



**Activists commemorate International Working Women's Day, March 8, in New York City. Read more on page 10.**

PHOTO: ANAKBAYAN NEW YORK

# Venezuela battles U.S. sabotage of electrical grid

**By Sam Ordóñez**

March 10 — Thousands of people filled the streets of Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, in celebration of the Bolivarian Day of Anti-Imperialism on March 9. This date has been observed since 2015 when U.S. President Barack Obama declared Venezuela to be an “unusual and extraordinary” threat to national security.

The Bolivarian masses also marched in response to attacks against the country's electrical grid. A series of sabotages and cybernetic attacks against the electrical plant in the Bolivar state at El Guri, which supplies electricity to most of the country, began on March 7.

Speaking in front of the anti-imperialist march, the legitimate President Nicolás Maduro said that the opposition was responsible for the attacks against the electrical grid. The attacks came two weeks after the Venezuelan government declared that the coup attempt directed from Washington had failed.

Meanwhile, on the other side of Caracas, Juan Guaidó, the self-appointed “interim president,” indirectly threatened new, broader sabotage. Speaking from a megaphone in front of an opposition rally, he said, “We must announce with responsibility that this will become a fuel crisis.”

At the time of this writing, electricity is being gradually restored to the affected areas. According to government officials, there has been constant work to restore power and “normalize the situation” from the beginning of the attacks.

The coordinated use of international new media has been key to imperialism's strategy in Venezuela. Until now all the major media have repeated the lies fed to them by National Security Adviser John Bolton, Sen. Marco Rubio and Special Envoy for Venezuela Elliott Abrams alleging that Maduro's forces burned aid trucks at the border. On March 10, however, the New York Times released a report contradicting these claims and showing how the

U.S. Agency for International Development truck had in fact been burned by opposition forces. ([tinyurl.com/y5ykjd9e](http://tinyurl.com/y5ykjd9e))

There can be no doubt that those U.S. operators who planned the coup will make any claim in their frenzy to conquer Venezuela. It's not clear why the New York Times chose to break with the U.S. government at this time. This break clearly demonstrates how imperialism has lied and then used the media as a weapon in its attacks against Venezuela.

## The new regime-change strategy

A month and a half after Juan Guaidó declared himself president, an act propelled by the United States, Nicolás Maduro remains in the presidential palace at Miraflores and the National Bolivarian Armed Forces

(FANB) have remained loyal to the constitution.

On Feb. 23, the opposition attempted to bring trucks into the country from Colombia and Brazil, claiming that they contained “humanitarian aid.” Both the International Red Cross and the United Nations called the aid ploy a political move. Despite two days of violent attacks on the Colombian border, the trucks were unable to enter the country.

It was popular power mobilized to resist imperialism that defended Venezuela. On the border, the FANB was fighting alongside pro-government “colectivos,” or collectives, and civilian militias. The high levels of political consciousness and organization prevented a split inside the FANB that the U.S. and its puppet Juan Guaidó were looking for.

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# HIT THE STREETS TO DEFEND VENEZUELA!

## Major demonstrations set for Washington, DC for March 16, March 30

**March 16** - *U.S. Hands off Venezuela!*  
 ➤ 12pm at Lafayette Park

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Commentary

A new generation of socialists is coming

By Makasi Motema

The crowd roared when the head of the imperialist/capitalist state proclaimed that “America will never be a socialist country.” Donald Trump made himself the standard-bearer of U.S. capitalism during his State of the Union address in February, and both parties lined up to follow.

But in spite of the thunderous response, the bipartisan cries of support for capitalism carried a hint of desperation. Why did Trump feel the need to rally Congress against the advance of socialism?

The reason is that young people are increasingly rejecting capitalism, and it frightens the ruling class. Young people have seen the harm caused by neoliberal capitalist regimes, and they are embracing socialism as the only viable alternative.

The lifetime of today’s youth has been marked by the dramatic stripping away of capitalism’s promises and the revelation of its cruel reality. Unlike their parents’ generation, today’s young people were told that they could not get a good job without a college degree. Under these terms, those who could saddled themselves with five- or six-figure student loan debts, only to be mauled by the post-2008 job market.

Entry-level jobs require not just a degree, but relevant experience. Gaining experience means shouldering the burden of an unpaid internship — giving away your labor power to a company for free while you find some other means to support yourself. With the pre-existing disadvantage of debilitating debt payments, the Millennial generation came of age in a world where even getting a job is unaffordable.

Those who do find work are not greeted with formerly stable employment and retirement plans of previous generations. Instead, their employment, and thus their survival, is tenuous at best. They are encouraged to get second jobs in the “gig economy.”



Piling one scam on top of another, the capitalists demand the working class submit not just to the bosses, but also to algorithms which exploit workers with computerized precision. With no job security, no retirement plans, no escape from debt and seemingly no future, the current generation understands that the only means of survival is dismantling the old system and replacing it with something new. For today’s young people, socialism isn’t a fashionable new trend — it is a life raft in a sea of capitalist destitution.

A system that puts workers in control is the only rational option — the alternative is a life of economic instability. The capitalists have been given every chance to “reform” their system, and they have come up with nothing. “Hope and change” was nothing but hot air, and the current generation understands this. They know that capitalism can never, and will never, be fixed.

Capitalism is unsustainable. A dramatic transformation from a system based on theft to one based on meeting the needs of society is required. Capitalism brings with it imperialism, racism, patriarchy and environmental destruction. Today’s youth want no part of that future. They have seen the damage done at home and abroad. They demand a morally justifiable economic policy.

Young people desire a system where medical care is not
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Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# Students lead Confederate statue voted down at University of Mississippi

By Minnie Bruce Pratt  
Oxford, Miss.

March 9—A home-grown, student-led campaign delivered four powerful body blows to racism here at the University of Mississippi during the first week in March.

UM’s Graduate Student Council Senate, Associated Student Body Senate, Faculty Senate and Staff Council all voted “yes” to removing an infamous Confederate statue from its central place on campus. These four organizations make up UM’s shared governance. The Staff Council represents over 2,000 people, ranging from custodial workers to the university registrar.

The GSCS resolution included a clause denouncing white supremacy. The vote by senators in ASBS, representing undergraduate students, was unexpectedly unanimous, which evoked applause and celebratory tears. Almost 58 percent of student comments received by ASBS supported removing the racist statue.

The university, founded in 1848 by white plantation owners as an alternative to sending their sons to abolitionist-influenced Harvard or Yale, has been nicknamed “Ole Miss,” a reference to a plantation owner’s white wife.

The Confederate statue, erected in 1906, was part of a nationwide white-supremacist propaganda campaign launched after the Civil War and emancipation of enslaved African people. The statue has been a rallying point for the Ku Klux Klan and other racist groups, including in 1962, when segregationists gathered there to oppose integration of UM by Black U.S. military



PHOTO: DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN/REED JONES

Students march at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Nov. 28, 2018.

veteran James Meredith.

White rioters attacked the dormitory where Meredith was staying and set fire to the military car of a U.S. Army general and staff, who barely escaped with their lives. Two people were killed and 300 injured.

Ralph Eubanks, African-American UM graduate and former director of publishing at the Library of Congress, commented to The Daily Mississippian that when he was a student, his mother did not want to come to campus. She said, “I can’t look at the Lyceum [directly behind the statue] without seeing blood running down the steps.” (March 7)

## ‘Now they are woke’

The campaign against the statue was initiated by Students Against Social

Injustice, part of United Students Against Sweatshops, a U.S. student-led worker association.

SASI President Quay Williams, an African-American sophomore from the Mississippi Delta, commented to WW, “The campus is awake because we’ve been fighting for a while against the racism of the statue. Now they are woke.”

Emrys Gill told WW that the campaign included many strategy meetings, appointments with the administration, marches last April and November and a spirited Feb. 23 protest. SASI organizer Gill is a white sociology major from Jackson, Miss.

The Feb. 23 march opposed white supremacist groups The Hiwaymen and Confederate 901, who began their rally that day at the statue with a prayer of

thanks to enslaving plantation owners. The counterrally, organized by the Black Student Union, SASI and other groups, drowned them out with anti-racist chanting.

A turning point in the struggle came the night of Feb. 23. As the national anthem played at an at-home UM college basketball game with the University of Georgia, seven UM players knelt in protest. Six were African-American and one Latinx.

