeoisie. But it does not lead to that one important act: taking over the reins of society by taking over the means of production.

The workers walk off the job. If done in unison with millions, it’s an act of tremendous revolutionary consequences. The next thing is to come back and take the means of production over, to say we’ve come back not to be subjugated, we’ve come back to manage it.

Many of us know how to manage our jobs, even if we are no longer being directed by the bosses. So the question today is not whether the workers are out or not, the question is whether, when they do go out — which shows an act of defiance and a break with collaboration — will they come back and say, “We are running things”?

### So simple yet so essential

It seems such a simple act, so elementary. Yet it has taken centuries for workers to be able to come to that conclusion. And they can come to that conclusion only as a result of conditions — sometimes conditions of starvation, of war. That’s what happened in Russia. They would never have taken over the industries had it not been for the devastation of the war, the hunger caused by the bourgeoisie in prosecuting the war.

So what’s going on in France now is a contest. The bourgeoisie are saying, well, we’re going to play around with them, we’re going to promise something here, promise something there, until they go back to work.

What the revolutionary elements have to say is, well, we want to go back all together, under the condition of taking over the management — which is not such a terrible change because we’re doing it already.

What constitutes a social revolution? Revolution is a change in the form of property. But it’s not only that. It has to be a change in the form of thinking, and the thinking first of all of the leaders themselves.

Has it sunk into them that they have the power in their hands? That they can do it? That the masses are ready for it? That they have learned the art of managing? That there are hundreds of thousands of lower-ranking managers who were sympathetic to the workers’ movement even before the strike began?

As the strike progresses, the question is how to consolidate it and move it further. To say to the government: Move over, we are taking over. It is the essence of the matter. We can do a whole lot of agitation, we can go over a whole lot on what tactical matters can be done. But that is the main thing.

And we hope that the French workers are up to it. □

## Boston

# Hotel workers win again

By Phebe Eckfeldt  
Boston

On Nov. 22, strikers at the Battery Wharf Hotel voted 100 percent to approve a new contract and returned to work after 79 days on the picket line.

Westmont Hospitality Group, owner of Battery Wharf Hotel, had been determined to break the strike by digging in and refusing to negotiate. But the determination of the mostly im/migrant strikers was greater.

While the hotel owners sat in heated luxury rooms, strikers picketed 12 hours a day for those 79 days, literally on the wharf of this Atlantic seaport in icy wind, rain and snow. They marched, chanted and drummed. The 75 strikers are from all over the world and are represented by UNITE HERE Local 26. Their work is setting up and staffing banquets, cleaning rooms, taking out the garbage, cooking, waiting tables, cashiering and greeting customers. They are inspiring to anyone who spent time on the picket line.

As of this writing, the gains the workers won have not been made public by the union. But the union has said that the Battery Wharf workers won the provisions that Marriott hotel workers won after striking in 2018 for

46 days at seven hotels in Boston. Those gains included wage increases, increased pension contributions, protections for im/migrants against discrimination and terms addressing job security, more stable schedules and affordable family health care.

One of the issues the Marriott strikers fought hard for and won are protections for housekeepers against sexual and racial harassment, including “panic buttons” for housekeepers if threatened by attacks. The buttons are carried by the workers and when pushed alert security guards and give the worker’s location. This was a huge issue for the Battery Wharf strikers, and word is that they won these provisions. Housekeepers are predominantly women of color, and in the hotel industry, sexual and racial harassment and assault are common.

Housekeeper Fatoumata Bah, a Battery Wharf strike leader, told Vox website on Oct. 1, “Sometimes [the guests] stay in the room while you clean, and you have no idea what they are going to do to you. I’m so worried about my safety.” The article noted that Bah described an incident that left her traumatized — when she feared an enraged guest was going to beat her: “He was right in front of my face yelling. He could have hurt me, and no one would know.” When Bah ran out of the room, she



Battery Wharf workers won after striking for 11 weeks.

called security, but no one came or asked if she was okay.

Battery Wharf strikers won this victory with solidarity and militant tactics that included following the founder and president of Westmont Hospitality, Majid Mangalji, to various cities. They confronted him at conferences demanding protections against sexual and racial harassment and assault. □



U.S. hands off Venezuela!

At the meeting of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR) in Bogotá, Colombia, on Dec. 3, some 15 countries took action against the Bolivarian government of Venezuela. They restricted travel of top members of the Venezuelan government, including its president and vice president.

