

Congresswomen condemn White House racism

On July 16, the House of Representatives passed a resolution stating that Trump’s tweets were racist. All Democrats and four Republicans voted for the resolution. More to come.

By Monica Moorehead

The white supremacist and misogynist Trump has opened up another vicious, racist verbal war. This time it is against four progressive Congresswomen of

color — Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (N.Y.), Ilhan Omar (Minn.), Ayanna Pressley (Mass.) and Rashida Tlaib (Mich.). They are, respectively, Puerto Rican, Somali, African American and Palestinian. Omar and Tlaib are also Muslim. All four are Democratic Party members.

The four have been aggressively outspoken against the Trump administration’s xenophobic raids, deportations and detention of thousands of migrants, including children, since they won their congressional seats in 2018.

They have especially ratcheted up their criticisms of Trump following public visits of several politicians to extremely overcrowded detention centers where migrants have been denied the right to shower, nourishing and plentiful food, medical care and much more.

Trump told the women in his tweets to “go back and help fix the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came. If they are not happy here, they can leave.” Ironically, Omar is the only one born outside the U.S.

At a joint July 15 press conference, all four representatives responded to Trump’s attacks. Rep. Omar stated, “This is the agenda of white nationalists. This is his plan to pit us against one another.” She also connected Trump’s attacks on them to his attacks on Black athletes who have denounced social injustice, his objectification of women and his disparaging remarks about developing countries.

A week prior to Trump’s attacks, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), opened up an attack of her own on the same four representatives. The attack was in response to their opposition to a \$4.6 billion House-sponsored border bill that Democrats were pushing in an attempt to appease Trump, who was threatening to shut down the federal government for a second time if building his new border wall was stalled again.

In a New York Times interview, Pelosi remarked about the four: “All these people have their public whatever and their Twitter world. But they didn’t have any following. They’re four people and that’s how many votes they got.” (July 6)

In truth these four “no” votes represented the sentiment of millions of people, who are adamantly opposed to building any new wall or any milder-sounding but still-restrictive immigration policy.

Rep. Tlaib said in an ABC News interview, “We know what it feels like to be dehumanized. We know what it feels

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WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

People’s Power Assemblies NYC organized its fifth annual rally and march in Brooklyn, N.Y., on July 13 to demand justice for Sandra Bland. The 28-year-old African-American woman was found hanging in a Waller County, Texas, jail cell on the same date in 2015. Bland had been abused and then falsely arrested by a white cop during a traffic stop. Her case helped ignite the Twitter hashtag #SayHerName.

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Philadelphia, July 12.

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Growing signs of deepening global capitalist crisis

Part 2

By Ben Carroll

The aggressive posture of U.S. imperialism in decline, coupled with the fracturing of long-standing imperialist alliances, is contributing to concerns among ruling circles of an impending economic contraction and revealing divisions among them.

In an effort to contain and undermine China, the U.S. has opened an expanding trade war, with tariffs targeting key sectors of the world’s second-largest economy.

U.S. imperialism’s desperate attempts to recapture markets and regain an advantage over China are revealing emerging divisions within the ruling class here. They focus on Trump’s imposition of tariffs on Chinese products and his continued threats to raise them even higher. These efforts are causing fear among some sections of the ruling class that a prolonged trade war may end up negatively impacting their capitalist plunder of the world.

That is on top of the brutal and racist war Trump is waging on migrant workers, which has been accompanied by the threat of tariffs of up to 25 percent on imports from Mexico.

The threat of U.S. war on Iran looms as the U.S. seeks to expand its export of oil and natural gas. Nearly a third of the world’s tanker-carried oil and petroleum passes close to Iran through the Strait of Hormuz. The U.S. Energy Information Center describes the Strait as “the most important chokepoint for the world’s oil industry.”

Tendency of rate of profit to fall and capitalist overproduction

An article in the June 11 New York Times pointed out: “Corporate profits may be particularly vulnerable right now. Revenue overall is growing faster than earnings. In the first quarter, sales rose about 5 percent from a year earlier, while profits declined 0.4 percent ... [and] that dynamic is expected to persist over the next two quarters ...

suggest[ing] companies have little ability to increase their bottom lines by expanding profit margins.”

One of Karl Marx’s key discoveries about the capitalist system was a contradiction that leads to crises of overproduction and the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.

This system is driven by competition among the owners of capital to carve out wider markets for their commodities and expand production. If they do not, they will be gobbled up and taken over by other capitalists who succeed in doing so. This leads the capitalist class to invest more and more capital into the process of production itself, including more efficient machinery for the production of commodities while reducing the amount of labor needed.

But profits are derived from the value that workers produce above and beyond what they are paid.

At first, the capitalists using the more efficient technology get a competitive edge. But eventually the new technology, requiring fewer workers, becomes the industry standard.

Marx called the capital invested in plant and machinery “constant capital.” Its cost is pretty much the same for all capitalists in the same industry and is incorporated into the value of the commodities produced.

What the bosses pay out for the human labor consumed in production, however, is called “variable capital” because it varies depending on how much the bosses can squeeze out of the workers by speeding up production and reducing wages.

The more the bosses spend on machinery, etc., in order to replace workers, the greater the ratio of constant capital to variable capital. But profits come from variable capital—the exploitation of labor. So spending more on machines and less on labor eventually causes the rate of profit to fall. This is a key contradiction of the capitalist system.

While the quote from the New York Times does not in and of itself indicate this phenomenon, it is an interesting revelation when taken as a whole. Based on official historical data compiled through 2017, the rate of profit in

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WORKERS WORLD

this week

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

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

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

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.

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Queer Liberation March resurrects spirit of Stonewall

By Brenda Ryan
New York

At least 45,000 people joined the Queer Liberation March here on June 30 in an exuberant and powerful celebration honoring the legacy of queer liberation struggles, past and present.

Organized by the Reclaim Pride Coalition, the march and following rally renounced the commercialization of the annual Pride event, which has been dominated by corporations. There were no corporations, floats or police contingent in the march. Rather it expressed solidarity with immigrants, the Black Lives Matter movement and all oppressed people.

Held on the 50th anniversary of the historic Stonewall Rebellion, the march followed the route of the first Pride march and captured its spirit. It began at Sheridan Square Park in the West Village and went up Sixth Avenue to Bryant Park, where a second wave of participants joined, and then continued to Central Park's Great Lawn.

There were sit-ins along the route, one of which protested the confinement of people with HIV in immigrant detention centers. A trans Latinx contingent and groups supporting abortion rights and Palestine marched, as well as contingents opposing U.S. wars and militarization.

Workers World Party, People's Power

Assemblies NYC and Shut It Down were part of the Abolition contingent, which called for the abolition of cops, prisons and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The WWP banner proclaiming "Queer As In — Fuck the Police" got an enthusiastic response from the crowd.

There were two moments of silence. The first was to remember and honor those lost to homophobia, transphobia, racism and sexism, to HIV/AIDS and violence in all its forms. The second was in tribute to the trans women of color murdered throughout the country. The march also honored all those killed by police or while incarcerated, as well as those who have died by gun violence or by lack of access to housing and medical care.

The rally also ignited the spirit of fightback of the original marches. Speakers included members of the Gay Liberation Front and Larry Kramer, one of the founders of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP). A statement was read from Chelsea Manning, a trans woman and Iraq war whistleblower currently incarcerated for refusing to testify before a grand jury.

"We are here for trans women of color, who, despite leading the fight at Stonewall 50 years ago, continue to be attacked and killed on our streets, in jails and prisons, and in our own communities," Manning



Marchers reclaim Pride from corporations and cops.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

wrote. "We are here for Layleen Polanco, who just a few weeks ago was found dead in solitary confinement at Rikers Island. We are here for Johana Medina León, a 25-year-old asylum seeker from El Salvador, who died in ICE custody on the first day of Pride Month. We are here for Ashanti Carmon, Zoe Spears, Muhlaysia Booker and the eight other trans women who have been murdered this year alone."

As the thousands spread out on the Great Lawn in Central Park, they continued to respond to the speakers with cheers and applause all afternoon.

The majority of the speakers were queer and trans people of color who reflect today's wide diversity of struggles and issues. Powerful talks by Black and Latina trans women lifted up crucial issues they face. LaLa Zannell and Cecilia Gentili led the crowd in the chant "Sex work is work!" They urged the movement for queer and trans liberation to defend all workers against exploitation and police repression.

Loan Tran, a queer trans organizer from Durham, N.C., expressed solidarity with the Central Park Five, who in 1989 were wrongly convicted and sent to prison for crimes they did not commit, and with migrants being forced out of their homes.

"Don't we think it's time to shut down those concentration camps at the border?" Tran asked. "The crisis at the border is a crisis of capitalism, it's a crisis of imperialism, it's a crisis of colonialism. The thousands who are being forced to come to the fake U.S.-Mexico border are coming as a direct result of the pillage and plunder and exploitation of their resources and communities. The thousands coming to the border are owed reparations for the wealth that has been stolen from them for decades and for centuries."

Tran called on the crowd to organize to make their ancestors proud. "Open the borders, free Palestine, no war in Iran, down with imperialism, down with white supremacy," they declared. □

Serena Williams and Megan Rapinoe

Fighters for racial and gender equality

By Monica Moorehead

Powerful women athletes are using their popularity and influence to speak out against various forms of social injustice. Two of them are Serena Williams and Megan Rapinoe.

Serena, generally known by her first name, is regarded as the greatest women's tennis player ever. Since 1999, when she was a teenager, the African-American icon has won 23 grand slam titles — including the Australian, French, Wimbledon and U.S. Opens multiple times. In the Open era, only Margaret Court of Australia has won one more grand slam title — for a total of 24.

Now, just one month shy of her 38th birthday, Serena has played her way into three major finals since the birth of her daughter, Alexis Olympia, almost two years ago. She was in the first trimester of her pregnancy when she won the 2017 Australian Open. During her remarkable 20-plus-years span of playing tennis, Serena has been outspoken against the racist and sexist abuse she has endured on and off the court, along with her older sister, Venus, who has won seven grand slam titles.

During the BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells, Calif., which Serena won in 2001, she, as well as Venus and their father Richard Williams, were called the racist N-word epithet repeatedly. In protest, Serena decided to boycott the event until 2015.