They were the first UM student athletes in any sport to protest during the anthem and the first-ever such protest by basketball players at a major university since sports protests against racism began in 2016 with NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick’s actions.

## ‘We will not stop’

With the athletes’ action, the campaign for removal picked up steam. Student organizer Williams commented that the Feb. 23 white-supremacist rally also called the question as to what side people were on: “If they didn’t vote for removal [on the resolution], that would show them as more obviously in support of racists.”

The four resolutions go now to UM’s interim chancellor, who will likely send the issue to the board of trustees for Mississippi higher education.

As for next steps, organizer Gill emphasized, “For the University of Mississippi—students and everybody—the statue is not down yet. The votes are a necessary step, but we are not finished. We will not stop until the construction crew shows up and takes down the statue.” □

# Pennsylvania prisoners punished by Dept. of Corrections

By Ted Kelly

Frackville, Pa. — For the last six months, Pennsylvania state prison staff have been systematically opening and duplicating all legal correspondence exchanged between inmates and their attorneys.

This flagrant violation of attorney-client privilege, made official policy by Gov. Tom Wolf in July 2018, was challenged by a joint suit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, the Abolitionist Law Center, the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project and the Amistad Law Project.

After just one day of testimony in federal court, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections announced its intention to

settle the suit and will stop photocopying and storing prisoners’ legal mail.

This sudden reversal is a major victory for inmates and abolitionists across the state.

The decision to open, copy and store prisoners’ legal mail was one of many repressive policies implemented in the aftermath of an unprecedented 2018 statewide crackdown on prisons. Wolf claimed that his decision to impose an emergency lockdown of all 24 state correctional facilities — and over 50,000 prisoners — was in response to an “outbreak” of illnesses due to exposure to “synthetic drugs” that were being smuggled into prisons.

But there has been only one verified

case of a corrections officer’s “exposure” to illegal drugs, confirming activists’ suspicion that the lockdown, ordered in the middle of 2018 National Prison Strike, was aimed at stifling rebellion and strike activity.

State ACLU Legal Director Vic Walczak told a local NPR affiliate: “Our expert, who was a former warden at San Quentin and a commissioner in the California Corrections Department, was going to testify that legal mail has not been a major source of contraband.” (wskg.org, Feb. 22)

The legal watchdogs’ suit was aimed only at prisoners’ legal mail, so all other mail will continue to be routed through Smart Communications in Florida, where it is photocopied and forwarded to Pennsylvania prisons. The DOC granted a \$4 million contract to Smart Communications and has spent over \$40,000 to purchase copy machines for all state prisons.

## Retaliation continues against prisoners, families

“They’ll resort to any means at their disposal to make you feel like you have no control, to undermine your value as a human being,” says Bryant Arroyo as he bites into a cold turkey sandwich in the visiting room at SCI Frackville.

For the first time since the July lockdown, Bryant and his fellow inmates are allowed to purchase lunch while meeting with visitors. Sandwiches and candy bars are again in vending machines that for six months stood empty.

The machines seem to be stocked with six month’s worth of leftovers, with mostly food, including some kind of pork product.



PHOTO: BENJAMIN IRVING

Bryant Arroyo and Ted Kelly at SCI Frackville.

“This facility is aware,” says Arroyo, “of the majority-Muslim and other individuals who refrain from the practice of eating pork products. It seems the staff has engaged in a deliberate act of discrimination against the Black/Hispanic inmate population.” This insult has only exacerbated racial tensions between the majority Black and Brown prison population and the overwhelmingly white staff.

Bryant also points to the removal of tables from the visiting room. During our visit, prisoners could be seen juggling lunch trays in their laps while meeting with family members, or else they were forced to put trays on the floor and eat off the ground. Apart from the indignity of this arrangement, Bryant slams the removal of proper tables and furniture as ableist and a likely violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The privilege of prisoners to get their

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# A new generation of socialists is coming

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determined by one’s ability to pay and where housing is a human right. They have growing solidarity which demands an end to wealth extracted from the many by the few — that can only be accomplished through socialism.

Young people are correct in identifying this solution. When we look at the pain caused by greed and economic exploitation, and the righteous anger of people rising up to resist it all over the world, it’s clear that the victory of socialism over capitalism is inevitable. Systems of oppression cannot thrive forever.

We live in an increasingly interconnected world where class consciousness is on the rise. Unity among the masses is always a sign that the ruling class will soon lose its grip on power. The moral

force of socialism cannot be stopped, and neither can the masses who have pushed it to the forefront of U.S. politics. Workers’ strikes will only intensify. As these workers’ movements continue to become more intersectional and join with anti-racist, anti-patriarchal and anti-imperialist movements, they will become uncontainable. Any attempt by the ruling class to suppress these movements will only hasten its own demise.

Today’s youth have emerged from the ruins of the greatest economic disaster since the Great Depression. Their experience has taught them that capitalism is not an engine of economic growth, but of cannibalization and environmental catastrophe. Instead, they crave a system based on equity and economic justice. The ruling class is terrified that soon they will get it. □



# Tufts University dining hall workers to take strike vote

By **G. Lechat and Ed Childs**  
**Boston**

UNITE HERE Local 26 Dining Hall workers marched and rallied March 5, eight months into contract negotiations with Tufts University. Tufts has resisted unionization for years, but workers have been building power, and this show of force was about 1,000 strong.

During the organizing drive, 75 percent of the workers signed union cards — the National Labor Relations Board requires at least 30 percent for a union representation election — and 127 out of 146 workers voted to join Local 26 in April 2018. Contract negotiations began last August; with community support, workers are fighting back against the anti-union university. A strike vote is scheduled for March 14, and most workers have indicated that they would vote to authorize a strike.

While picketing and drumming all over campus, demonstrators left hundreds of signs planted in the snow in front of the president’s office during a cold two-hour demonstration that drew enormous student turnout as well as other area union members. Local 26 members, who have had their own struggles against Harvard and Northeastern universities as well as Marriott International, all came out to show support.

Boston’s hotel workers, who weathered a 46-day strike last fall, were an especially strong contingent on the picket line. One Harvard union member, a veteran of

the 22-day Harvard strike in 2016, came out to support her mom who is also a dining hall worker and a union activist at Tufts.

Local 26 has led the way in bringing the strike weapon back to the Boston area, and the 2016 Harvard strike has been an inspiration to workers far and wide. The Harvard strike showed the importance of organizing within a union — developing strong leaders, not just growing the union to as many members as possible. Without this effort, unions cannot fight effectively against management’s cuts or contemplate a strike when necessary. So the Harvard strike empowered hotel workers to fight back and win.

The Northeastern campaign and one-day strike followed Harvard in 2017 and reinforced the importance of student solidarity through groups like Harvard Student Labor Action Movement, Huskies Organizing With Labor at Northeastern and now Tufts Dining Action Coalition. The Tufts Coalition has mobilized students and secured statements of support and acts of solidarity from Robin DiAngelo, author of the recent book “White Fragility” who visited the university; the mayors of Medford and Somerville, municipalities that include Tufts’ campus; and even fraternities such as Theta Chi that hoisted a banner reading “Frats for Dining Worker Power.”

Student solidarity has added pressure on the university to do the right thing. Just as it has been a major advantage for all unionized education workers, especially



March 5 protest. PHOTO: G. LECHAT

teachers who have repeatedly struck, even in “right-to-work” states.

However, the triumph of UNITE HERE hotel workers, who simultaneously struck in 10 locals across the country, shows that strong organization can win, even without the student solidarity that education workers have. While employers have become greedier, unions prepared to strike can still push back. Workers who fight to form a union or make their union better have an impact on the whole working class — by raising wages and winning the respect all workers deserve. □

## Strike in Erie ends Rank-and-file unionism pushes company back

By **Martha Grevatt**

Wabtec is a company that supplies technology products and services to freight rail and passenger transit markets worldwide. On Feb. 25, Wabtec consolidated a merger with GE Transportation. That very day, the company announced it would no longer abide by the contract terms that the United Electrical workers union had previously negotiated with General Electric in Erie, Pa.

Wabtec attempted to unilaterally impose major concessions, including forced overtime, pay cuts of up to 38 percent, a two-tier pay scale, extensive use of temporary workers and arbitrary schedules.