This hostile step by these countries, whose right-wing rulers are subservient to U.S. imperialism, is a sign that Washington plans to step up its assault on the Venezuelan government and people.

In an interview by Margaret Flowers and Kevin Zeese of Popular Resistance,

New York-based Venezuelan activist William Camacaro explained these points in great detail. Camacaro, who is active with the Solidarity Committee with Venezuela NYC and organizes food sovereignty tours to Venezuela, put out an alert to people in the U.S. urging them to take action to defend Venezuela.

Camacaro discussed how President Nicolás Maduro’s government has the backing of Venezuela’s military and has organized popular militias to defend the democratically elected government. Because of this support, the Caracas government has stopped Washington’s agents

from carrying out a coup, which they have attempted to instigate since early this year.

Camacaro stressed the seriousness of the TIAR meeting and the threats coming from the Colombian regime. He also described U.S. imperialism’s dangerous and aggressive stance as mass uprisings throughout the hemisphere have put U.S.-backed neoliberalism under attack. He also discussed the military-fascist coup in Bolivia and some of the differences between Venezuela and Evo Morales’ Bolivia.

The interview delivers a message that anti-war and anti-imperialist activists in

the United States should take seriously: We must keep up our level of defense of the government of President Maduro.

Workers World will continue its support for the Venezuelan revolutionary process and the Maduro government, and also supports Camacaro’s call for the movement here to stay alert and take appropriate actions.

We direct our readers to the full text of the interview with Camacaro, published Dec. 7 at popularresistance.com, which can also be found at tinyurl.com/uegr5l5.

U.S. imperialism, out of South America and the Caribbean! □

NATO Summit strengthens the ‘War Party’

By Manlio Dinucci

*This Dec. 6 article from the Italian web newspaper, Il Manifesto, shows how the Dec. 3-4 London NATO Summit reinforced the belligerent stance of that military alliance. Before 1991, NATO was a U.S.-dominated alliance of European and North American imperialist interests directed at the USSR and the East European socialist camp and aimed at preventing socialist revolutions in Western Europe. Since then, NATO has projected its imperialist military force in Africa and Asia and has recently threatened Russia and even China. Translation by John Catalinotto.*

French President Macron spoke of the “brain death” of NATO; others called it “moribund.” Is this military alliance, without a head of its own, crumbling as a result of internal fractures? The disputes at the [Dec. 3-4] London Summit seem to confirm this scenario. A look at the substance, at the real interests that the various allies share, provides a different view.

In London U.S. President Donald Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron argued on camera. In Niger in West Africa, with little publicity, U.S.

Army Africa (USARAF) carried on its cargo planes thousands of French soldiers and their weapons from various outposts in West and Central Africa for “Operation Barkhane.” Paris deployed 4,500 soldiers for this assault, mostly special forces, and U.S. special forces supported them even in combat actions.

At the same time, the Reaper-armed drones, supplied by the USA to France, operate from Air Base 101 in Niamey [Niger]. From the same base the Reapers of the USARAF take off. These drones are now relocated to the new base 201 in Agadez in the north of the country, continuing to operate in concert with the French military.

The example is iconic. Transnational corporations based in the United States, France and other European powers compete for markets and raw materials. But they unite when their common interests are at stake.

Consider, for example, those corporations that possess a wealth of raw materials in the Sahel: oil, gold, coltan, diamonds and uranium. Now, however, both popular uprisings and the Chinese economic presence jeopardize these corporate interests in this region, where poverty rates are among the highest. Hence the U.S.-French

Operation Barkhane, presented as an anti-terrorist operation, engages the allies in a long-lasting war with drones and special forces.

The strongest link that holds NATO together is the common interests of the military-industrial complex on both sides of the Atlantic. This is reinforced by the London Summit. The Final Declaration provides the main motivation for a further increase in military spending: “Russia’s aggressive actions pose a threat to Euro-Atlantic security.”

The NATO allies committed not only to raising their military spending to at least 2 percent of their gross domestic product, but to allocating at least 20 percent of it to the purchase of armaments. This objective has already been achieved by 16 out of 29 countries, including Italy. For this purpose, the U.S. is investing over \$200 billion in 2019.

We can see the results. On the same day as the NATO Summit opened, General Dynamics signed a \$22.2 billion contract with the U.S. Navy, extendable to \$24 billion, for the supply of nine Virginia class submarines for special operations and attack missions, including Tomahawk missiles with nuclear warheads (40 for submarines).