Serena has been viciously objectified for many years, both racially and sexually, for wearing tennis outfits that proudly show her muscularly built body.

The descriptions are so repulsive and heinous they should never be repeated. They reflect how Black women have been and still are degraded as being hypersexual in a society dominated by white supremacy since the days of slavery.

During Serena's pregnancy, Ilie Nastase, a former grand slam winner from Romania, referred to her unborn child with the statement: "Let's see what color it has. Chocolate with milk?" (New York Times, April 25, 2017) Serena's spouse, and father of Olympia, is white.

Serena responded to Nastase's racist statement on Instagram: "It disappoints me to know we live in a society where people like Ilie Nastase can make such racist comments toward myself and unborn child, and sexist comments against my peers. I am not afraid unlike you. You see, I am no coward. Does my sassiness upset you? Why are you beset with gloom? You may shoot me with your words, ... you may try to kill me with your hatefulness, but still like air I will rise."

Serena was referring to the International Tennis Federation's banning of Nastase from their events for his verbal, sexist abuse of British women tennis players.

During her match with Naomi Osaka during the U.S. Open finals in August 2018, Serena was accused of cheating by a male referee, who took away a point and then a whole game, when she protested the allegation. Serena has publicly accused referees of displaying double-standard treatment toward women tennis players, who are portrayed as hyper aggressive, while male tennis players receive only a slap on the wrist under similar circumstances.

Following her loss to Simona Halep at the Wimbledon championship match on July 13, Serena was asked during her press conference whether she should concentrate on just playing tennis and not on activism. Serena replied: "The day I stop fighting for equality and for people that look like you and me will be the day I'm in my grave." With those words, Serena continues to be a beacon of inspiration for all women athletes of all nationalities, ages and abilities, especially those who are working mothers.

Megan Rapinoe: another powerful voice for social justice

Black former San Francisco 49er quarterback Colin Kaepernick, during the 2016-17 National Football League season, began to take a knee while the U.S. national anthem was played in order to protest racist police brutality. That inspired Megan Rapinoe, an openly lesbian member of the U.S. Women's Soccer Team, to take a knee for the same cause, including for gender equality.

She and Kaepernick took a lot of criticism for their stance, including from white-supremacist and misogynist Donald Trump, but neither one of them wavered. Kaepernick has been denied the right to play football since his heroic act. The attacks on Rapinoe include homophobia.

Rapinoe told Yahoo Sports: "Colin Kaepernick very much inspired me, and inspired an entire nation, and still does, to actually think about these things. The way he spoke about them so clearly, so



Serena Williams with daughter, Alexis Olympia.

matter-of-fact, wasn't trying to convince anyone. Just, 'This is what is happening, this is what I'm willing to do about it.' I found that extremely inspiring and convicting. Like, how can you not support?" (May 13)

During the 2019 World Cup games in France she refused to sing the national anthem before each match, and says she will continue to do so going forward, as a protest. Rapinoe stated her reasons for not singing the anthem in an essay for The Players' Tribune in 2016: "I haven't experienced over-policing, racial profiling, police brutality or the sight of a family member's body lying dead in the street. But I cannot stand idly by while there are people in this country who have had to deal with that kind of heartache."

"There is no perfect way to protest. I know that nothing I do will take away the pain of those families. But I feel in my heart it is right to continue to kneel during the national anthem, and I will do whatever I can to be part of the solution."

Rapinoe and the rest of the U.S. soccer team rank No. 1 worldwide. The team, which is multinational and multigendered, has put ongoing pressure on the

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As workers demand ‘Health care, not wealth care!’ Hedge funds move to kill vital community hospital

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

Pressure is growing on Philadelphia and Pennsylvania officials to find a way to prevent hedge fund owners from shutting down Hahnemann Hospital. At the same time, hospital managers are moving to close down functioning units quickly, before a mass movement can develop. Hahnemann’s lawyers claimed in bankruptcy court in Wilmington, Del., that the hospital is losing money rapidly, and this makes it harder to sell the parent company’s most valuable asset, St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children, near the Kensington section of Philadelphia.

Nurses, doctors and other workers held several rallies last week to “Save Hahnemann” from being closed. A July 9 protest march targeted the offices of one hedge fund owner, Colliers International. A July 11 demonstration of around 2,000 labor and community members featured Nina Turner, representing presidential contender Bernie Sanders. The protesters marched around the block, encircling several hospital buildings. The central demand was posted on many of the picket signs: “Gov. Wolf — Save Hahnemann!” Hospital staff, medical students, patients and community groups rallied again July 14, and Sanders planned a second rally for July 15. (Philadelphia Inquirer, July 15)

Services being shut down

In a July 3 order, Philadelphia Common Pleas Court Judge Nina W. Padilla wrote that Hahnemann is “enjoined from closing, ceasing operations, or in any way further reducing or disrupting services at the Emergency Department of Hahnemann University Hospital” before a closure plan is approved by the city’s health commissioner and a bankruptcy judge.

Nevertheless, hospital officials plan to completely shut down Hahnemann’s emergency room July 17. Most Hahnemann admissions come through its emergency department, so shutting the ER would rapidly reduce its patient population to nothing. The emergency department has already stopped accepting critically ill patients, and it gave up its trauma center designation just days after the closing was announced.

A large proportion of Hahnemann patients are Black and Brown, many on either Medicare or Medicaid, the government health plan for the poor.

Its maternity ward was closed July 11. Without Hahnemann, Philadelphia will have just five hospital maternity units, plus a special delivery center for high-risk pregnancies at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. That is down from 14 maternity wards in 1997.

The closure “does concern us from the standpoint of trying to reduce maternal mortality,” said Marianne Fray, the Maternity Care Coalition’s chief executive officer. “The more barriers to care, the more it increases the possibility that they’ll have adverse outcomes.”



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

July 11 protest to save Hahnemann Hospital brought out unions, community.

(Philadelphia Inquirer, July 9)

Hahnemann announced plans July 10 to transfer its physician training programs to Tower Health, which will pay \$7.5 million for Hahnemann’s 500-plus residency and fellowship slots. Residents will be guaranteed a spot at one of Tower’s six hospitals, the largest of which is the 716-bed Reading Hospital in Berks County. But the Tower system has accredited residency programs in only five of the 15 medical specialties available at Hahnemann.

Other hospitals have also offered to take in Hahnemann’s doctors and residents: Main Line Health said it expects to take 40 Hahnemann residents across all specialties, primarily at Lankenau and Bryn Mawr hospitals. Penn Medicine has made offers to several dozen Hahnemann residents. Jefferson, Cooper and Temple have also said they will take Hahnemann residents. In the meantime, residents continue to work with doctors and the rest of the hospital’s medical staff to handle the patients still being treated.

Hahnemann’s policies, if allowed to continue, will certainly empty the 170-year-old, 496-bed institution within days or weeks.

Sodexo Inc., which provides food services at Hahnemann, notified the state that it plans to lay off 106 workers when the hospital closes. Many more workers who provide services to the hospital also stand to lose their jobs.

If city and state officials fail to come to an agreement with Hahnemann’s owners or the bankruptcy court to keep the hospital open, union and community organizers will be forced to come up with a Plan B.

Hedge funds call the shots

So far, state and city officials have been unable to come up with a fiscal alternative to CEO Joel Freedman and his hedge fund backers, Apollo Global Management

and Colliers International.

Hahnemann Hospital’s demise is being orchestrated by those hedge funds determined to make millions in profits by turning the medical properties into commercial or residential entities. It’s another layer of the gentrification that has forced out longtime residents from large sections of the city’s many neighborhoods.

Many organizations, large and small, have developed over the last decade trying to fight gentrification. Anyone who has seen their neighborhood gentrified should come out into the streets to stop the equally destructive gentrification of Hahnemann.

Hahnemann’s closing is an issue for all women. Shutting down the maternity ward in the city’s first hospital to give women a medical degree will increase deaths during childbirth, especially for the Black, Brown and impoverished women who depend on Hahnemann.

Historically, many LGBTQ2S+ people have faced obstacles in receiving adequate care. In a 2010 survey conducted by Lambda Legal, almost 56 percent of lesbian, gay or bisexual respondents had one or more discriminatory care experiences, and 70 percent of transgender and gender-nonconforming respondents had one or more of them. Hahnemann University Hospital’s Transgender Fellowship Training Program, a rare program focused on medical and surgical care for transgender patients, was among the first of its kind in the United States.

Hahnemann is an example of why “Medicare for All” is needed. Closing Hahnemann, a safety net hospital that provides medical care to an already underserved community, will make it even harder for those with minimum or no insurance to gain access to health care.

Workers represented by the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals (PASNAP) and District 1199C of the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees and community activists will need to turn up the heat if Hahnemann is going to survive.

Individual members of the Communications Workers; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; American Federation of Teachers; Service Employees; Teamsters; and other unions have taken part in Save Hahnemann rallies. A massive turnout of the labor movement on a weekend, or better yet on a work day, would show the powers that be that organized and unorganized workers are united to defend over 3,000 Hahnemann workers and the additional hundreds of workers who service the hospital.

If all the diverse communities who have ever benefited from Hahnemann Hospital shut down Broad Street and occupied the hospital grounds, wouldn’t local, state and federal officials find the necessary funds?

Health care, not wealth care! □

Buffalo protests hit union busting

By Ryan Lockwood
Buffalo

The Western New York SPoT Coffee chain has become the center of a pro-union protest now in its second week.

Following the successful unionization of its Rochester location in May, SPoT fired Phoenix Cerny and Phil Kneitingner for attempting to bring the union to Buffalo shops. The company also fired store manager Lukas Weinstein for standing in solidarity with his co-workers and refusing to give the names of those attending union meetings. The company has given no other pretext for terminations.

The workers’ reaction has been swift. Picket lines at SPoT locations around Buffalo were set up by SPoT employees and the organization Workers United, which

now represents the Rochester shop. Their first demonstration, on July 4, was attended by around 50 picketers, including friends, co-workers, union activists and other comrades in the class struggle. The demonstration was met with near-constant enthusiasm from motorists and passersby, and the momentum carried to pickets at other SPoT locations in the city.