UE Local 506, representing most of the 1,700 workers at the Erie plant, and Local 618, representing a smaller group of workers, did not waste any time trying to plead with the company for fairness. They hit the picket line!

Nine days later the strike is over and the union is claiming a win. The tentative agreement is for 90 days, but UE is confident it can win a long-term contract. Terms of the short-term agreement include no pay cuts, no benefit cuts, no forced overtime and no plant closure or permanent layoffs during the term of the agreement.

### Rank-and-file union against Fortune 500 behemoth

As the union points out, Wabtec can well afford to maintain the pay and benefits that GE had been providing. Formed in 1999 by the merger of Westinghouse Air Brake and Motive Power Industries, Wabtec is no small, upstart company.

Even before its latest acquisition, Wabtec had 100 facilities in 50 countries on six continents and was one of the world’s largest railroad equipment companies. With the latest expansion, Wabtec has 27,000 employees worldwide and has become a Fortune 500 firm. CEO Ray Betler was paid \$16 million in compensation last year — about equal to the value of the contract concessions Wabtec demanded.

The Erie plant, over 100 years old, is one of the largest locomotive factories in the world, occupying 1,000 acres. UE has represented the workers for 82 years. GE was — and now Wabtec is — the largest single employer in the city of Erie, population 97,000. Imposing pay cuts or layoffs on 1,700 UE families would have had a detrimental impact on the local economy. Less money would be spent and the tax base would drop.

People in the community understood this. They honked in support, stopped by the lines and dropped off food, coffee, hand warmers and firewood. “Community support was overwhelming,” Local 506 President Scott Slawson told Workers World. For years GE tried to use UE’s good wages and benefits to pit the community against the union. “But,” he continued, “we’ve made the community understand the benefits to them of [jobs with

good] wages and benefits. The outreach from them was absolutely amazing.”

**Support for strikers — from Erie to around the world**

Support came in from all over the world. As the UE website reports, “The Erie UE locals have received letters of support from UE Local 610, which represents Wabtec workers in Wilmerding [Pa.]; the IndustriALL Global Labor Union which represents 50 million workers around the world; unions in Canada, Great Britain, France, Italy, Brazil, Mexico and Turkey; and from Railroad Workers United, a cross-craft alliance of union railroad workers in the U.S. and Canada — all of whom have written to Wabtec CEO Ray Betler indicating they are following the Erie negotiations and are prepared to take action.”

Solidarity of the rank and file is what, first and foremost, pushed the company back. The union explains, “In UE, we use the term ‘rank-and-file unionism’ to describe how our union operates: it simply means it’s

the members who run our union ... in a democratic and collective manner.” (ueunion.org)

In Erie, this culture was evident. “The company understood our resolve. The spirit on the picket line was very high,” according to Slawson. To his knowledge there were no line-crossers. “Nearly the entire membership participated. The first days there was a high level of excitement and after that it was sheer resolve. The company was overwhelmed.”

The company agreed to most of the language in the GE-UE contract, although not 100 percent. The union, previously allowed to strike over any grievance, agreed not to strike for the life of the contract; the company agreed to no lockouts.

What if the company demands more givebacks in the next 90 days? Are the workers prepared to go back out? “Yeah, I believe they are,” said Slawson. “We’re a tough unit and certain things — two-tier, mandatory overtime — are just not acceptable.” □

## Pennsylvania prisoners punished

*Continued from page 3*

photo taken with visitors is still suspended, even though officials said the moratorium was only meant to last 180 days.

**Monetizing even the small moments**

Daniel Gibson, an activist is also being held at SCI Frackville, described to WW a recent visit with his loved one in no uncertain terms: “Our visit at SCI Frackville was punitive and oppressive. It seemed like all the correctional officers’ actions were a retaliation against the recent wins of prisoners’ rights — food and drinks returning to vending machines, the return of client-attorney privilege with respects to legal mail and the reinstatement of the book policy which allows people to donate and send books to inmates.

“The COs specifically singled us out, reprimanding us for the slightest personal touch (like leaning on someone) and non-‘promiscuous’ behavior” (which is not allowed in State Correctional Institution visiting rooms). This is the case for many visiting rooms across the state, where people do feel singled out because of how oppressive these environments are.

“Inmates’ families report harassment, cuts [in] visiting times at SCIs Camp Hill and Frackville in particular, and feeling criminalized while trying to visit their loved ones. The Department of Corrections wants to make in-person visits so unbearable [and] eventually force

increased use of video visitation, yet another cash cow for the DOC. They want to further monetize even these small, intimate moments.”

The number of formal grievances filed by inmates has reportedly skyrocketed in recent weeks, an indicator of greater mobilization and activism on the part of prisoners. Arroyo, whom Mumia Abu-Jamal once dubbed “the world’s first jailhouse environmentalist,” is encouraged by the bravery and engagement of his fellow inmates.

**‘Tell me who you walk with’**

Switching back and forth between Spanish and English as he often does, the Puerto Rican prisoner-organizer recites an adage he learned from his working-class parents. “Dime con quien andas y te diré quien eres/Tell me who you walk with and I’ll tell you who you are.”

Bryant walks the block with the most oppressed of our class. The prison authorities and corrections officers clearly stroll a different path.

“What does the DOC hope to achieve from all this?” A mischievous smile appears on Arroyo’s face, and he rubs his shaved bald head as if running his hand through a mop of hair.

Then he trumpets his lips out in a comic fashion and gestures wildly with both hands, impersonating President Trump: “They want to Make America Great Again!

“I think that’s a Freudian slip, by the way,” says Arroyo, chuckling. “They really just want to Make America Hate Again.” □

## WW Commentary

# We Stand with Ilhan

By Kathy Durkin

A crack has been made in the foundation of Washington's alliance with Israel: The taboo of not criticizing the Zionist state in Congress has been broken. This was spearheaded by Congress members Ilhan Omar and her colleague Rashida Tlaib, who oppose U.S. support for Israel and champion Palestinian rights.

Omar's courageous words have criticized the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, a pro-Israel lobbying group, and challenged Washington's alliance with Israel. This has angered the capitalist establishment, but engendered much support from a growing movement inside the U.S. which agrees with her.

Omar, a Somali immigrant representing her Minnesota community, and Tlaib, a member of Michigan's Palestinian community, are the first Muslim women elected to Congress. They back the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign opposing Israeli oppression of the Palestinian people.

The Islamophobic and racist attacks against Omar by right-wingers, including politicians, AIPAC and other Zionist forces, which include Christian evangelicals, has reached a fever pitch, with false cries that she is "anti-Semitic." Liberals and centrists criticized her. Corporate media piled on the hostility. Omar faced — and still faces — death threats.

When bigot-in-chief Donald Trump attacked Omar on twitter, Tlaib rightfully tweeted back March 6: "How dare you even pretend you have not given white supremacists and neo-Nazis even more power in this country? We will always stand with our Jewish, Muslim and neighbors of all faiths against your type of hate."

Congressional right-wingers assail Omar for criticizing AIPAC and U.S. support for Israel, hypocritically accusing her of anti-Semitism — which they have suddenly discovered. They demand her ouster from Congress but gave a pass to Trump when he remarked that neo-Nazis marching in Charlottesville, Va., in 2017 were "very fine people." These right-wingers said nothing when Trump spouted anti-Jewish and racist rhetoric during his election campaign and retweeted fake news stories about "global Jewish financial interests."

Democratic Party leaders have criticized Omar and tried to introduce a House resolution condemning anti-Semitism, meant to suppress her and Tlaib's denunciations of Israel and AIPAC. That these leaders singled out a woman of color, but had not formally condemned Trump's bigotry or Rep. Steve King's spewing of white nationalism, angered many people of color in Congress.

Many Congressional Black Caucus, Congressional Progressive Caucus and younger members supported Omar. With pressure from thousands of activists, the resolution evolved into one that condemned all forms of bigotry. This passed the House of Representatives with 23 Republicans refusing to vote for it.

Both Omar and Tlaib regarded this as a victory since it was the first time either chamber of Congress has condemned anti-Muslim bigotry.