Accusing Russia (without any evidence) of having deployed intermediate range nuclear missiles and thus burying the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, the Summit decided “to further strengthen our ability to defend ourselves with an appropriate mix of both



Protesters against NATO Summit in the streets of London, Dec. 3.

conventional and nuclear anti-missile capabilities, which it will continue to adapt: As long as there are nuclear weapons, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance.”

It is in this framework of military expansion that the Summit’s recognition of space as the fifth operational field arises. In other words, the NATO Summit announced a very expensive military space program. It is a blank check that the NATO powers unanimously gave to the military-industrial complex.

For the first time, with the London Declaration, NATO speaks of the “challenge” coming from China’s growing influence and international politics, underlining “the need to face it together as an Alliance.” The message is clear: NATO is more necessary than ever for a West whose supremacy is now being challenged by China and Russia.

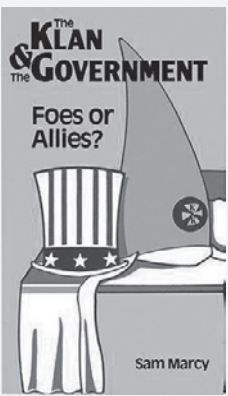
Immediate result: The Japanese government has announced that it has bought for \$146 million the uninhabited island of Mageshima, 30 km [18.6 miles] from its shores, to use as a training site for U.S. fighter-bombers deployed against China. □

The Klan & the Government Foes or Allies?

By Sam Marcy

Examines the special relationship with the state that has allowed the Ku Klux Klan to exist for over a century despite its criminal history of lynchings, murders, and intimidation. Published in 1983.

Read it free at [www.workers.org/marcy/klan/](http://www.workers.org/marcy/klan/)



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# Class struggle breaks out in the streets of France

By G. Dunkel

Workers in France are determined to defend one of the best retirement systems in the world, a retirement system based on solidarity and respect. That’s why 1.5 million workers hit the streets Dec. 5 in 250 French cities—all the big cities and most of the midsize and smaller ones. They demanded the government cancel its plans to replace the current retirement system.

Currently, workers with physically demanding jobs, such as railroad operating staff or sailors who have to work outdoors, off-hours and during holidays and summer vacations, are allowed to retire early with full pension. This benefit shows respect for their sacrifices on the job.

All workers know what pension they will receive. Only 7 percent of retired workers in France are at risk of poverty, whereas 19 percent are in England and Germany. (Guardian, Dec. 4)

The plan that the Macron government is proposing will base pensions on the number of points a worker garners during their career. The value of the points will be established when a worker retires and can vary from year to year. Their retirement age will be years later than it is now.

President Macron is an arrogant, former investment banker and hedge-fund operator with the Rothschild bank. Some say that’s why he endorsed this scheme. The new policy, however, is not just based on an individual’s arrogance. It is aimed at serving the interests of the imperialist ruling class in France and in Europe.

These changes will fit French retirement rules into the European bourgeoisie’s scheme of depriving workers of gains won in decades of struggle. They are part of the program that Macron has begun to implement to privatize and minimize social services available to French workers.

While these protests were about retirement, which directly impacts older workers, it was clear that young people,

out of solidarity and a need to protect their future, also protested in significant numbers.

The U.S. news service, Associated Press, interviewed an older worker and his 23-year-old nephew, both marching in Paris. The nephew said, “The older ones have fought for us. It’s normal we fight for ourselves and for future generations. Yes, it will be difficult, but if we need to do it, we will.” (apnews.com, Dec. 4)

The Yellow Vest movement also participated in many of the protests and demonstrations. Just a little over a year old, this movement had challenged the French state with weekly militant demonstrations about the needs of homemakers, contingent, part-time, self-employed and retired workers. The Yellow Vests criticized French unions for ignoring these sectors of the French working class.

While the weekly demonstrations dwindled during the summer, the Yellow Vests have maintained some organizational cohesion and helped the unions broaden the Dec. 5 protests. Yellow Vests and militant union committees for full employment held marches Dec. 7 in Nantes, Lyons and Toulouse, as well as in Paris.

There were even contingents representing the environmental movement with signs like “What’s the use of retirement if there is no planet” — which rhymes in French.