“We’re here to tell our community what had happened, and that it was wrong,” said Cerny at the third picket, “and that we are going to continue to fight for our right to organize.” In addition to getting information out, Cerny added that the workers were “collecting signatures for a petition and contact information in the event that [they] decide to push forward with a boycott with support from the community.” □

Downtown Buffalo scene of anti-war protest



As thousands of people gathered in downtown Buffalo July 13 for a food festival, Buffalo AntiWar met them with chants calling for an end to U.S. sanctions and threats of war against both Iran and Venezuela. The protesters demanded: “No to another war for oil! No war on Iran, and no U.S. coup in Venezuela! End the sanctions now! Bring all the troops home now!”

They also demanded the government “Stop the war at home — stop the raids

and deportations! Close the concentration camps now!”

Participating in the Buffalo AntiWar group were activists from the Erie County Green Party, U.S. Friends of the Soviet People, Buffalo Democratic Socialists of America, Veterans for Peace, the Western NY Peace Center, Workers World Party and the International Action Center.

— Report and photo by Ellie Dorritie

Solidarity in the fight against white supremacy

Part 2: Toppling statues of the Confederacy

The Sixth International Assembly of the International League of People's Struggles took place in Hong Kong June 23-26. Founded in 2001, ILPS is a coalition of more than 200 anti-imperialist mass organizations from around the world that "promotes, supports and develops the struggles of the peoples of the world, including the workers, peasants, women, youth, professionals and other sectors of society against the ideological, political, military, economic, social and cultural domination and attacks of imperialism and reaction."

Loan Tran, who attended as a representative of the International Action Center, spoke at the assembly. Part 2 of Tran's remarks, slightly edited, are presented below. For more information about ILPS, see ilps.info.

With this context in mind, the struggle against white supremacy is central to the class struggle being waged by workers and the oppressed in the U.S. It's not just that one cannot happen without the other; it's that, especially in the case of the U.S., these struggles are one and the same.

There are some concrete examples from recent years I would like to lift up. I would like to make a nod to the fervent efforts throughout the 1930s into the 1960s and 1970s, at the height of the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movement, where communists, and Black communists in particular, were waging revolutionary struggle to build unions, Black-white worker solidarity, and of course beating back racist segregation efforts, confronting the Ku Klux Klan and police alike — who were and are merely evolutions of slave patrols.

In 2016, following the shooting of Keith Lamont Scott, a 43-year-old Black father in Charlotte, N.C. — the masses poured into the streets under the banner of Black Lives Matter — which really took off with the killing of Mike Brown in Ferguson, Mo., in 2014.

Charlotte is the third-largest banking city in the U.S., behind New York and San Francisco. It is home to headquarters for major banks like Bank of America and Wells Fargo, which in the 1980s and '90s made most of their money off predatory mortgages to Black homebuyers. Charlotte is often called the "Wall Street of the South."

When the masses poured into the streets for Keith Lamont Scott, Charlotte became the first southern city where a major rebellion against police terror took place. This in and of itself is significant. What makes it even more significant is that these demonstrations took place for weeks in the heart of downtown, in front of the banks and corporations that fortify the inherent relationship between white supremacy and finance capital.

Demonstrators took to fighting the police directly, despite the cops' expensive military-grade equipment, and destroyed bourgeois private property of the banks and hotels. It became clear — when the National Guard was called into North Carolina and directed to protect buildings by beating protesters and even killing another Black man, Justin Carr — just how effective a tool white supremacy is for capitalist interests.

One year later in 2017, following the election of the racist, misogynist, fascist pig Trump, hundreds of neo-Nazis and white supremacists descended on Charlottesville, Va., in an alleged effort to defend the statue of Robert E. Lee, the



Tearing down a Confederate statue in Durham in August 2017.

commander of the Confederate States Army during the Civil War; a war not about states' rights — as often told in bourgeois history — but a war of Southern Confederate states to defend their right to own slaves. Even deeper than that, it was a war between the competing interests of the slave-owning ruling class and the increasingly finance-backed and industrialized ruling class.

Students from the university as well as organizers and activists from across the region showed up in Charlottesville to confront these racists. As some may know, the daylong clashes between anti-racist demonstrators and Klan members left one woman, Heather Heyer, dead from a car that ran into the crowd, along with many, many others who were brutally injured and hurt by Klan members and cops alike.

Direct action in Durham

Two days later in Durham, N.C., in solidarity with Charlottesville, our comrades organized a demonstration in front of a Confederate monument which stood in front of the old courthouse. The monument was erected in 1924 — a period in which the Black community of Durham, much like in other cities across the country, such as Kansas City, had made significant economic and cultural advances.

The Confederate monument stood in front of the building that many Black people have to walk by each day. It stood as a message that they were not welcome there and that despite their successes in that town, white supremacy was still law and only white people would be allowed to

benefit from capitalism.

In a tremendous show of people power, that Confederate monument was literally toppled in 2017 as hundreds chanted, "You can't stop the revolution!"

The days and weeks that followed the monument toppling saw statues being torn down, removed, defaced and vandalized across the South — from Baltimore to New Orleans.

In response to this revolutionary wave across the region, the KKK openly called for a demonstration in Durham, N.C. Their numbers were small compared to the thousands of oppressed people who came out into the streets to confront them, while they were sheltered by the local police in the courthouse building.

We knew that this struggle was never just about statues: It was about using white supremacy as a tool for bourgeois-class rule. It was never about cheap pieces of metal or copper, it was about underscoring that there is a class which benefits from the exploitation, degradation and murder of another class. And to be clear, the class that benefits is very much the class founded by white, slave-owning men. The class that is exploited is very much made up of nationally oppressed workers.

We should consider the concentration camps at the U.S.-Mexico "border" a monument to white supremacy. We should consider the same of the prisons, of dilapidated public housing, of deadly manufacturing companies, of underfunded schools, of outdated and unkept public infrastructure from roads to the water pipes in Flint, Mich., for example. There

Black communities are going on five years without clean drinking water. These are precisely the conditions needed to ensure that oppressed people do not rise up.

Those of us with alleged participation in the toppling of the monument in Durham waged a staunch campaign asserting that "fighting white supremacy is not a crime," as we faced felony charges for this necessary action. We organized a People's Tribunal Against White Supremacy where community members were able to testify about the real crimes taking place; attacks on workers, attacks on Black people, attacks on migrants, attacks on affordable housing, attacks on public education, and more.

The law is not the last word

So much of white supremacy is codified into the law. In this particular case, there was yet another preemption law that had been passed in 2015 preventing local government from removing Confederate monuments. It had to be approved by the state general assembly.

But just because something is law, clearly, as we know, doesn't make it real. If anything, it reiterates to us whom the law is made for. Ultimately all the felony charges were dropped, but only because we organized a mass movement that was able to stand up and fight and draw on the decades and centuries of anti-racist organizing in the South against racism and white supremacy. If you break the so-called law, you must have the political cover and solidarity of a mass movement.

There are many challenges, of course, in building this kind of mass movement in the U.S. where more and more labor is atomized. And workers are largely alienated from each other as the result of the capitalist development of technology and an emerging "gig economy." This muddies the role and responsibility of multinational corporations that are not seen as employers, but as simply service providers — like Uber or Lyft, for example.

There is not a coherent worker identity. Some of this incoherence is a result of a weak, mainstream, bureaucratic labor movement that continues to fall behind on updating its understanding of the working class and the need to integrate key struggles for national and social liberation. Some of this is a result of the deepening capitalist crisis which is quite literally killing people — whether the killers be politicians, police, landlords or bosses. □

Buffalo, N.Y.

Indigenous tell truth at Santa Maria display



A replica of the Santa Maria, one of Christopher Columbus' ships, was put on display in Buffalo's Lake Erie harbor July 13. Reacting to the occasion, Haudenosaunee activists and their allies were present to tell the truth about the ship. They explained that rather than just being an innocent tourist attraction, its presence was a commemoration of the genocide, slavery and theft of Indigenous lands that began with Columbus' original voyage. As one spokesperson explained, the arrival of the ship was not just a moment in history, but an attempted genocide that continues today. A delegation from Workers World Party attended in solidarity.

— Report and photo by Ellie Dorritie

700+ protests demand: N

By Martha Grevatt

With each shocking photograph, the reality becomes ever clearer: The U.S. government is holding migrants in concentration camps.

The latest images came after Vice President Mike Pence himself toured two camps. Hundreds of men, so densely packed into a cell they cannot even lie down, cry out, “No shower!” Children are sleeping on concrete with only emergency mylar blankets for bedding.

Pence first tried to claim the detainees were well-treated, but after seeing another camp even he acknowledged, “This is tough stuff.” Reporter Josh Dawsey found the camps’ stench “horrendous.” Adults and children were denied blankets, mats, pillows, food and hygiene items. Mats were taken away from children suffering with head lice after one of them lost a comb. Young children were caring for infants. (Washington Post, July 12)

Images and stories have gone viral and the horrors are public knowledge. U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet condemned the conditions, saying, “This should never happen anywhere.” (Al Jazeera, July 9)

New York Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez initially came under fire for characterizing detention centers as concentration camps until progressive Jews, including Holocaust survivors and descendants, defended the term in protests outside Immigration and Customs Enforcement offices. “Never Again Is Now” has become a rallying cry.

Japanese survivors of U.S. internment during World War II have also spoken out against the camps.

Im/migrant communities face terror

After the Supreme Court recently ruled against including a question about citizenship in the 2020 U.S. census, President Donald Trump promised to either bring a new argument to SCOTUS or overrule the high court via an executive order. On July 11, he retreated on the question, a concession to the strength of the im/migrant rights movement.

However, the xenophobe-in-chief is waging war on migrants by other means. Raids in 10 cities, aimed at apprehending some 2,000 undocumented immigrants, were originally planned for June, but delayed until July 14. Pending deportation, arrestees could find themselves in one of the same horrible concentration camps housing asylum seekers.

Mayors of nine cities — Denver, Atlanta, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Miami, Baltimore and Houston — are refusing to cooperate with the raids. All of these mayors, with the exception of New York City’s Bill de Blasio, are African American or Latinx. (Planned raids in New Orleans were called off because of the approach of Hurricane Barry.)