## Movement grows against U.S.-Israel alliance

The people of the world have viewed with horror Israeli military attacks on Palestinians in the Occupied West Bank and Gaza. A Feb. 28 report from the United Nations Human Rights Council stated the terrible toll taken by Israeli snipers at the Gaza border during mass protests in 2018.



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

**Solidarity with Ilhan Omar on Int'l Working Women's Day, March 8, Cleveland, Ohio.**

They shot over 6,000 unarmed demonstrators, killing 189, including 35 children, three health workers and two journalists. In total, 23,313 Palestinians were injured. "Snipers targeted people clearly identified as children, health workers and journalists." (fair.org., March 8)

Israel's crimes against humanity have outraged millions and brought outcries against the Zionist state's racism, brutality and inhumanity. Criticisms of Washington's financial and political support for Tel Aviv have mounted. Solidarity and sympathy for the Palestinian people are growing, demonstrated by increasing worldwide support for the BDS movement.

Despite U.S. government and AIPAC attempts to squelch both the BDS campaign and support for the Palestinians, this movement is mushrooming, as shown in protests by youth, Arab, Muslim, African-American, Jewish and other progressives. Michelle Alexander's groundbreaking op-ed in the Jan. 19 New York Times, "Time to break the silence on Palestine," was a clarion call to oppose Washington's backing of Israel and its crimes against the Palestinians. The very publication of the op-ed reflects the struggle's growing strength.

## Proud to defend Ilhan Omar

After Omar criticized AIPAC, and Trump and his racist cronies viciously attacked her, Jewish Voice for Peace issued a press release Feb. 12. It read: "Jewish Voice for Peace is proud to defend Ilhan Omar. We reject attempts to silence her criticism of Israeli policy and her support for Palestinian rights and freedom, just as we reject anti-Semitism and bigotry in all forms."

JVP launched an #istandwithilhan social media campaign, endorsed by hundreds of celebrities and well-known progressive activists and academics, including Angela Davis, Harry Belafonte and Eve Ensler.

A statement by #westandwithilhan issued March 1 quickly garnered hundreds of Jewish endorsers. It disavowed AIPAC, and said: "We thank Ilhan Omar for having the bravery to shake up the congressional taboo against criticizing Israel."

Ady Barkan, a young disabled Jewish activist, with ALS, defended Omar and Tlaib, writing: "[They] are allies of mine and of Jews ... who are fighting for peace, racial justice, immigrant rights and the defeat of fascism. The anti-Semites are the Nazis and white supremacists who marched and murdered in Charlottesville ... and the MAGA supporter who massacred worshipers at a Pittsburgh synagogue." (The Nation, Feb. 12)

The shake-up in Congress and within the ranks of the Democratic Party over Washington's pro-Israeli policies is far from over. With more people, including youth, sympathetic to the Palestinian people, and global outrage growing at Israel's reign of terror, one thing is certain: This struggle will continue. □

## Ohio

# Sonic Drive-In workers protest pay cuts

By Mike Kuhlenbeck

Workers at three Sonic Drive-In restaurants in Ohio walked off the job in response to company threats of reduced pay and layoffs on Feb. 22. Sonic staff in Circleville, Grove City and Lancaster quit as a group after being told that, along with other grievances, their pay would be reduced from \$8.55 an hour (Ohio's current minimum wage) to \$4 an hour plus tips.

These stores were among the 10 locations in the Columbus market acquired by Sonic's operating affiliate, SRI Holding Co., in December. SRI took over eight of the restaurants and closed the other two due to "poor performance" on Feb. 25.

Early news of the proposed changes by SRI caused the workers to storm off the job, leaving behind angry notes and letters explaining their actions. At the Circleville store, a note on the window read, in part, "Due to terrible management the whole store has quit. The company has been sold to people that don't give a damn about anyone but themselves." The note was signed by "Ex-Sonic Crew."

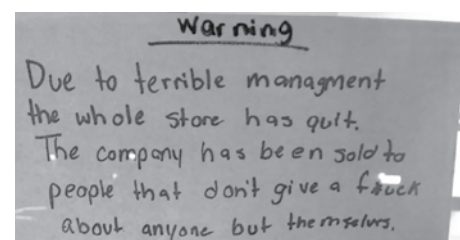
A letter at the Lancaster store called Sonic "the trashiest company we have ever seen." It was signed by "The Breakfast Club," referencing the 1985 film depicting a group of high school students in detention who, despite their differences, band together to reclaim their lives.

Policy Matters Ohio Project Director Hannah Halbert told Workers World, "The letters the Sonic workers posted during their walkout highlight many of the problems with this sector."

Sonic, which advertises itself as "America's Drive-In," is not the only restaurant chain that exploits its workforce. Food service and prep are known for low pay, erratic scheduling, lack of job security and opposition to unions.

"The letters were powerful because they show how little the workers were valued despite their commitment to the company," Halbert said. "People who work in food service care about their job, but too often no one cares about them."

Since the walkout was reported by The Scioto Post (based in Circleville), multiple



news outlets picked up the story and photos of the notes went viral. Sonic quickly issued statements to calm the social media storm. Vice President of Public Relations Christi Woodworth wrote on March 1: "We recognize that changes like this can be difficult for employees to understand and most current employees will have the opportunity to continue working at the drive-in." Sonic denied there would be pay cuts, claiming the incident was a result of miscommunication.

"It is hard to believe the workers would have taken these actions if these changes weren't on the way," Halbert said. "These are folks working tough jobs, with no union protection, probably with very little to fall back on. They took a huge personal risk to stand up to this company."

It is uncertain if any of the workers will return. But, as Halbert pointed out, "The walkouts created pressure, and that they got the company on record saying that pay rates would stay the same and that tips would not be taken out of base pay is a win."

Over 158,000 Ohio workers are in food service. Data from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services indicates this sector will continue to be the Buckeye State's largest job category through 2026.

Some Ohio legislators have recently called for raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2023. If passed, the measure would benefit more than 2 million workers. But this alone will not stop exploitation in food service and other sectors. Workers need \$15 an hour right now.

"The most basic worker protections — our minimum wage and overtime laws — have been eroded over time," Halbert said. "Unionization continues to be under threat. Collective action is an effective way to demand that we rebuild that foundation." □

# Fight for women's liberation! Build Workers World!

As Marxists, we strive not just to honor history but to make it — to bring about changes that put the workers and oppressed first instead of last. Workers World commemorates the socialist holiday of International Working Women's Day, March 8, with a roundup of women's protests for freedom, justice and equality the world over.

Struggle is the only way to bring about change. The Black Lives Matter movement, started by women and gender-nonconforming activists, boldly fights racism and demands redress for centuries of oppression. Women are powering the fight for \$15 an hour and a union because two-thirds of low-wage workers are women, often women of color and single heads of households.

Inspired by the #MeToo Movement and Time's Up, women are speaking up at work — particularly in restaurants, offices and hotels — against sexual harassment and for respect along with women including trans women resisting horrific sexual assaults by police and prison guards.

WW will continue to focus on women

who bear the brunt of Trump's racist, sexist, bigoted, xenophobic agenda: im/migrant women and refugees detained and often deported for the "crime" of crossing borders to find work and provide for their families or to escape life-threatening repression and violence; children separated at the border from parents, making it nearly impossible to reunite them; and "Dreamers" whose legal status under DACA is still in limbo.

If you appreciate WW's year-round coverage of struggles that advance women's liberation, join the WW Supporter Program. For a donation of at least \$75 a year — and much more if you can — members receive a year's subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give to friends. Write checks (either monthly or once a year) to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up at [workers.org/donate/](https://workers.org/donate/) for monthly deductions. Know that we appreciate your help in building Workers World — for today and for the future. □



# A uniquely capitalist crisis

## Hunger amid a glut of food

By Deirdre Griswold

Do you know what it feels like to be hungry? Not just missing a meal, or being too busy to take a break. Hungry. All the time. Feeling weak and fatigued from hunger. Needing to put some food in your belly — but not having the money to do it. According to Move for Hunger, 41 million people in the U.S. go hungry every day.

How can this possibly be? The agriculture industry in this country produces so much food that 20 percent of it is exported each year.