Transportation workers, whom the government slanders by calling them

“privileged” and “over-paid,” with a totally “unfair” special retirement system, decided almost unanimously to go out Dec. 5. They said they were very angry over what they knew of Macron’s plans and were intent on defending what they had won with decades of struggle.

Even the railroad worker section of the French Democratic Labor Confederation (CFDT), the CFDT-Cheminot, endorsed the strike and joined their colleagues on the picket line. This is significant because the CFDT had cooperated with Macron’s counterreforms (reform designed to counter the effects of a previous reform), and many worker militants despise its leadership.

## Workers did not just march, they struck

The Dec. 5 railroad strike was so successful that the French railroads could only offer 10 percent to 20 percent of their normal service. Some lines in the Paris metro system are automated so they were able to run, but service on most of the other lines was either suspended or scarce.

School teachers also walked out. According to the government, 51 percent of primary schoolteachers and 42 percent of secondary school teachers went on strike. (Government figures are national.) There were major walkouts of health care workers.

Almost all schools in the region that includes Paris were closed. This allowed

Communist mayors of many suburban communities, which in France are overwhelmingly working class and often home to many oppressed nationalities, to use school buses to shuttle protesters to the Paris march. Right-wing media denounced the mayors’ use of the school buses as illegal, but the mayors successfully ignored them.

At “general assemblies” throughout the country, people endorsed the call of the union leadership to extend the transportation strike until at least Monday, Dec. 9. Railroad management expressed the opinion that their jerry-rigged service could collapse.

(A “general assembly” is an open-air meeting of all union members on strike, which is held at a workplace. In France, it is common for multiple unions to represent workers at the same job site.)

Protesters are also blockading oil refineries and fuel depots. Truckers are combating Macron’s decision to hike taxes on fuel they use. Some gas stations have closed.

Domestic airlines have significantly cut service. Management claims only 30 percent of flights have been suspended.

A drop in holiday shopping and tourism, which is a significant factor in the French economy, is another problem for the Macron regime. It is possible that the strike could be extended, and the unions have called for another massive demonstration on Dec. 10.

What is really missing is support for the French working class from workers in other countries. The struggle in France is confronting not only its own bourgeoisie but the whole European bourgeoisie, which is striving to impose austerity throughout Europe.

Workers in France are also setting an example for workers in the United States, whose retirement pay in general is grossly inadequate. □



The lead banner of the Joint Union, the coalition that initiated the massive Dec. 5 protest of millions in France.

# ¿Que camino hacia al socialismo?

Continúa de la página 12

campana presidencial del Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero.

Nuestros candidatos, Monica Moorehead y Lamont Lilly, plantearon demandas tales como la abolición de la policía y la Aduana y Control de Inmigración, y el desmantelamiento del Pentágono. Pedimos reparaciones globales por los crímenes del imperio estadounidense. Nos dirigimos al movimiento Black Lives Matter de una manera que ninguna otra campana hizo.

Tenemos que apoyar las luchas por reformas al tiempo que explicamos la necesidad de un cambio revolucionario. En el futuro, debemos explicar por qué Medicare para todos, una reforma importante, no llega lo suficientemente lejos mientras los capitalistas sean dueños de todos los hospitales, medicamentos y, cada vez más, más prácticas médicas.

Necesitamos aclarar que al abolir el capitalismo, nos referimos al establecimiento del control de los trabajadores sobre todas las industrias principales (energía, educación, finanzas, transporte y más) y que esto es posible y necesario. Necesitamos

sacar este programa más lejos que nunca.

Un programa revolucionario no es suficiente. Sabemos que publicar nuestras ideas no impedirá que el imperio estadounidense mate a pueblos indígenas y destruya la vida humana, y toda la vida, en el planeta. Sabemos que el verdadero poder está en las calles.

Nuestro partido se ha movilizado con éxito en torno a varias luchas clave durante el año pasado. La construcción de solidaridad con los migrantes/inmigrantes, la conexión con el aumento de las luchas de los trabajadores y la lucha contra los intentos del imperialismo estadounidense de conquistar Venezuela y Bolivia han sido desarrollos significativos.

Hemos seguido construyendo solidaridad contra el racismo y el encarcelamiento masivo. Y aplicamos la perspectiva única del partido sobre la centralidad de luchar contra la opresión nacional y el racismo como clave para el éxito de la revolución en los Estados Unidos.