Immigrant rights advocates and attorneys conducted a widespread, well-organized “Know Your Rights” educational campaign leading up to the announced raids. Volunteers patrolled streets, monitoring ICE presence. Chicago City Council member Rossana Rodriguez Sanchez



Aurora, Colo.

WW PHOTO: VIVIANA WEINSTEIN

organized 160 community members into neighborhood brigades, while “ICE catchers” roamed Metro Atlanta.

With these preparations in place, where ICE cops did knock on doors, they were ignored or turned away when they failed to produce a warrant. Most of the nine cities reported no arrests; the latest ICE tactics were reportedly a scaled-down operation over the course of the week.

Nevertheless, the threats of arrest, detention and deportation created a climate of fear and intimidation among im/migrant communities. Immigrants stayed home from work, avoided shopping, skipped church services, and in general stayed inside on July 14. The atmosphere remains tense in the nine targeted cities as ICE cops could return over the next week with arrest warrants in hand.

With no advance warning, ICE agents knocked on doors in Immokalee, Fla. The Coalition of Immokalee Workers has won successful boycott campaigns against fast-food chains and is currently boycotting Wendy’s for its refusal to join the Fair Food Program. While no one was arrested, the attempted arrests were a menacing act against farmworkers.

Meanwhile, the horrors at the border continue. On July 14, Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown was denied entry to children’s detention camps in Texas by Customs and Border Patrol agents, while Trump fired off blatantly racist tweets against Congresswomen of color Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Ayanna Pressley and Rashida Tlaib, all of whom call for closing the camps.

The masses speak: ‘Close the camps!’

The July 12 call for actions to close the camps brought out masses of outraged people. Protests took place in 700 to 800 U.S. cities and around the world. The number of people participating ran from the hundreds to the thousands. Homemade signs bore familiar slogans — “No human being is illegal,” “Close the camps,” “Never again is now.” But many who brought signs were new to activism.

Here are just a few examples of the coordinated outrage that was replicated from coast to coast. Demonstrations continued through the weekend, building momentum for grassroots efforts to thwart the raids.

The biggest banner at a vigil at the main intersection of the small town of **Rhinebeck, N.Y.**, read, “Hudson Valley Strong — Power through action.” People in the area turned out about 80 strong, many coming from a service in a local church. The handmade signs, more than a few written on the backs of signs supporting Planned Parenthood, included messages like “Our Line in the Sand: Child Torture” and “Immigration is not a crime.” While many of the cars passing by honked in solidarity, the best moment was when a large FedEx truck passed with



Cleveland, Ohio.

WW PHOTOS: MARTHA GREVATT



Buffalo, N.Y.

WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

No raids! Close the camps!



Philadelphia.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

the driver leaning hard on a loud horn. A large crowd, demanding closure of immigrant detention camps, blocked traffic for over an hour and a half at a busy intersection in downtown **Buffalo, N.Y.**, on July 11. Trapped at the front of the line of traffic was a UPS truck driver. While protesters refused police demands to let him through, this African-American union member honked support for the protest and gave demonstrators high-fives.

Police arrested nine activists. Before the demonstration, a smaller group occupied Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer’s office and presented a list of demands.

“We are here to demand action from our leaders,” said protest organizer Rachel Ablow. “As an American Jew, I am horrified to see history repeating itself and feel compelled to join many others, including Holocaust survivors, in demanding the closure of the camps.” (News release from Justice for Migrant Families)

Nearly 1,000 demonstrators took to the streets of **Philadelphia**, shutting down major roadways in the heart of the city. Workers World Party’s contingent marched under the banner of “Abolish ICE, the Police, and the Pentagon,” drawing widespread support.

Chanting “Free the Families! Close the Camps!” and demanding the abolition of ICE and closure of the local Berks Detention Center, activists marched around City Hall and then to the local Department of Homeland Security headquarters, which is the most active and aggressive ICE office in the country. They also demonstrated outside the “Round

House,” where the notorious Philly Police Department is headquartered, linking the struggle of migrants and refugees to that of prisoners and Black and Brown workers in the U.S.

In **Cleveland**, 1,000 people filled Market Square Park for a nighttime candlelight vigil where a multinational, multigenerational crowd chanted, “Close the camps!” Homemade signs included, “Deport the racists” and “Queer as in abolish ICE.”

About 30 people participated in a rally at Seville Park in downtown **Pensacola, Fla.**, on July 7. The protest was hosted by Strive, the local transgender advocacy group; Workers World Party; Party for Socialism and Liberation; and Dream Defenders. Speakers, one for each group, stressed the need for all protests against ICE and its attacks on im/migrants to take an internationalist, proletarian approach to liberation. They urged looking beyond reformist measures and insisted on the abolition of ICE. Participants discussed possible plans for future resistance, including a bus trip to the Texas/Mexico border and a fight to shut down Pensacola’s local Border Patrol office.

In **Aurora, Colo.**, over 2,000 people protested jailing immigrants, separation of families, deportations and the threats that refugees are facing. They marched 2 miles to the Aurora Processing Center, a detention facility run by the private Geo Group, east of Denver, where Lights for Liberty was holding a vigil.

Cheers for the speakers could be heard inside the center where more than 1,500 immigrants have been detained without bail for months and cannot get out. Protesters banged on the doors and

screamed, “Tear it down!”

A young woman told Workers World how her husband was deported and she now has two children to provide for. It will cost \$15,000 to try to bring him back, money she does not have.

Protesters in **Portland, Ore.**, held a “week of action,” rallying outside and marching into Microsoft and four Portland banks to demand they divest from ICE. Bank of America and Suntrust said they would divest, but that the process will take months to complete. Other banks targeted were PNC and Bank of the West.

Businesses were forced to shut and lock their doors for hours. Demonstrators told workers to call their managers and tell them to end their contracts with ICE or the protests would continue. ICE contracts with Microsoft use Azure Government software.

On July 12 over 1,000 people gathered in front of the ICE detention center, then marched through downtown Portland demanding: abolish ICE, stop corporate profiteering, reunite im/migrant families and end the inhumane conditions at the detention centers.

The July 12 “Lights for Liberty” actions were mainly initiated by Democratic Party-oriented organizations such as Indivisible, with the goal of activating voters ahead of next year’s election. “Vote him [Trump] out” was one of their

chants.

Growing section of working class in solidarity with im/migrants

The massive turnout over the weekend shows a growing section of the working class is repulsed by the stench of racism and xenophobia emanating from the White House and is deeply concerned about the attacks on im/migrants. This in itself is progressive, despite the Democratic Party’s maneuvering to direct anti-racist sentiment into electoral channels.

Unions are taking a strong position against bigotry. The United Steelworkers explained in a July 6 statement: “This is about human decency. This is about recognizing that many of the people coming to our borders seeking asylum are workers.”

Referring to the campaign to get major hotel chains not to contract with ICE, UNITE HERE International President D. Taylor said: “We’ve gotta do action at every one of those hotels. We’ve gotta turn up the heat ... we’ve gotta get off our asses and get off Twitter and get in the streets where this evil is going on.” (Daily Kos, July 12) Marriott and Choice hotels have announced they would decline any request from ICE to house detainees.

Trump’s policies, designed to mobilize a racist base for his 2020 election campaign, have the unintended consequence of provoking widespread resistance.

John Catalinotto, Julianna Cordray, Ellie Dorritie, Ted Kelly, Johnnie Lewis, Lyn Neeley and Viviana Weinstein contributed to this article.



Pensacola, Fla.

WW PHOTO: JULIANNA CORDRAY



Rhinebeck, N.Y.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO



Portland, Ore.

PHOTO: JENNIFER DOWLING VIA TWITTER

Trip set for Aug. 18-29

Seeking truth about Venezuela’s food production

By John Catalinotto

An organization in the United States has scheduled a 10-day trip to Venezuela in late August that could help people find answers to important questions: Are there shortages of food? What is responsible for such shortages? What is the role of U.S. sanctions? How are the Venezuelans responding to the challenge?

These are essential questions for political activists in this country, especially for those who want to remove U.S. imperialism’s foot from the backs of the people of the world, including Venezuela.

Since January, Washington has stepped up its aggressive campaign against the legitimate Venezuelan government led by President Nicolás Maduro. The U.S. propped up an ineffectual puppet, Juan Guaidó, who declared himself interim president. But the Trump gang’s repeated attempts to carry out a coup and break up the Bolivarian Armed Forces have failed miserably, due to the mass resistance of the Venezuelan people and the loyalty of the armed forces.

Washington appears to have moved toward long-term subversion. The U.S. is disrupting Venezuela’s economy through a virtual blockade and the actual theft of Venezuela’s wealth, which is held in imperialist banks. A propaganda offensive has accompanied economic subversion. Media lies portray life in Venezuela as miserable and chaotic while blaming the Caracas government for the difficulties.

On July 6, for example, an article in the New York Times detailed the problems that fuel shortages have brought to an agricultural region of Venezuela. While the article does mention that U.S. sanctions caused the fuel shortages, it nevertheless assaults the Maduro government’s policies, blaming them for the crisis.

The media campaign makes it doubly important that the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle of New York and



its spokesperson William Camacaro are organizing the August trip. Camacaro is well-known to Workers World readers as a long-term and consistent internationalist. The Bolivarian Circle pulled together a trip from April 26 to May 5 this year, which happened to coincide with the April 30 coup attempt. U.S. activists on the trip were able to send back eyewitness accounts of how the Venezuelan people were coping with the emergency, rebutting imperialist lies.

Plans for August trip

The trip this August will provide an opportunity to learn what is happening in Venezuela and to bring that message back to the people of the U.S. Here are excerpts from the Bolivarian Circle’s description of the coming trip:

“What’s going on right now in Venezuela? Come see for yourself how Venezuelans are coping with U.S. economic sanctions designed to cause a social implosion. Sensationalized reports of Venezuelans eating zoo animals and rotten garbage present a distorted picture of what is happening in Venezuela. The media also omit serious analysis of the role of the food distribution program known as CLAPs run through a government-community partnership reaching millions of Venezuelans.

“There is no doubt, however, as indicated in a recent

report by the Center for Economic Policy Research [April 25], that the U.S.-imposed sanctions are indeed causing collective hardship and even death.