But a large amount of what remains sits in warehouses. Here’s a recent description of the crisis developing in the dairy industry: “America is sitting on a massive surplus of cheese with a record 1.4 billion pounds of cheddar, American and Swiss in cold storage. ... [T]he cheese glut is now bigger than it’s ever been in the 100 years the government has been keeping track. For perspective, 1.4 billion pounds of cheese translates to 700,000 tons.” (Patch, Jan. 16)

The Des Moines Register wrote about the cheese glut back on Oct. 5, 2016, when it was still “only” 1.24 billion pounds of cheese in refrigerated warehouses. It also reported on other stockpiles, including:

- 322 million pounds of butter (up 52 percent from the previous year)
- 1.52 billion pounds of frozen fruit, including 377 million pounds of strawberries and 313 million pounds of blueberries
- 1.31 billion pounds of frozen poultry (chicken and turkey), up 4 percent in a year

### Where’s the national emergency?

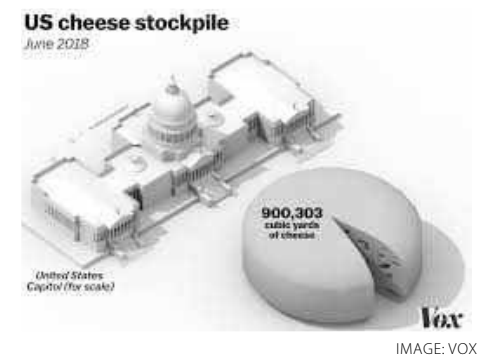
Trump has just announced his proposed budget for the next fiscal year. Besides setting aside some \$8.6 billion for his border wall, plus another increase in military spending, his new budget will reduce spending on domestic programs. The result is certain to be more hungry people.

The creature in the White House has declared a “national emergency” over a wall on the southern border. But 41 million people going hungry while food is stockpiled? To the billionaires who run this country, that’s not an emergency. It’s business as usual.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, while 20 percent of overall agricultural production is exported, the number is even higher for certain crops: 50 percent of the soybeans and 46 percent of the wheat grown in the U.S. are sold elsewhere.

A huge market for U.S. agricultural exports has been the People’s Republic of China, which increased its share of U.S. agricultural exports, on average, from 3 percent in 1995-2000 to 16 percent in 2011-17, according to the USDA Economic Research Service.

But in his campaign to “Make America Great Again,” Trump put tariffs on goods from China. This has caused China to



retaliate with tariffs on U.S. imports, which is hurting U.S. farmers.

And they know who is to blame.

An op-ed piece by Illinois farmer Krista Swanson last Sept. 24 explained:

“My family and I farm in Illinois, where farmers like us send about 30 percent of the corn and 60 percent of the soybeans we grow to other countries. Nationally, more than 20 percent of agricultural products are exported. ...

“Expectations for big corn and soybean crops and surplus supplies, combined with the escalating trade conflict, are weighing down crop prices. Soybean prices approached a 10-year low this month.

“Although the influence of U.S. trade policy cannot be completely isolated from other economic factors, the timing of trade conflicts has coincided with drops in market prices for many U.S. agricultural products. ...

“Right now, farmers are facing inflation-adjusted incomes at the lowest level since 2009, and the outlook for 2019 is considerably worse.” (USA Today, Sept. 24)

So MAGA has come back to bite the very people Trump pretends to represent.

### Tariffs rev up crisis of overproduction

What is never mentioned in the big business media when reporting on these surpluses is the phenomenon of capitalist overproduction. It is affecting all areas of the economy, and has led to across-the-board price declines in everything from petroleum to wheat.

Midwest farmers like Swanson are highly susceptible to the swings of the world market. They are not the small farmers of years gone by. When the economy is good, they are worth a lot of money, because modern agriculture requires expensive modern equipment. But when the economy goes sour, they can lose everything.

If even these large farmers are hurting now, you can be sure that overproduction is driving a lot of small farmers out of business and off the land. And, in fact, this has already happened. The rate of hunger is even higher among rural children than those living in cities. Some 86 percent of the counties with the highest rates of what is called “child food insecurity” are rural.

Overproduction is a uniquely capitalist problem. It is what leads to capitalist crises and a crash of the system. What is happening in agriculture may be exacerbated by Trump’s tariffs, but the underlying crime of growing hunger alongside a glut of food is the profit system itself. □

## Nome, Alaska

# Impact of global warming in Arctic community

By G. Dunkel  
Nome, Alaska

Nome, Alaska, had back-to-back blizzards followed by rain, ending a February that saw temperatures in the upper 20s or low 30s. When the rain hit the snow, it turned into ice, which made the roads so treacherous that even taxis stopped running. The National Weather Service reported Nome got 76 inches of snow between Jan. 25 and Feb. 28. Since Nome is just 143 miles south of the Arctic Circle, rain and warm temperatures are unusual.

A single weather event may or may not be caused by global warming. But when you add the facts that the whole eastern half of the Bering Sea is ice-free, that its water temperature is 3 degrees warmer than usual; that Kotzebue Bay, a shallow arm of the Bering, is not frozen solid; that the Grand Iditarod Dog Race, a famous, 1,000-mile race from Anchorage to Nome, is building temporary bridges to cross water south of Nome; and that this latest unusual weather pattern is at least 2 years old—the only reasonable explanation of all these facts is global warming. Inuit elders began noticing warming signs in the 1980s.

Nome, a fly-in community since it is not connected to the rest of Alaska by road, is a hub for a number of smaller communities because it receives freight by barge. It’s only a hundred or so years old, the result of an early 20th century gold rush, with just under 3,700 people according to Mayor Richard Beneville. It is about 65 percent Inuit, with communities from the Inupiaq, Central Yupik and St. Lawrence Island peoples.

Unlike a number of Alaska’s municipalities, Nome is not a dry (alcohol-free) town, and it has a former substance abusers’ support group. that meets weekly in the Katirik Cultural Center. A fluctuating group of homeless people

hangs out in front of the bars on Front Street. The religious radio station KNOM reports that a new shelter has been set up to allow homeless people who were sleeping in snow banks to sleep under a roof. (tinyurl.com/y4rble8s)

With the beginning of what could be substantial trade between Europe and Asia using the Northwest Passage, there are capitalist dreams about turning Nome into a very profitable service port. This would require more investment, major dredging and workers used to living in an exacting environment.

Over 6 feet of snow, topped with ice, creates major difficulties for workers who have to drive or walk to their jobs and for students who take a bus to school. Open water in the Bering Sea makes it very difficult to harvest sea mammals and fish that people in Nome, especially Native people, depend on for sustenance. It also opens their communities to flooding and erosion from winter storms.

Hunting for sustenance is important for Alaskans. It is the only state where the federal SNAP program (formerly the food stamp program) allows its benefits to be used to purchase tools for harvesting wild animals. The tools include “nets, lines, hooks, fishing rods, harpoons, knives and ice augers.”

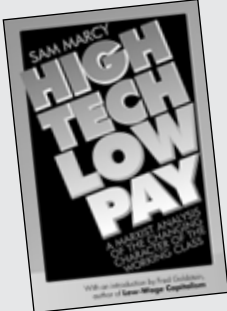
But without ice, people can’t go ice fishing. Harvesting seals, a major food resource, is much harder when you have to tow them to land. The hunters who catch walruses (mammals that grow to between 2,000 and 3,000 pounds) have to process their catch 50 miles offshore in an open boat—much more difficult and dangerous than towing their catch a few miles to ice and processing it on a stable platform.

Global warming is making the hard lives of people living on the Alaska coastline, some in whaling communities like Utqiagvik that are close to 1,000 years old, much harder. □



Disappearing sea ice.

PHOTO: KTOO.ORG

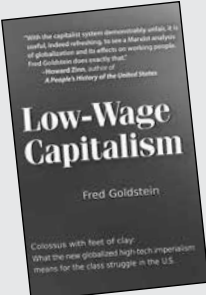


### High Tech, Low Pay

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**.

Read at [workers.org/books/](http://workers.org/books/)



### Low-Wage Capitalism

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



### Capitalism at a Dead End

Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

For more information on these books and other writings by the author, **Fred Goldstein**, go to [LowWageCapitalism.com](http://LowWageCapitalism.com)



# Title X changes promote right-wing, “faith-based” agenda

By Sue Davis

The Trump administration’s new rules for Title X, the reproductive health care program serving 4 million low-income women, has two purposes. One has two parts: denying all information about abortion services to patients — the so-called “gag rule” — and defunding Planned Parenthood, which provides 41 percent of Title X patients with a comprehensive range of women’s health needs, including abortion. (“Oppose Trump’s Title X changes,” WW, March 7)

The other is promoting faith-based “crisis pregnancy centers” that offer little or no medical care or postnatal support, while coercing pregnant women to have babies, not abortions.