Necesitamos ser más audaces. Necesitamos seguir organizando movilizaciones importantes que se presenten en puntos clave para nuestra clase, reconociendo que es multinacional,

multigeneracional y multigénero, e incluye a nuestras hermanas y hermanos inmigrantes. Estos deben ser abiertamente campañas y coaliciones anticapitalistas, antiimperialistas, antirracistas y proinmigrantes/migrantes que construyan la solidaridad global de la clase trabajadora.

Piense en estas manifestaciones como una huelga global contra el capitalismo y el imperialismo. Cada vez que hay una crisis y los demócratas no convocan a una acción de protesta, tenemos que planear cerrar el sistema con nuestros aliados, incluidos los de la izquierda.

Las movilizaciones no son suficientes. Para que nuestro partido tenga éxito, necesitamos hundir nuestras raíces más profundamente en la clase trabajadora. Los camaradas que ganamos a través de nuestras movilizaciones e iniciativas ideológicas deben convertirse en luchadores de confianza para nuestra clase. Necesitamos ser vistos como los mejores organizadores comunitarios, los luchadores sindicales con más principios y los pensadores más claros.

Necesitamos una estrategia en la que la gente dedique sus vidas a construir las

organizaciones de la clase trabajadora que llevarán a cabo la revolución aquí. Estos incluyen sindicatos, asambleas de trabajadores y personas, organizaciones comunitarias y grupos de estudio ... La organización profunda, el trabajo de construir relaciones con los líderes de nuestra clase, es nuestra única arma.

Finalmente, debemos seguir siendo la voz más fuerte para la unidad marxista-leninista. Debemos seguir siendo un partido de principios, no sectario, que intenta construir una unidad y solidaridad marxista-leninista más amplia entre las organizaciones comunistas. Nuestros camaradas en Bolivia y en toda América Latina no merecen menos.

Necesitamos una unidad real y práctica. Las crisis de este período requieren un mayor nivel de comunicación, deliberación y unidad entre las fuerzas más avanzadas de la izquierda.

Finalmente, no perdamos la esperanza. La desmoralización puede ser la enfermedad más grave para un partido comunista. Creo que ganaremos, y espero que tú también lo hagas.

¡Construyendo un Mundo Obrero! ¡Socialismo o muerte! □





FOTO: CARLOS ZGZ

Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA)

## ¿Que camino hacia al socialismo?

Por Scott Williams

*Este artículo se basa en una charla editada, “¿Qué camino hacia el socialismo?” Dada en un Foro de Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero el 23 de noviembre del año en curso en la ciudad de Nueva York.*

La pregunta “¿Qué camino hacia el socialismo?” puede plantearse como “¿Qué camino hacia la supervivencia para la especie humana y para el resto de la vida en el planeta?” Pero también es una pregunta inmediata y práctica que impacta todo nuestro trabajo diario.

El partido Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero se inspira en los aumentos masivos en Haití, Líbano, Chile, Colombia, la resistencia al golpe fascista en Bolivia y la lucha constante para defender la revolución bolivariana. La gente del mundo está en las calles manifestando contra el capitalismo, el imperialismo y la opresión.

Si bien estos levantamientos masivos son tremendos, los impactos del imperialismo y el capitalismo neoliberal no terminarán sin el crecimiento del movimiento comunista mundial. Como hemos visto a lo largo de la historia, la resistencia masiva al capitalismo y la opresión, liderada por organizaciones comunistas revolucionarias con profundas conexiones en las masas, es el camino hacia el socialismo.

Estamos comenzando a ver signos de un movimiento de trabajadores rejuvenecido en los EE. UU. Los maestros de Chicago golpearon contra el racismo y la desigualdad. Los trabajadores de la educación, los trabajadores de bajos salarios, las mujeres, las personas de color, y más de la clase trabajadora, están flexionando el músculo de la huelga. Vimos la huelga más larga de General Motors en décadas. Las campañas sindicalizadas en los EE. UU. continúan ganando. La izquierda está en ascenso.

El apoyo al socialismo también está en aumento. Según encuestas recientes, el 70 por ciento de los millennials, personas de 23 a 38 años, votarían por un socialista. Un tercio de los millennials ve el comunismo favorablemente en comparación con el capitalismo. La popularidad del comunismo está creciendo rápidamente.