“Join us for a special delegation (August 19-28, 2019) dedicated to studying the actual conditions on the ground and the struggle for food security and food sovereignty in Venezuela, at a time when the Donald Trump’s administration has initiated a new series of sanctions against the food programs that the Venezuelan state has created.

“The Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle of New York, in partnership with Sustainable Agriculture of Louisville (SAL), a U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance member, invites historians, artists, videographers, writers, political analysts, health professionals, agricultural production experts and other activists to join a delegation to Caracas, Venezuela this coming August.

“Witness: communities organizing themselves in the face of manufactured food shortages to grow and distribute their own food; participatory democracy in action through community councils, ‘comunas’ and other forms of citizen organization; community-run art, media, education, health and nutrition efforts; alternative markets and fairs featuring homemade products and agro-ecologically produced foods; parks, natural areas, historic sites, and other reclaimed public spaces.

“Come bear witness to the effects of the economic warfare and the sanctions against the Venezuelan people imposed by Donald Trump’s administration as well as the inspiring resistance to these, as Venezuelans push for food sovereignty in response to crisis. Come see the real ‘threat’ posed by Venezuela — as living proof that another world is indeed possible. As the Venezuelan people assert, ‘Venezuela is not a threat — we are hope!’”

The trip will start and end in Caracas, with visits to the states of Miranda and Aragua. For more information, email cbalbertolovera@gmail.com or estebanbartlett@gmail.com, or call 502-415-1080. □

book review ‘The Plot to Overthrow Venezuela’

By Mike Kühlenbeck

The latest book by human rights attorney Dan Kovalik, “The Plot to Overthrow Venezuela,” is a critical primer on the U.S. government’s efforts to sabotage the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the future of its people.

This is the fourth title in Kovalik’s “Plot” series, starting with “The Plot to Scapegoat Russia” (2017) followed by “The Plot to Attack Iran” and “The Plot to Control the World” (both 2018). This series exposes U.S. foreign policy and acts of “humanitarian intervention” perpetrated by the Star-Spangled Empire with impressive clarity.

“The Plot to Overthrow Venezuela” features a forward by filmmaker Oliver Stone, director of the documentary “South of the Border” (2009). As Stone writes, “With its one thousand or so bases around the globe, the U.S. is an empire dwarfing all others that preceded it by a huge magnitude, and yet, unlike all other empires, the U.S. will never consciously admit to its imperial status.”

Washington has overthrown legitimate governments through military invasion and more covert means, investing in the leadership of oligarchs and military tyrants. “The Plot to Control the World” presented “emblematic cases” of U.S. interference in Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, which “had catastrophic results for the people and their pursuit of democracy and freedom.”

As this review goes to press, the Trump administration is trying to bestow such a cruel fate upon Venezuela. “The Plot to Overthrow Venezuela” investigates the crimes, motives and historical context of the situation with intelligence and insight. In Kovalik’s words, “This ‘humanitarian intervention’ of the U.S. is nothing but an old-fashioned bank heist dressed up as something altruistic.”

Washington has imposed barbaric sanctions upon Venezuela with deadly results. These sanctions have killed thousands of people, weakened infrastructure, prevented medicines from reaching those whose lives depended on them, and ended purchasing food from abroad.

There are several motives for U.S. interference. The plundering of Venezuela’s natural resources, particularly oil, is at the top of the list.

Venezuela is home to the largest amount of proven oil reserves in the world (opec.org), giving the country

“a considerable advantage over the North American rival in terms of capital requirements and extractions costs,” according to worldatlas.com. This motive is what inspired the book’s subtitle, “How the U.S. Is Orchestrating a Coup for Oil.”

Historical background

In 1998, Hugo Chávez was elected president of Venezuela. He ran on a platform to uplift oppressed and marginalized peoples, oppose the imperialist entities robbing the country of its wealth and build a movement against neoliberal policies.

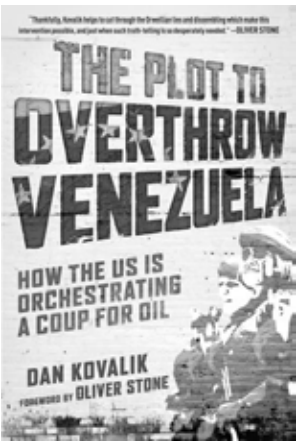
When Chávez assumed office in 1999, the wheels of D.C. think tanks and the Pentagon were already in motion, devising ways to remove him.

The majority of U.S. media outlets often act as stenographers and mouthpieces for the State Department. For example, The New York Times referred to the April 12, 2002, U.S.-backed kidnapping and attempted overthrow of Chávez as a “resignation,” calling him a “would-be dictator,” and sided with businessman and would-be replacement Pedro Carmona Estanga.

When the 2002 coup attempt failed, the New York Times backpedaled with a follow-up editorial, which read in part, “Forcibly unseating a democratically elected leader, no matter how badly he has performed, is never something to cheer.” (April 6, 2002) And yet, the Times cheered, as did most U.S. corporate media, according to a report published by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting. (June 1, 2002)

Once again, these same media push for the most recent efforts to destabilize Venezuela. The current administration appointed neocon ideologue and Iran-Contra convict Elliott Abrams to lead these efforts, as he had in Guatemala and El Salvador decades earlier. While many journalists questioned Abrams’ appointment, few questioned his mission.

Despite the media’s repeated attacks on the presidency of Donald Trump, when the Trump administration sounded the shrieking trumpets of regime change in Venezuela, many in the press corps lined up to defend this potential call for war. Media coverage has



even influenced some who oppose the administration.

Stone touches on the media’s impact, writing, “[I]f the U.S. is an Empire in this morality tale, then surely Venezuela and its people are the outgunned rebels. And yet, many Americans who should know better, including many liberals and self-proclaimed ‘leftists,’ find themselves rooting against them and for the Empire and its culture of death.”

Unlike many of those who repackage White House talking points as news, Kovalik has been to Venezuela. Last year, he witnessed the May 20 elections when

Maduro won the presidency with 67 percent of the vote. The election results were ignored by the Trump administration, which last January recognized an unelected, dubious Juan Guaidó as interim president.

Why Venezuela matters

Besides presenting a wealth of information and sources, the book describes the resilience of the Venezuelan people and their collective strength in the ongoing struggle against external and internal subversion aimed at their country.

Venezuela has suffered devastating power blackouts, oil tanks catching fire, assassination attempts on government leaders (most notably the attempt on Maduro via drone last Aug. 4) and other events that many believe the U.S. either organized or at least supported. The people of Venezuela have stood their ground in the face of such tribulations.

As Kovalik correctly emphasizes, “The battle for Venezuela has huge implications for all humanity. None of us can stay neutral on this issue. And given the nefarious designs of the U.S. upon Venezuela, the suffering the U.S. is already bringing to the Venezuelan people through its regime change operations and the threat of global conflagration, it is incumbent upon us to resist the latest intervention.”

“The Plot to Overthrow Venezuela” is now available from Hot Books, an imprint of Skyhorse Publishing.

Puerto Rico

U.S.-appointed education overseer arrested for corruption

By Betsey Piette

In the fall of 2018 a people's wanted poster surfaced in Philadelphia, describing city native Julia Keleher as a "ruthless mercenary hired to kill public education; proven to be completely ignorant about the Puerto Rican values, culture, history, literature and language of the children under her mandate." Keleher had been appointed Puerto Rico's Education Secretary in January 2017 under the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA).

The wanted poster was prophetic. On July 10, Keleher and five others — including Angela Ávila-Marrero, the former head of Puerto Rico's Health Insurance Administration (ASES); and Fernando Scherrer-Caillet, managing partner of the prominent accounting firm BDO — were arrested for conspiring to channel more than \$15 million in federal funds to organizations with which they had personal ties.

BDO consultant Alberto Velázquez Piñol was indicted for receiving a 10 percent commission on contracts he secured for the firm. BDO has amassed over \$63 million in government contracts since 2012, including \$16 million linked to the Department of Education. (Latino Rebels, July 9)

Since Hurricane Maria devastated the island in September 2017, Puerto Rico has been under the thumb of the U.S. neo-colonial Fiscal Control Board — established by PROMESA on behalf of Wall Street bondholders — to restructure \$120 billion in bankruptcy debt. Island activists have rejected the FCB, calling it the "Junta," and holding many protests against it.

The six named in the grand jury indictment face 32 counts, including money laundering and wire fraud. Keleher and Ávila-Marrero are accused of using their government positions to fraudulently award contracts involving federal funds, while depriving Puerto Ricans of education and health service.

The indictments allege that Keleher and others schemed to direct \$95,000 in education department funds through a contract to Colón & Ponce. The company was described by one education department official, who refused to okay the job,



as "the only company not qualified for the contract, and the worst applicant."

Keleher and two others were charged with conspiring to defraud more than \$13 million in federal funds through education department contracts to BDO from January 2017 to April 2019. The indictment charges that BDO then subcontracted with other companies to perform the services, in violation of the contracts and also inflating the costs.

Ávila-Marrero is charged with using her post as administrator of the health insurance administration to channel more than \$2.5 million to BDO. Under PROMESA, health care on the island is already facing over \$1 billion in debt, and residents are denied access to vital drugs usually covered by Medicaid.

As news of the federal investigation began to surface in April, Keleher and Ávila-Marrero both resigned their posts. Keleher's attempt, at the time, to portray herself as a "heroic fighter against the island's anti-reform forces" was met with derision by opponents, who stormed her office and voiced opposition with the hashtag #JuliaGoHome.

'Hired to break the system'

Despite her lack of education experience, Keleher was paid \$250,000 annually to serve as Puerto Rico's "Education Secretary." Her monthly salary was 9 times that of the average teacher in

Puerto Rico. She is in lockstep with the destructive policies promoted by Trump-appointee Betsy DeVos, now U.S. Secretary of Education with a mission to privatize education.

In April 2018, Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló responded to a question by a reporter from the University of Pennsylvania's Penn Gazette magazine asking why Keleher was hired: "Very bluntly, we asked her to break the system and rebuild it again." (thepenngazette.com, April 23, 2018)

During her tenure Keleher introduced an unpopular strategy of closing public schools. The local DoE budget was cut by half a billion dollars. In 2018 PROMESA demanded an additional \$200 million in cuts, including \$80 million from special education. Rosselló continues to champion Keleher and her push to devastate the island's education system, leading to calls for his resignation.