The second purpose, which has not been covered as much in the corporate media — if at all — is totally in keeping with the Trump administration’s flagrantly right-wing, anti-women/gender-oppressed people, white supremacist agenda.

But the two parts converge in the Trump/Pence wish list — that the revised rules will kick Planned Parenthood out of Title X and lavish funds on anti-abortion facilities.

Title X was passed by Congress in 1970 by the Nixon administration, when providing basic reproductive health care for low-income women was seen as integral to the federal war on poverty—because it would cut welfare payments for poor children!

Trump began planning to restructure Title X when he appointed Diane Foley head

of the Office of Population Affairs in the Health and Human Services Department in May 2018 to oversee distribution of Title X funding. Prior to that Foley was president/CEO of Life Network, which, its website states, offers “life-affirming alternatives to abortion” and is an affiliate of CareNet, a large national network of CPCs.

But this is not the first time an anti-abortion gag rule has been introduced. The Reagan administration rolled out one in 1988, which was repealed in the early 1990s by Congress, though that body lacked the votes to override President George H.W. Bush’s veto. In 1993 President Bill Clinton suspended it with an executive order, and anti-choice rules were formally repealed in 2000.

### Designed to open up Title X to anti-abortion facilities

Wording of certain revised HHS regulations exposes its true purpose, reports a March 4 Pacific Standard article — to open the Title X door to CPCs. The revised HHS text reads: “[P]otential grantees and sub-recipients that refuse to provide abortion counseling and referrals will clearly be eligible to participate in the Title X program.” The word “unborn” baby or child is used nine times in the HHS text, but never “fetus”; the word “conscience” is used in the context of abortion 70 times.

The HHS preamble blatantly invites groups previously excluded from Title X funding “due to conscience concerns” to apply. “[It’s] a pretty clear call to those sites to do so,” Kinsey Hasstedt, senior policy manager at the Guttmacher

reproductive health research institute, told the Pacific Standard.

Another change, which increases the number of groups eligible to apply for funding, is removing “medically approved” from accepted forms of Title X birth control. That not only weakens standards of care but opens the door to faith-based groups that recommend the often unreliable, so-called “fertility awareness method” based on abstinence.

The current wording states that organizations only offering a single birth control method “may participate” if they are part of a broader network that offers a range of options. But the new wording says facilities “are not required to provide every acceptable and effective family planning method or service.”

As Jessica Marcella, vice president of communications at the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association (NFPRHA), pointed out in the article, “[That] could allow for a real shift in the network for providers supported by Title X.” Hasstedt noted that by shifting away from “trusted providers of high-quality care” to new sites with limited services (already infamous for inaccurate information and coercive care) that pressure clients to have children, “[I]t’s really shifting the fundamental purpose and impact of the Title X program in a really troubling way.”

### Opposition growing

That’s why dozens of national medical groups, pro-choice legal organizations and advocates, women’s rights groups, pro-choice clergy have come out

against the revised regulations. In fact the American Medical Association joined forces with Planned Parenthood on March 5 when they filed a federal lawsuit against changing the Title X regulations.

The AMA based its challenge against the revised rule on two points: “to prevent infringement of the physician/patient relationship and to protect the integrity of Title X.” It denounced the revised rule because it “blesses biased and incomplete pregnancy counseling where the interests of the patient are no longer paramount” and it “will politicize the practice of medicine and the delivery of health care.” (Time, March 5)

The state of California filed a lawsuit on March 4, while attorneys general in 20 states filed one on March 5. NFPRHA is due to file one soon on behalf of publicly funded family planning providers.

While the current opposition to the rule changes is overwhelmingly legal at this time, it’s obvious that women and other gender-oppressed people — led by people of color, who are the majority of Title X recipients, as well as youth, rural residents, im/migrants, women with disabilities and survivors of domestic abuse — need to start taking to the streets against Title X rule revisions.

Eons of class history have shown that’s the only way basic human rights are won. The right to have an abortion is a basic human right that is at the intersectional root of reproductive justice. Onward to liberation for all gender-oppressed people! □

## Anna Chambers says 'NO' to NYPD rapists

By Taryn Fivek

In September 2017, 18-year-old Anna Chambers was falsely detained and raped by two members of the New York Police Department in the back of a van in a Chipotle parking lot in South Brooklyn. While she was stumbling home, a friend collected her off the street and took her to the hospital where she underwent the humiliation and trauma of providing evidence for a rape kit. Incontrovertible physical proof of her rape was gathered against the two rapists: Richard Hall and Edward Martins. Despite this, all charges of rape were dropped against these cops March 6—a fresh outrage against women and girls delivered by the so-called justice system.

The cops had pretended to arrest Chambers and had promised her they would let her go if she allowed herself to be raped by them. The only charges left standing against these brutal, dangerous men are taking bribes and official misconduct. As if Anna Chambers had not been a terrified 5-foot-2-inch, 90-pound teenager in handcuffs in the back of a police van, but rather a wily sorceress who seduced these upstanding citizens in an effort to corrupt their morality.

This is how the defense painted it in public anyway, planting photos from her social media in the New York Post and other tabloids in an effort to say the clothing she wore, the poses she made, etc., somehow justified her being raped while in handcuffs by two grown men with guns.

Cops murder with impunity in New York City. Eric Garner’s killer Daniel Pantaleo still collects more than \$100,000 in salary per year while he remains in uniform. Now it seems the courts are sending the message that cops are able to rape with impunity as well. Anna Chambers refused plea deals because she wanted to see the NYPD on trial for rape, but the charges were dropped by the District



People’s Power Assembly takes to the streets in support of Anna Chambers.

Attorney’s office before a jury even had the chance to decide.

Chambers wanted to come forward in the spirit of the #MeToo movement to give other women and girls the courage to step forward. Instead, the NYPD sent a powerful message to women and girls across New York: We will rape you, torture you, drag your name through the mud and get away with it if you dare to defend yourself publicly.

Chambers possesses tremendous courage by speaking up, and her case helped pass a law in New York state that states the obvious — anyone in police custody cannot consent to sex with a police officer. In Anna’s case, she told cops “no,” but it didn’t matter. The armed guards of the state said she said “yes,” and that’s the story the state went with.

But consent is not necessarily about whether or not a person says “yes.” It’s about understanding the power dynamics involved in a situation and whether or not the person has the ability to clearly say “no.” With the NYPD’s history of wanton murder, theft, violence and rape, there is no way for anyone, much less a petite teenager in handcuffs, to give a real “yes” to a cop.

As Anna Chambers’ case moves into the civil trial phase, and as the cops threaten to bring charges against her, it is important for the public to stay aware and mobilized in defense of Anna and all survivors of rape. □



## International Women’s Alliance says: ‘End forced displacement, neo-fascism & war’

*This statement, slightly edited here, was issued March 8 by the International Women’s Alliance, a global grassroots women’s organization. For more information, see iwa2010.org.*

On this International Working Women’s Day, the International Women’s Alliance continues to amplify the voices of women and children around the globe who continue to struggle against intensified attacks by state fascism, wars of aggression and neoliberalism resulting in their further oppression and exploitation.

In the U.S., women comprise more than half the workforce, relying more and more on immigrant and migrant labor, and continue to face wage inequality. Persistent inequality has far-reaching economic consequences.

Along the southern border of the U.S., hundreds of thousands of migrants are seeking asylum across the border to escape violence, poverty and political corruption in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Once they have managed to survive the dangerous trek, they are immediately faced with inhumane treatment by Border Patrol and Homeland Security agents. Children, forced to separate from their families, [are] placed in overcrowded detention facilities.

As the U.S. continues to augment its war budget in the billions toward senseless wars and wall borders, the global capitalist crisis devastates the lives of the majority of the world’s population, with women and children feeling the brunt of this crisis. Forced migration and widening inequality across and within countries in the North and South are ... manifestations of a humanitarian crisis. The crisis of nature is visible in an ever-increasing number of

natural catastrophes, which hit predominantly poor and vulnerable populations.