El apoyo de los millennials al comunismo ha aumentado en un 8 por ciento en el último año, y el 35 por ciento de los millennials ve favorablemente al marxismo. El veinte por ciento de los millennials cree que el mundo estaría mejor si se aboliera la propiedad privada. La marea se está volviendo hacia nosotros.

Estos son los jóvenes de Black Lives Matter, el movimiento Occupy y el movimiento global de huelga climática. Estos jóvenes se enfrentan a una disminución de la esperanza de vida y al deterioro de los niveles de vida en un imperio en decadencia, racista y genocida.

Si bien el socialismo se está volviendo más popular, también lo son el terrorismo de derecha y el fascismo supremacista blanco, organizado por el propio presidente. El llamado a soluciones está en todas partes. Tenemos que demostrar que tenemos las respuestas. A través de nuestros esfuerzos ideológicos y



WW FOTO: JOE PIETTE

Scott Williams (a la derecha) y Betsey Piette protestan la crisis climática, Filadelfia, septiembre de 2019.

nuestro trabajo en la lucha, necesitamos prevalecer.

### El camino sin salida de la socialdemocracia

No somos el único grupo que tiene un camino propuesto hacia el socialismo. Uno de los programas más populares de la socialdemocracia en la actualidad es el Manifiesto del Partido Laborista recientemente publicado, presentado por el Partido Laborista británico dirigido por Jeremy Corbyn.

En el período previo a las elecciones parlamentarias del 12 de diciembre, Corbyn abandonó lo que llamó la plataforma laborista “más radical” de la historia. Si bien el documento parece radical durante este período del capitalismo neoliberal, en muchos sentidos es un ejemplo clásico de un programa socialdemócrata en un país imperialista.

El programa de Corbyn seguramente será popular entre la gente de clase trabajadora en Gran Bretaña. Promete un un Nuevo Acuerdo Ecológico para abordar la crisis climática: nacionalizar la industria energética, crear un millón de empleos ecológicos sindicalizados, expandir el Servicio Nacional de Salud, aumentar los fondos para la educación, crear un salario mínimo equivalente a \$13 por hora, mejorar los derechos de los trabajadores y terminar la precariedad en el trabajo.

Curiosamente, Corbyn podría ganar con este programa. Esto sería un paso adelante. ¿Pero el Partido Laborista llevará a los trabajadores hacia el socialismo?

La socialdemocracia británica tiene muchos problemas serios. El apoyo de los laboristas al imperialismo, la policía y la patrulla fronteriza deberían sorprender a un lector revolucionario. ¿No es Corbyn el notorio antiimperialista?

Algunos pueden recordarlo como el político que voló a la manifestación de Washington DC contra la guerra en Irak en 2003, convocado por Answer y apoyado por WWP. Ha sido visto como un antiimperialista por su defensa de los derechos básicos palestinos y su oposición a la guerra. Sin embargo, el programa del Partido Laborista no se opone a la guerra y al imperio.

En la sección final del Manifiesto, Labor describe su enfoque de política exterior en una pieza titulada “Nuevo internacionalismo”. Incluye propuestas como las siguientes: “Realizar una auditoría del impacto del legado colonial de Gran Bretaña para comprender nuestra

contribución a la dinámica de violencia e inseguridad en regiones anteriormente bajo el dominio colonial británico”.

Al hablar sobre el Imperio Británico que mató a millones de personas en todo el mundo, la palabra “reparaciones” no aparece una vez. ¡Una auditoría por sí sola no comenzará a resolver la crisis del “legado colonial de Gran Bretaña”!

En realidad, el programa laborista busca mantener el Imperio. Se lee: “Tenemos el deber de defender la seguridad y la soberanía de nuestros territorios de ultramar, incluidas las Malvinas”. Esta declaración no podría ser un llamado más claro para defender el Imperio. Las Islas Malvinas (llamadas las Falklands por Gran Bretaña) pertenecen a Argentina, no a los británicos.

Algunas de las propuestas en esta sección parecen progresivas, como suspender la venta de armas a Arabia Saudita y pedir el fin del bloqueo, la ocupación y los asentamientos israelíes en Palestina. En la misma oración que defiende el derecho de Palestina a existir, el programa viola el derecho del pueblo palestino a la legítima defensa, llamando a los palestinos a “poner fin a los ataques con cohetes y terroristas”.