When Hurricane Maria struck, Keleher used the disaster to push for more privatization and charter schools. She followed a pattern established in 2005 in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when New Orleans fired most teachers, closed almost all public schools and replaced them with charters.

Following Hurricane Maria, parents and teachers came together to repair schools and juggle classroom lineups as many families left for the mainland. Things were slowly moving back toward

normal — until Keleher struck. Teachers were laid off, hundreds of schools were closed, and children, including those with special needs, were packed tightly into classrooms. When they protested these "reforms" in street demonstrations, teachers and students were brutally attacked by police.

Without ever visiting them, Keleher closed and consolidated nearly 300 schools, many of which were in good shape despite Maria. Several included classrooms to accommodate special needs students — over 40 percent of Puerto Rico's student body.

One top public school was sold for \$1 to a for-profit private Christian foundation.

Why now?

A key question remains about why the indictments, first rumored in April, were delayed until now.

The arrests appear to coincide with efforts by Puerto Rico to obtain more federal money for post-Hurricane Maria reconstruction. A congressional vote on an additional \$12 billion in Medicaid funding over four years was originally scheduled for July 11 but has not taken place.

The Financial Control Board is also under a U.S. Appeals Court order from February 2019 to have its members reappointed or replaced after creditors challenged members' appointments. When appointed by then President Barack Obama in 2016, the process did not require Senate confirmation. The appeals court's order set a July 15 deadline for that process to be completed. □

Down with imperialism! Up with Workers World!

The U.S. has been the world's No. 1 imperialist bully for years. That fact has been carefully covered up with self-righteous bourgeois language by the corporate media. Now, led by emperor-wannabe Trump, the soft-sell bullying has become in-your-face ultimatums, with Venezuela, Cuba and Iran the latest targets.

The New York Times and other big business media are not reporting on criminal U.S. sanctions as outright attempts at regime change via a ruling-class imposter in Venezuela. Rather, they are cheering U.S. plots to take over Venezuela's oil deposits, valued as the world's largest.

Trump is using his bully pulpit against Cuba, this year celebrating 60 years of socialist power. Not only has Trump set up tough restrictions on U.S. visits to Cuba, he has authorized U.S. companies, whose imperialist holdings were nationalized after the revolution, to sue Cuba for "reparations." There's no corporate media coverage of what socialist Cuba has accomplished to uplift its people in 60 years.

Trump ordered this year's super-militarized July 4th celebration of the origins of the genocidal, enslaving,



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Reclaim Pride march, June 30, NYC.

white-supremacist capitalist U.S., while at the same time using the U.S. Armed Forces to threaten Iran striving to maintain its independence surrounded by global capitalism. The corporate media are willing co-conspirators in covering up the real threat — U.S. imperialism.

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Congresswomen condemn White House racism

Continued from page 1

like to be brown and black in this country. And I'll tell you right now, we're not going to stand by and sit idly by and allow brown and dark-skinned children to be ripped away from their parents to be dehumanized." (July 7) She also stated in the same interview, "It is very disappointing that the speaker would ever try to diminish our voices in so many ways."

These four representatives must be defended against racist and sexist attacks, whether coming from the Trump administration or from within their own Democratic Party. No matter the varying

degrees of rhetoric or tone of the political attacks, the Republican and Democratic parties represent the interests of big business. The fact that these four women are not afraid to speak out against injustice against Black and Brown people — like the chokehold death of Eric Garner, whose killer cop was exonerated July 16; or the reportedly 24 migrants who have died in Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody, including seven children — has helped empower many women of color, other working women and workers in general to cheer them on and to be in the streets to protest these inhumane policies. □

WORKERS WORLD

editorials

No ‘forced pregnancy’

“The right to control what happens to your own body and to make medical decisions for yourself” is one of humankind’s universal rights, established in 1948 by the United Nations.

But as of July 11, 4 million poor U.S. women and nonbinary people, predominantly those of color, are being denied that human right. According to a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision, the Trump-Pence revised rules for Title X can go into effect in 49 states (except Maryland) until cases against the rules are resolved in various states.

This is the first attempt to turn the Title X health care program, designed in 1970 to promote gender- and class-equality for Medicaid patients, totally into its opposite.

The first change to Title X was in 1976, when the Hyde Amendment placed a huge burden on Title X patients by prohibiting federal payment for abortions for anyone except survivors of rape and incest or women whose health was endangered by pregnancy. Currently 17 states elect to cover Title X abortions with state funds.

Now, this new domestic gag rule promotes a theologically based, anti-comprehensive-health-care program that prohibits all Title X-funded health care clinics from discussing abortion options. And those providing abortions must set up prohibitively expensive separate facilities with different accounting procedures.

In addition, for the first time this revision opens up funding to “crisis pregnancy centers” and faith-based organizations so they can more easily promote their backward anti-abortion, pro-“natural-family-planning,” anti-feminist, anti-LGBTQ2S+ programs.

Nationally known Black politician Stacey Abrams coined the term “forced pregnancy” to describe the anti-abortion law recently passed in Georgia. It aptly applies to the Trump-Pence attack on Title X recipients.

This deeply reactionary move by the patriarchal, anti-working-class state — with its right-wing, white-supremacist, anti-woman and anti-gender-nonconforming agenda — is establishing rules that deny rights, rather than affirm or

expand them.

This blatant attack has garnered opposition from many arms of the medical, legal, civil and human rights communities and at all levels of government.

Washington state is among those withdrawing from Title X. It will use “only state funds for its family planning program to minimize any uncertainty of whether doctors could make abortion referrals.” (Politico, July 11)

Dr. Leana Wen, CEO and president of Planned Parenthood, the primary target of the revised rule, noted that the organization will not apply for Title X funding. It has set aside funds to cover that contingency.

In a statement Wen said: “This is devastating news for the millions of people who rely on Title X ... for critical primary and preventive care. [W]e ... will keep fighting to block this dangerous rule that allows the government to censor our doctors and nurses from doing their jobs.” [Wen has since been ousted from her position.]

Among many clinics and health care

groups now refusing Title X funds is the Community Healthcare Network, which received \$700,000 in 2018. CEO Robert Hayes told the website Jezebel, “We’re not going to commit malpractice here. We’re not going to lie to patients.” (July 11)

This is a turning point in U.S. society — for individuals and organizations. It’s a which-side-are-you-on moment during this criminal, hate-filled, anti-human Trump-Pence power drive — at the border and in the bedroom.

There is only one side in this ruling-class war. Are you for full human rights for all women and gender-nonconforming people? If so, will you link arms at the barricades to fight as we’ve never had to before?

That is required to take down this capitalist system that rests on genocide, racial violence and profound wage theft, systemic misogyny and class oppression.

It’s time to recognize the intersectionality of oppressions and show solidarity in the united fight for a world where the human rights of all people are promoted and honored. □

Wealth, sex work and sexual abuse

The U.S. Secretary of Labor resigned last week, July 12. Maybe you didn’t notice? Just another turnover in the revolving door of scandal that’s the Trump administration.

The wrongdoing that sent Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta out the door might not, at first glance, seem to be related to labor or work or workers.

When Acosta was U.S. Attorney for southern Florida over a decade ago, he brokered a deal for multimillionaire Jeffrey Epstein to escape some federal charges. Epstein’s crime? Recruiting hundreds of underage girls into sex trafficking at his luxe Miami mansion.

Epstein was controversially sentenced, on the lesser state charge of “soliciting women,” to 13 months in a Florida minimum-security jail — which he was allowed to leave six days a week to run his business handling investments for other super-billionaires.

On July 8, Epstein was arrested and indicted on sex trafficking counts by federal prosecutors in New York’s Southern District. Negative publicity about Acosta’s original deal with Epstein ignited, and Acosta resigned, with a push from Trump — who still praised him as a “great, great secretary.”

News stories about Epstein’s wealth emphasize its “mysterious origins,” and say he is a man “of nearly infinite means.” His current defense lawyers argue he “never used violence or coerced” the underage girls. (Associated Press, July 14)

But there’s really no mystery where those millions and billions came from. The phrase “without coercion” actually exposes the violent truth of the connection between labor and wealth and the exploitation of women and other workers by capitalist bosses.

Epstein’s very wealth gave him the power of coercion, which he used, his victims assert, to both exploit and also violently assault and rape.

Most of us would surely guess that the young girls Epstein coerced for his use were trying to survive on the edge of

difficult economic conditions. In Epstein’s capitalist logic, the girls were getting a fair bargain for some short-term work.

But there is no fair bargain, or level playing field, between a man who can offer his private jet as bail bond security, and young girls, some simply isolated and lonely, some merely trying to feed and clothe themselves.

Epstein’s actions, and the protection given him by Acosta as a U.S. Attorney, show the old hand-in-glove of capitalist power sheltered by state power in order to exploit workers to the maximum. Epstein’s trading on the vulnerability of young girls is despicable — and Acosta is equally complicit.

In the 2020 fiscal budget Acosta issued in April, he proposed an 80 percent reduction in funding for the International Labor Affairs Bureau. The ILAB is a sub-agency of the Department of Labor that investigates and prosecutes human trafficking, including sex trafficking. Experts were clear the proposed reduction would effectively end many federal efforts to curb trafficking. (tinyurl.com/yyg3f2f5)

The ILAB is a U.S. state agency. Its mission statement may say one of its goals is “to promote a fair global playing field for workers.” But that means the ILAB will promote “workers’ rights” only to facilitate U.S. capitalist profit making.

We know that the exploitation of women and others in sex work reaps untracked hundreds of billions in profits for capitalists worldwide. Meanwhile, the supposed government “protection” against sex trafficking has meant that sex workers of age have actually been prosecuted and jailed for supposedly trafficking — themselves.

At the same time, Acosta’s proposal to end ILAB efforts against exploitation of women and other gender-vulnerable people in sex work flashes a green light to capitalist big-business networks to go after more sex-trafficking profits. That’s a green light to the shadowy businesses that delivered young girls to the back doors of Jeffrey Epstein’s mansions.