The logic of the system of rapacious capitalism requires it to constantly seek out more land, resources and labour. Artificially created conflicts and proxy civil wars, fed and fanned by external powers for their own gain, ravage parts of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, affecting particularly the women. We hear the hypocritical invocation of democracy by regime changers in situations like Venezuela—where the U.S. and Canada are shamelessly playing a leading role—often the same players who financed and supported coups in places like Chile and propped up genocidal dictators!

To counter our growing resistance, governments — regardless of the political party — use distractions such as heightened nationalism to divide us and provide fodder for neo-fascists.

In Quebec, the latest incarnation of secular fundamentalism is the law excluding women and others from work if they choose religiously observant clothing, even as the Premier denies the existence of Islamophobia, something his Status of Woman Minister actually proves with her utterances! It is clear such laws have nothing to do with religious neutrality or protection of women. Instead, they feed racism, hate, attacks on women and undermine women’s economic autonomy.

Women throughout the world need to unite and resist the increasing fascism in their respective countries and throughout the world. Working women must continue fighting for their rights and against oppression and exploitation!

Long Live International Working Women’s Day! □



# Three days of war for light in Venezuela

By Marco Teruggi  
Caracas

A ghost town, that's what Caracas looked like at mid-night on Saturday, March 9. The power shutdown was almost total. Only crowded luxury restaurants, some service stations, pharmacies, hotels, and the few cars and motorcycles on the road had light. Silence and darkness, a Hollywood setting. Once again the power outage was accompanied by a special element: the absence of violent hotspots and a very small police presence at key points.

In the early hours of Sunday morning, light returned to some parts of the country and to the city. In a few areas it had not yet returned by Sunday afternoon and evening. In other words, thousands of people were left in the dark for more than three days, starting Thursday, March 7, at 5 p.m., the moment when the national emergency began that brought the whole country into an unknown space of time.

We are usually not consciously aware of all the things that depend on electricity: communications, payments, land and air transport to health systems, day and night schedules, water, food reserves and the possibility of studying or working. A prolonged total disruption slows a country down almost to a stop, with its companies, institutions, homes and daily life, approaching an abyss as it drags on, and that, as we know, can trigger reactions.

That's why the tranquility that we experienced within such a framework was key. Yesterday morning's images were of setting up fruit and vegetable markets; forming lines to fill up gas tanks, to get water; worries about relatives; acts of solidarity; daily life in times of siege.

One can't go far astray by speculating that the purpose of the shutdown was to trigger an apocalyptic frenzy. An article in Forbes on March 9 (a magazine that can't be accused of being a friend of Chavismo) raised the possibility of a cyber-attack to explain the outage: "In the case of Venezuela, the idea of a government like the United States remotely interfering with its power grid is actually quite realistic. Remote cyber operations rarely require a significant ground presence, making them the ideal deniable influence operation."

The article adds: "The country's outdated internet and power infrastructure present few formidable challenges to such operations and make it relatively easy to remove any traces of foreign intervention ... [it can be done] in a way that delegitimizes the current government exactly as a government-in-waiting has presented itself as a ready alternative."

## Why U.S. chooses sabotage

Sabotage to the power grid of such magnitude can be framed by the sequence of events initiated at the beginning of this year, including: the nonrecognition of Nicolás Maduro [as duly elected president of Venezuela]; the self-proclamation of Juan Guaidó; the meeting of the United Nations Security Council; Feb. 23 as the key date for the delivery of [so-called] humanitarian aid, coupled with the impossibility of achieving that objective; new meetings in the U.N.; Guaidó's return to the country; and the shutdown.

After Feb. 23 there was a reversal: The threat of military intervention by the United States was taken off the table, which could be due, among other things, to the negative impact that threat was having. What followed was the shift to this power outage scenario, where the action unfolded in two different directions: the act as such, with all its consequences, and its interpretation, that is, the dispute to fix responsibilities. At this point the key lies in the power to convince.

One of the lessons to be learned from recent episodes is the vulnerability of truth in the face of the immense power major news networks linked with governments have to promote what they want us to think. The most emblematic case was the story presented as a matter of fact — that Venezuelan police burned trucks supposedly filled with humanitarian aid on Feb. 23.

A recent article in the New York Times points out what Página 12 had published: That a molotov cocktail was thrown from the behind the lines of the opposition [on the Colombian side of the border], and that there is no evidence that medicines were in the trucks. However, the manufactured "fact" [that Chavistas threw it from the Venezuelan side of the border] was repeated as truth by the media, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence and the Venezuelan case manager, Elliot Abrams, at the United Nations and other venues.

The controversy over credibility is even stronger in the case of the power outage, because of the difficulty of proving sabotage, the lack of evidence for the attack, the ways in which the strikes were launched — as President Maduro pointed out — in a computerized, electromagnetic, scientific manner, and with in-house collusion.

Added to this, the instability of the electrical system has been persistent in some areas of the country, such as Zulia state. That, together with allegations of a lack of investment in the electrical system, the view reiterated every day that this government is entirely corrupt, in addition to miscommunication, and the concrete effects of the shock, have meant that the argument of sabotage has not convinced a large part of [Venezuelan] society.

The urgent need of the government is to stabilize the system, guarantee emergency supplies of food, water, gas, reorder the daily routine within the existing difficulties, for which, among other things, it has set up operations in hospitals, and declared Monday, March 11 a day off from work. It can be predicted that there will be new attacks to generate new power outage and there will be the need to deal politically with its repercussions. There could be other characteristics. It is a complex scenario with many variables, assault fronts, possibilities, actors, timing and desperation.

We must not lose sight of the general scenario in which these events take place: the attempt to create a parallel government to force Nicolás Maduro to abandon political power, whatever form it will take. Guaidó announced in an extraordinary session of the National Assembly today, declaring a State of National Emergency, again calling on the Bolivarian National Armed Force with a last-chance warning. Other right-wing leaders reiterated they are in favor of calling for a violent remedy with intervention.

The battle for light, the core of the assault at this moment, is not over yet. □

*First published March 11 in pagina12.com.ar. Translation by Michael Otto.*



A delegation of anti-war leaders from the U.S. are in Caracas to express solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution.

# Venezuela battles U.S. sabotage of electrical grid

Continued from page 1

Feb. 23 was an important defeat for the Venezuelan opposition, even beyond their failure to get the trucks into the country, which was always a secondary objective. What the opposition truly needed was to create a pretext for invasion though violent provocations and media manipulation.

Washington hoped to gather support among the NATO countries for intervention, just as it had for the attacks on the former Yugoslavia in 1999 or in Libya in 2011. Before Feb. 23, it seemed likely that several European countries such as Britain would join this intervention. The rest of the coalition would be the Lima Group, an organization of right-wing Latin American governments, some of which were recently targeted by U.S.-backed coups — Honduras in 2009 or Brazil in 2016.

However, the heroic Bolivarian demonstration of strength and resistance caused both the European Union and the Lima Group to rule out endorsing military action. If the U.S. government wants to invade, it will have to do it without the approval of any international body.

This makes it more difficult for the Trump administration to invade openly. The question now is what the new imperialist plan against Venezuela might be. The attack against the electrical grid suggests that the plan is to destabilize and

wear down the country.

The economic attacks from the U.S. will continue, and Washington has already threatened to apply sanctions to countries trading with Venezuela. The sabotage and digital attacks will continue as well, and are likely to be expanded to more critical sectors.

Another possibility is a dirty war, fought through rebel groups created and armed by the U.S. to apply enough pressure to collapse the Bolivarian social programs. The opposition already has a base of "guarimberos," or violent street fighters, that could serve as a starting point.

In either case, the main battlefield is the economy. Imperialism's plans to destabilize the country are based on "making the economy scream." To defeat the new and desperate opposition attacks, it will be necessary to break the remaining power the oligarchy holds over the Venezuelan economy, while strengthening popular organization in the country.

## Divisions within the U.S. ruling class

The fact that it was Obama who first classified Venezuela as a national security threat is important. This declaration was the justification for unilateral sanctions against the country. The current efforts to overthrow the Venezuelan government are a direct continuation of policies begun under Obama.