### La postura del Partido Laborista sobre la guerra

Este “nuevo internacionalismo” es tan traicionero como el aliento de la Segunda Internacional a la Primera Guerra Mundial. Se lee: “El trabajo aumentará la financiación para las operaciones de mantenimiento de la paz de la ONU a £100 millones” (\$131 millones), lo que significa más financiación para las tropas como las de Puerto Príncipe que reprimió el movimiento en Haití. Y hay esto: “El Partido Laborista apoya la renovación del disuasivo nuclear Trident”.

Tanto decir en contra de la guerra. Corbyn y el Partido Laborista quieren mantener los misiles nucleares apuntando a Rusia. En otras propuestas, los laboristas prometen expandir el complejo militar-industrial.

El Partido Laborista propone aumentar el número de policías en 2.000 y culpa al Partido Conservador por subfinanciar a la policía y causar crímenes. Su programa pide “una coordinación más estrecha contra el terrorismo entre la policía y los servicios de seguridad” y pide más patrullas fronterizas.

Desafortunadamente, la clase trabajadora global no parece existir para el Partido Laborista. Más bien, el Imperio debería ser reformado para proporcionar mejores servicios a sus ciudadanos de clase trabajadora.

Para los socialistas en los Estados Unidos, la cuestión de la solidaridad internacional es aún más crítica. Jacobin, una publicación socialista líder en los Estados Unidos, escribe sobre el Manifiesto del Partido Laborista de manera muy positiva, sin mencionar su apoyo a la policía, la patrulla fronteriza o las fuerzas militares.

El Manifiesto del Partido Laborista no es un camino hacia el socialismo, sino un callejón sin salida para defender y modernizar el imperio. En realidad, el socialismo no se logrará mediante elecciones. Se desarrollará como parte de un aumento masivo de la acción de la clase

trabajadora.

¿Dónde están las huelgas y manifestaciones que promueven el programa laborista? Sin un movimiento de masas, este programa socialista parlamentario está destinado a decepcionar.

### Juicio político y las elecciones de 2020

Quizás nadie sea más responsable del crecimiento de la popularidad del socialismo que el senador Bernie Sanders. Su programa se ha conectado con estos jóvenes radicales y ha dado voz a la política progresista de una manera que pocos políticos tienen.

Sin embargo, en el improbable caso de que Sanders gane las elecciones presidenciales, necesitaría que la clase trabajadora se movilizara para ganar los elementos básicos de Medicare para todos, el Nuevo Acuerdo Ecológico, la Universidad para todos, los impuestos para los ricos y otras partes de su programa.

Mientras tanto, la clase dominante de Estados Unidos está en declive. No es probable que haga compromisos. Es más probable que sea represivo, rompa la unidad de la clase trabajadora y se vuelva cada vez más violento en el extranjero para defender su sistema cada vez más tenso.

Los procedimientos de juicio político han sido un ataque oculto al movimiento Sanders. Este es un intento de sacar a la gente de las calles y centrar su atención en procedimientos legales aburridos en el Congreso.

El mensaje es claro: Nancy Pelosi y los demócratas corporativos proporcionarán “resistencia” a Trump. En realidad, los cargos dudosos e irrelevantes contra el racista, sexista e imperialista Trump pueden movilizar a la derecha y efectivamente permitirle ganar un segundo mandato.

Otro término para Trump es bueno para los negocios. A medida que se acerca la próxima crisis económica, la clase dominante exigirá austeridad, más privatizaciones, más sangre y más violencia fascista. No quieren militancia obrera ni un presidente Sanders que se una a los trabajadores en una línea de piquete.

En el caso de que Sanders gane, su presidencia se enfrentará a huelgas de capital, derrumbes bursátiles y sabotaje capitalista, junto con movilizaciones fascistas para amenazar cualquier posibilidad de una presidencia progresista.

### Un propuesto para un sendero hacia el socialismo

¿Cómo derrotamos el surgimiento del fascismo en un país construido sobre el genocidio, la supremacía blanca, la esclavitud, el patriarcado y el anticomunismo? ¿Cómo apoyamos las luchas contra el capitalismo, el racismo, el sexismo y todas las formas de opresión y las convertimos en un movimiento para un futuro socialista revolucionario?

Esta propuesta demasiadamente simplificada incluye tres partes: una campaña ideológica renovada, movilizaciones continuas y un giro hacia una organización más profunda.

En primer lugar, necesitamos una iniciativa ideológica en la que aclaremos y destaquemos nuestro programa. Lo hicimos hasta cierto punto en el 2016 con la

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