The 2018 historic strike by McDonald’s workers against sexual abuse emphasized how bosses can make sexual demands as a required part of the “job description” for any kind of work. The #MeToo movement surged in the millions to resist this kind of exploitation. (Workers World, Sept. 17, 2018)

Now the Epstein-Acosta link shows how profit making from sexual coercion and abuse is hidden, protected and

facilitated at the highest levels of U.S. government.

The vast majority of those being exploited are women, gender-nonconforming and gender-fluid people, LGBTQ2S+ people and people of color. Sexual exploitation is an added, special oppression they face as workers.

Working-class solidarity means fighting to protect these oppressed workers from both capitalist profiteering and

Serena Williams and Megan Rapinoe

Continued from page 3

U.S. Soccer Federation, demanding pay equity for women and gender-oppressed players. Their male counterparts make much more money and receive more benefits. All 28 women players filed a class action lawsuit against the federation this past March, charging gender bias and demanding equal pay.

The lawsuit states that between 2013 and 2016, women soccer players could earn a maximum of \$4,950 per “friendly,” or nontournament, victory, while male players earned an average of \$13,166 for the same type of game. A new collective bargaining agreement with the USSF signed in 2017, which has not been made public, reportedly saw a spike in women’s salaries, but the pay for male and female athletes is still not equal. (The Atlantic, March 19) The disparity between men and women athletes is relegated not just to soccer, but to all professional team sports, reflecting the entrenched patriarchal-dominated U.S. society.

Rapinoe has refused to visit the White House, as most championship teams, pro or amateur, are invited to do. When asked what she would tell Trump if she had the



Megan Rapinoe takes a knee in September 2016.

opportunity, Rapinoe said she would ask Trump: “Do you believe that all people are created equal? Do you believe that equal pay should be mandated? Do you believe that everyone should have health care? Do you believe that we should treat everyone with respect? I think there’s some feelings of disrespect about the anthem protests or things I’ve said in the past, but ultimately I think I am here open and honest. I think he is trying to divide so he can conquer, not unite so we can all conquer.” (Washington Post, July 14)

Rapinoe says she drew inspiration from Serena, quoting verbatim from one of her press conferences on fighting for equality “until she is in her grave.” □

Elections in Greece

What happened and what's next

By G. Dunkel

New Democracy, which the big business press calls a center-right party, won the July 7 election in Greece with 39.8 percent of the vote. It has 158 seats in parliament — a comfortable majority that let it form a majority government. The leader of ND, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, took over as prime minister on July 8.

Syriza, a social democratic party that describes itself as the Coalition of the Radical Left, came in second with 31.5 percent. It had been running the government since January 2015 when it was elected on an anti-austerity platform.

There are reasons for Syriza's decline. Its prime minister, Alexis Tsipras, held a referendum July 5, 2015, in which 61 percent of the voters rejected the draconian conditions that the Troika — the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Commission — had imposed on Greece for it to qualify for a third bailout loan. Just 10 days later, the Tsipras government reached an agreement with the Troika for a three-year bailout, with even harsher austerity conditions than the ones rejected by the voters.

For the election this July 7, Syriza had to run on its record. The center-right ND, however, could rely on promises to make life better, even though Greeks know that ND was involved in the first two bailouts; and that Kyriakos Mitsotakis is the son of a reactionary, anti-working-class prime minister and the brother of a former right-wing mayor of Athens. Mitsotakis wants to "improve" the job market by making the work week seven days long, privatizing hospitals and health care, and cutting social security.

While disgruntlement with Syriza

might have been the reason for a sharp increase in abstentions, which reached 42 percent, Syriza appears to have benefited from workers and progressives choosing it as the "lesser of two evils." However, it has lost a great deal of credibility by at first running as an opponent of austerity and then, when it was in power, adopting very harsh policies.

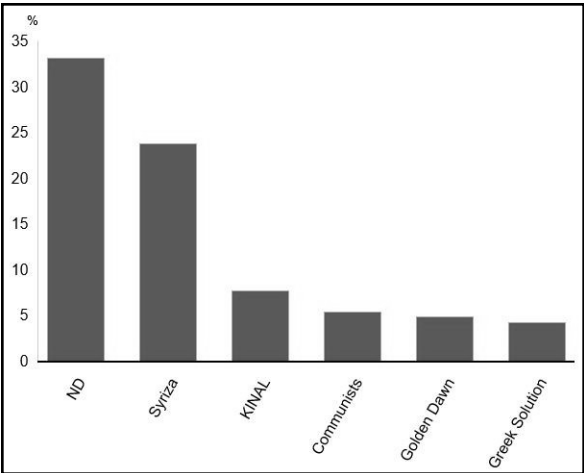
The ND was also able to win because it picked up votes from some right-wing parties, like ANEL and POTAMI, which had lost so much support they didn't even run in the election. The ND votes were concentrated in the petty bourgeois and bourgeois areas around Athens. But there does not appear to have been a major shift to the

right among Greek workers.

The victory of Syriza in the 2015 election had been hailed both in Europe and North America as a victory of the left, as a big step forward for social democracy. Besides numerous articles in newspapers and magazines and numerous symposia, there was even a book, "The Syriza Wave" by Irish leftist Helena Sheehan, that described "the surging and crashing" of the Greek left.

Serious economic challenges

The ND government is going to face serious economic challenges. Between



Greece 2019 election results. IMAGE: BBC



Location of Greece (dark grey) in relation to Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. IMAGE: WIKIPEDIA

400,000 and 600,000 of Greece's educated and skilled workers, unable to find decent jobs, have left in the past 10 years. The economy has shrunk by a quarter during that time. Unemployment is at 18 percent and poverty — already at 35 percent — is increasing. Greece's bailout creditors have rejected a call to ease strict budget targets.

ND's economic "solution" is obviously going to increase misery for Greek workers. That means it will have to confront the Greek Communist Party (KKE) — which for over 100 years has consistently opposed Greek capitalism — as well as the powerful and militant Greek trade unions.

The KKE came in fourth in the elections, with 300,000 votes (5.3 percent) and 15 seats in parliament. That is very close to what it has received in the past few elections. The KKE is closely tied to PAME, the All Workers Militant Front, a union with 800,000 members, and has participated in many of the general strikes and other labor actions over the past five years.

A KKE July 8 statement on the election contains this pledge: "The votes of the KKE will be utilized from tomorrow morning in every workplace, neighborhood, in the schools, in the universities to organize struggles in order to block new measures, in order to bring relief to all who suffer." □

Growing signs of deepening global capitalist crisis

Continued from page 2

the U.S. has declined substantially over the last few decades. After the capitalist economic crisis in 2007-08, as jobs were slashed and the means of production destroyed, the rate of profit recovered somewhat and peaked in 2014. It has been on a relative decline ever since. (tinyurl.com/y5e2vvg5)

That contradiction leads to the crisis of overproduction — which is where the capitalist system on a worldwide basis is currently heading. The anarchic nature of production under capitalism and the need to expand in order to increase profit leads to the overproduction of commodities — not more than what people need, but more than can be sold — which in turn causes the system to eventually fall into depression. Workers and the oppressed know all too well what this means: mass layoffs, cutbacks, austerity and a wholesale attack on our class, particularly the most oppressed.

It can also be a time of explosive and dynamic struggles of the working class as the depravity and inhumanity of the capitalist system are on stark display in these crises. Elevating global solidarity on a class basis, which rejects and confronts the many ways the ruling class attempts to divide workers with racism, sexism, anti-LGBTQ2S+ bigotry and other walls of oppression, will be key.

It's up to communists and revolutionary forces to lay the foundation to raise revolutionary class consciousness and organization to intervene in these crises and to help point the way forward for struggle that can resolve the contradictions of the capitalist system by prosecuting the class struggle and socialist revolution.

Capitalism at a dead end: Struggle orientation needed

There is widespread speculation that the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates

at least once, and perhaps several times, before the end of the year. 2020 is a presidential election year, and Trump will do all he can to prevent an economic crisis before then, which would certainly vanquish his chances of re-election.

Trump plans to hold the Republican National Convention in Charlotte, N.C. — the city with the second-largest concentration of finance capital in the U.S., also known as the "Wall Street of the South."

Despite the fact that sections of the ruling class may be forced to reluctantly admonish Trump for his more odious comments and policies, he has brought them lavish profits and most will likely be happy to oblige him to undertake any measures to safeguard his re-election and their profitability.

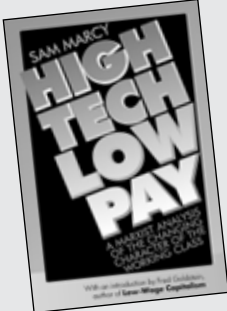
What will Trump do, however, if a contraction occurs before the election? The dangers are very real of war, increased attacks on the most oppressed, including

migrants, LGBTQ2S+ people, women and people of color, or other drastic measures to distract from an economic crisis.

The capitalist system is on life support, and has relied upon intervention from the central banks to keep it afloat. A new crisis of the system is not a question of if, but when.

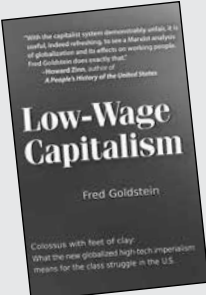
The impending capitalist crisis threatens to be violent and devastating for workers and oppressed in the U.S. and around the world, who already face a battery of attacks every day.

As in every previous crisis, Wall Street will do all it can to place the burden of the crisis onto the backs of workers. The 2020 elections will be (and already are) used to demobilize the struggle. We must be prepared to mobilize on a global basis in our class interests to direct the fury of the workers and the oppressed against the capitalist system itself. □



High Tech, Low Pay
A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class

By Sam Marcy with an updated introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of *Low Wage Capitalism*.




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Fred Goldstein

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



FOTO: WHITE, ARNOLD AND DOWD

Marshae Jones, Alabama.

‘Vigilando el útero’ en Alabama

Por Minnie Bruce Pratt

El ataque intensificado contra las mujeres, la justicia de género oprimida y la justicia reproductiva, denunciada como “vigilancia policial” por la activista y defensora de los derechos reproductivos Michelle Goodwin, ha alcanzado un nuevo nivel de violencia en Alabama.

El 3 de julio, Marshae Jones, una joven afroamericana embarazada, fue arrestada tras ser acusada por un gran jurado de Alabama por homicidio involuntario, porque abortó a su feto espontáneamente después de que un atacante le disparara en el estómago. El tirador, otra mujer conocida por Jones, no fue acusada y fue puesta en libertad.

La acusación contra Jones se basó en la declaración de la policía arrestada de Pleasant Grove, Alabama, cuyo portavoz dijo: “La única víctima verdadera” fue el feto, dependiente de su madre para evitar que sufriera “daño”. (Washington Post, 28 de junio)

El bufete de abogados que representa a Jones presentó una moción para desestimar los cargos, pero su argumento se basó en motivos legales relacionados con homicidio involuntario, no un desafío al concepto de persona asignada a un feto que el gran jurado había utilizado para acusar.

Después de una protesta internacional y de Estados Unidos, incluida una manifestación en el Centro de Justicia de Bessemer, así como el apoyo del Fondo Yellowhammer, una organización de derechos de aborto de Alabama, la fiscal de distrito local anunció el 4 de julio que había decidido “no procesar” a Jones.

Criminalización del aborto/aborto involuntario

La declaración policial original refleja la ola de leyes racistas anti-mujer, anti-pobres que ahora definen y atacan a las personas embarazadas como simples recipientes o portadores de un feto. En Alabama, cientos han sido procesados con el estatuto estatal de “peligro químico de un niño” por supuestamente exponer su embrión o feto a sustancias controladas.

Según Lynn Paltrow, fundadora y directora ejecutiva

de National Advocates for Pregnant Women, Alabama encabeza a los Estados Unidos en acusar a las mujeres por delitos relacionados con el embarazo. También señaló que las mujeres en todo el país han sido procesadas por homicidio o asesinato por haber tenido un aborto o haber sufrido un aborto involuntario.

El 15 de mayo, el gobernador de Alabama promulgó la ley más represiva contra el aborto en la historia reciente de los Estados Unidos, que prohibía los abortos en casos de violación o incesto. Otros estados, como Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri y Ohio, han aprobado leyes casi punitivas en los esfuerzos por criminalizar y vigilar los derechos reproductivos.

Se ha prestado mucha atención a la interpretación de estas leyes reaccionarias como un intento de la derecha para obtener un argumento ante el Tribunal Supremo que podría permitir el fin del acceso al aborto en los EE. UU.

De hecho, estas leyes son solo la última iniciativa desarrollada y desplegada contra los derechos reproductivos ganados en los últimos 46 años desde la decisión Roe v. Wade de la Corte Suprema de los Estados Unidos que legalizó el aborto.

Ha habido un ataque ininterrumpido de leyes de “derecho a la vida” a nivel estatal, basadas en creencias religiosas y no científicas. Estos castigan desproporcionadamente e intentan controlar la autonomía de las mujeres de la raza negra.

Aquellos que defienden las leyes no declaran abiertamente ni admiten su intención prejuiciada, sino que enmascaran el odio del racismo con el pretexto de defender el “derecho a la vida”.

Dirigido a mujeres pobres de la raza negra

La hipocresía de esa posición fue desenmascarada, una vez más, a través de la información explorada extensamente en una columna del 3 de julio en Birmingham News, “The Reckon”: las madres negras tienen casi cuatro veces más probabilidades de morir en el parto y el embarazo que las madres blancas. Esta es la disparidad racial más amplia en la salud de las mujeres en los EE. UU.

Las razones van desde el racismo estructural al

prejuicio individual, desde la negativa de los estados a ampliar la cobertura de Medicaid para las personas pobres, hasta el racismo médico no probable pero real como el que experimentó Myra Powell en Montgomery, Alabama. Perdió fetos gemelos a causa de un aborto espontáneo a las 26 semanas, y empapados de sangre y con dolor, fue llevada al hospital por conductores de ambulancia que nunca encendieron la sirena o las luces de emergencia, se sentaron en cada señal de alto y luces rojas y nunca excedieron los límites de velocidad.

La acompañó un paramédico que revisaba su teléfono durante el viaje terriblemente lento y luego se negó a autorizar su traslado a un hospital con una unidad neonatal.

La evaluación del estado de Texas de sus muertes maternas mostró que el riesgo para las madres negras era alto independientemente del estado civil, el nivel de educación o el acceso a un seguro privado. Las mujeres negras económicamente acomodadas mueren a tasas más altas que las mujeres blancas de su misma clase.

Obviamente, si los defensores de las leyes reaccionarias contra el aborto y contra el aborto involuntario que se están aprobando con sinceridad se preocupan por las madres y los niños, estarían presionando sobre todo por un sistema de atención de salud materna más receptivo, accesible y asequible. Se enfrentarán y combatirán el racismo que causa muertes desproporcionadas en comunidades de color, desde la falta de atención médica hasta la brutalidad policial.

Con un examen cuidadoso, la acusación de Marshae Jones muestra, en cambio, que los impulsores de leyes reaccionarias vinculadas a la reproducción buscan la criminalización de las mujeres pobres, las mujeres de color, las personas sexualmente independientes. Buscan continuar el dominio de la supremacía blanca y el patriarcado capitalista.

Marshae Jones fue liberada solo a través de organizaciones locales, nacionales e internacionales. Esa es la respuesta que pondrá fin a la “vigilancia policial” y en cambio, afirmará la justicia reproductiva. □

Acciones para ‘Cerrar los campamentos’ se aceleran en Houston

Por Gloria Rubac

Desde que las familias de inmigrantes empezaron a ser destruidas en la frontera en 2018, han habido docenas y docenas de protestas, marchas y mítines en Houston contra las políticas racistas de la frontera de Trump.

Pero ahora que las condiciones brutales dentro de los campos de concentración de inmigrantes finalmente han estado ampliamente expuestas al mundo, la gente se ha indignado aún más. Los eventos para cerrar los centros de detención se llevan a cabo a un ritmo acelerado.

Houston FIRE (Lucha por los migrantes y refugiados en todas partes) ha protestado recientemente en la oficina del Senador estadounidense John Cornyn, participó en un discurso en contra del cuatro de julio contra los campamentos y se manifestó en un centro de detención federal en el centro de la ciudad.

La protesta del 2 de julio en la oficina de Cornyn fue parte de una campaña nacional para “Cerrar los campamentos” convocada por MoveOn.org en las oficinas centrales de congresistas que regresan de Washington, DC para el feriado del 4 de julio. Decenas de miles en todo el país acudieron a estas protestas.

Algunos de los demócratas que se postulan para la presidencia han aparecido en Houston para protestar. El 29 de junio, el candidato Beto O’Rourke convocó una manifestación en el centro de detención Casa Sunzul, que alberga a menores no acompañados. Casa Sunzul está dirigida por Southwest Key, una organización sin fines de lucro notoria que recibió cientos de avisos de infracción por parte de los reguladores estatales durante las inspecciones realizadas durante los últimos tres años.

Pero la indignación palpable de los manifestantes de Houston en la protesta del 2 de julio fue mucho más allá de la política demócrata. Las cuatro esquinas de una intersección de la calle estaban llenas de personas que gritaban: “¡Cierren los campamentos!” Llegaron cientos de familias, veteranos activistas, grupos religiosos, activistas por la paz y muchos que nunca habían protestado antes.

¿Qué hay para celebrar?

Luego, el 4 de julio, cuando algunas personas estaban listas para la barbacoa o pensando en los fuegos artificiales posteriores, el Carnalismo Brown Berets de Houston celebró el evento “Un Cuatro de Mentiras”. Como dijo la organizadora Elizabeth Lozano, “tenemos niños en campos de concentración. ¿Qué hay para celebrar?”

Uno de los primeros oradores recordó a la gente: “América Central ha sido colonizada y saqueada por los Estados Unidos. Ahora la gente está huyendo de las horribles condiciones que se han creado. Matarán a estos refugiados en los campos de concentración si no luchamos por ellos”.

Las instancias citadas de acciones colonizadoras de los Estados Unidos incluyeron su derrocamiento en 2009 del presidente democráticamente electo de Guatemala, poniendo en su lugar a un dictador vicioso que permitió que los estudiantes que protestaban fueran asesinados y asesinatos de activistas y organizadores indígenas. Antes de eso, en la década de 1980, el gobierno sandinista en Nicaragua fue atacado por contras respaldados por los Estados Unidos que cometieron crímenes horrendos: asesinatos, violaciones y terror. El número de invasiones militares y “intervenciones” de los Estados Unidos en América

Central es demasiado largo para enumerar aquí.

Ed E SomiSek, miembro del pueblo indígena Esto’k Gna que ha vivido en lo que hoy es Texas y México durante siglos, habló: “Nuestra gente ha vivido históricamente en ambos lados del río, se movió por el área y ahora nos están haciendo extranjeros. Están construyendo un muro en las tumbas de nuestros antepasados”.

El líder de Black Lives Matter, Ashton Woods, consiguió que la energía de la multitud fluyera mientras dirigía los cánticos y hablaba: “Estoy aquí como un descendiente de un esclavo, una persona LGBTQIA con SIDA. Personas como yo están en esos campos de concentración. Estas personas están huyendo de la violencia creada por este gobierno. ¿Qué tenemos que celebrar hoy? ¿El encarcelamiento en masa, la Decimotercera Enmienda, los campos de concentración y las mujeres trans que son asesinadas y brutalizadas?” [La Decimotercera Enmienda a la Constitución de los Estados Unidos incluía la legalización de la esclavitud en las cárceles]

Sema Hernández, activista y retadora del senador Cornyn de Texas, dijo a la multitud: “Necesitamos dismantelar este sistema imperialista basado en el capitalismo y la supremacía blanca. Tenemos que acelerar nuestro trabajo para abolir ICE [Inmigración y Control de Aduanas] y cerrar estos campos de concentración”.

La pancarta de Houston FIRE y los letreros de color amarillo brillante fueron muy bien recibidos. La indignación sobre los campos de concentración ha reavivado la indignación que comenzó el verano pasado cuando las familias se separaron por primera vez. ¡FIRE tiene la intención de mantener ese fuego encendido! □