Despite their differences domestically, the leaders of both mainstream U.S. parties are firmly united when it comes to protecting imperialism. To prove it, you only have to look at how quickly Democratic leaders like Nancy Pelosi fell into line with the Rubio and Bolton narrative about Venezuela.

The unity of the two ruling-class parties serves to protect the imperialist system, ensuring the U.S. government will enforce the conditions imperialism requires. Pelosi had the opportunity to denounce the imperialist lies, and truly resist the Trump administration in the process, but Democratic Party leaders have always put imperialist interests first.

Now, as a result of the huge defeat imperialism suffered on Feb. 23, cracks

are beginning to show. The New York Times' decision to break with the government line is just the most recent sign of tension within the ruling class.

Some elected officials, such as Minnesota Rep. Ilhan Omar, have rejected the coup attempt from the very beginning. Omar's statements and her solidarity with Palestine have drawn fierce attacks from the Democratic leadership.

Venezuela remains under serious threat by imperialism, now in the form of sabotage and economic attacks. The progressive movement in the U.S. must take advantage of these divisions in the ruling class in order to strengthen the anti-imperialist movement and demand an end to the sanctions. □



## TURN THE GUNS AROUND by John Catalinotto

During the Vietnam War, U.S. draftees and enlistees threw a wrench into the Pentagon's war machine, emerged as anti-war leaders and organized for a union in the armed forces. Letters and interviews of GI war resisters combine with memoir and historical research to highlight the relation between rank-and-file troop resistance and the struggle to smash state power from the Paris Commune to the Portuguese revolution.

\$19.95 paperback. New York: World View Forum 2017, 324 pages. 29 photos, 4 maps. Available at online book vendors.



## Interview from Venezuela

# Union leader and militant on state of the crisis



*The following are excerpts from an interview with **Stalin Pérez Borges**, a union leader and veteran socialist militant in Venezuela. He is a member of the Unitarian Unionist Chavista League (LUCHAS) and of the Bolivarian Socialist Workers' Central (CBST) Advisory Council. The original appeared in Spanish on Feb. 7—that is, long before the Feb. 23 showdown on the border. Translated by Pedro Alvarez from Aporrea. (Entire interview: [tinyurl.com/y4tknu43](http://tinyurl.com/y4tknu43))*

### Social and economic crisis in Venezuela

The economic and social crisis has grown exponentially for five years, and has gotten to this rotten state of hyper-inflation that we're barely coping with. This is the cause for the huge discontent that we have at this stage and for the important change in the correlation of political power in this juncture. This is a consequence of three fundamental facts: two of them circumstantial, and one structural.

The circumstantial causes are: First, the economic sabotage and blockade, described by the government as "economic warfare." This factor is the main determinant in the current economic and social situation. The trade exclusion and the blockade have caused a stagnation of 80 percent of what little was being produced in the country's industries.

It has also led to plummeting in the high levels of imports of food, medicines, raw materials and machinery. It is also the cause of the hoarding and the fact that unscrupulous traders can set the price for all sorts of commodities, including the U.S. dollar.

The second circumstantial cause is corruption, ineptitude and impunity, which have soared in the past five years. The level of corruption and ineptitude [by] government functionaries is major and damaging. In many cases it coincides with the sabotage by the elites and imperialists, with the complicity of military and civilian functionaries, regarding the speculative value of the market price of commodities that the people need.

The structural problem is that the national productive capacity is very low. This is also determined by the historic high level of oil income, which turned the local bourgeoisie into a very parasitic social class, always dependent on the price of oil. They prefer to import, rather than produce or export.

Under Chávez, despite some appropriate programs and plans to improve the development of national industry, this largely remained on paper. The levels of national production needed were never made a reality. Under Chávez, from 2007 to 2012, that low production capacity didn't produce discontent as the high price of oil was enough to import even luxury goods.

But from 2013 to date, with Maduro, a

high price has been paid for this mistake. With the decreasing price of oil, there is no money for imports, nor for the national industry, including transnational companies, to receive the dollars that they used to be guaranteed due to the currency controls. The struggle of these sectors to seize a share of that income is the main reason why the conspiracies and the fight to the death haven't stopped in 20 years of Chavista governments. And it is here, making use of this situation, that Yankee and European interests also play a role.

### Scope and class character of the Jan. 23 'opposition'

The opposition's demonstrations on Jan. 23 were impressively big. Those in Caracas and Valencia surprised both them and others. That has encouraged the opposition. The right-wing segments had largely surrendered after the elections for the congress (ANC).

Since the election, until Jan. 23, they were absent at street demonstrations. They were focused on media campaigns against the government, taking advantage of the growing discontent because the government hasn't been able to provide measures to successfully counter the "economic warfare." And, they focused on the complicity of corrupt bureaucrats who have allowed speculation in the commercial sector.

As solutions, President Maduro has implemented distribution of food packages, carried out by the Local Committees of Distribution and Production (CLAP), and also Compensation Bonuses and continuous increases to the minimum wage and food ticket for workers. These are progressive measures, but they have not been enough to cover the loss of purchasing power of workers' salaries.

So the right-wing demonstrations of Jan. 23 included the usual social base of middle-class people, plus some segments of workers, including some unions that earlier this year identified with Chavismo.

### Chavistas organized spectacular demonstrations

After Jan. 23, the opposition made big efforts to turn out the same number of people, or more, as on that day in Caracas and Valencia. They demonstrated again on Feb. 2, but it wasn't the same in numbers or expectations as on Jan. 23. Meanwhile the Chavista demonstration on Jan. 23 in Caracas was very well attended.

The feeling among the government-sympathizing popular class is very strong. On Jan. 28, 29, 30, 31 and Feb. 1 and 2, Chavistas organized surprisingly spectacular demonstrations in more than six cities. The Feb. 2 demonstration in Caracas was attended by large numbers of people, similar to those during the best days of Chavismo. So currently we have a Chavismo

that is more motivated to take the offensive against the coup or invasion plans.

There are no visible signs of grassroots self-organizing. The United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) and government structures are leading these demonstrations. The strong presence of youth is striking.

### Internal rupture within the army?

Since before Jan. 10, the opposition and high-ranking members of the Trump administration, U.S. senators and some governments, like those of Ivan Duque in Colombia, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Mauricio Macri in Argentina, and Luis Almagro from the Organization of American States (OAS), have been waiting for the push for Maduro's fall to come from segments of the Bolivarian National Army Forces (FANB).

However, until now that has failed. They have offered FANB members large sums of money and promises of amnesty and appointment to high positions. Ever since Guaidó proclaimed himself interim president, this usurper's main proposition is aimed at members of the army, promoting a supposed Amnesty Law in favor of soldiers who rebel against Maduro's government.

No signs have been seen inside or outside the FANB that a force may appear which is capable of risking a suicidal venture on the side of imperialism and its lackeys in the opposition.

### Imperialism's strategy?

Imperialism's aim has always been to oust the Chavista government at any cost. Since the moment Maduro came to power in 2013, they started the plan to oust him. Currently, they are acting with more urgency. They need to put an end to Maduro and the Bolivarian revolution, the cycle of instability and the progressive and more-or-less sovereign governments that arose in our continent after Chávez kicked off the revolutionary process and started governing.

With Lenin Moreno's treason in Ecuador and having regained complete control in Brazil and Argentina, and with a favorable balance of forces in the region, imperialism does the rest. They want to oust Maduro and defeat the Bolivarian process with the least possible political cost. But if they don't achieve this in the short term, they will try to do it at any cost. Trump represents a segment of imperialism that desperately wants the U.S. to seize global economic, political and military hegemony. They want to recover economic, financial and industrial supremacy, which they have been losing to China. Their power is mainly military.

### Anti-imperialist sentiment deep

The anti-imperialist sentiment of our people is historic and it runs very deep. It will be difficult to defeat us. It will be hard to convince a majority of the workers and poor people to accept the raising of the U.S. flag, as Guaidó and the right-wing political leaders who are with him have done in their public demonstrations.

Since the oil strike of 1936 — which almost became a national strike against the British and Yankees and the military dictatorship — a very deep anti-imperialist sentiment has grown. It was rebuilt or revived for more than 15 years with Chávez's message. A rebellious sentiment appeared here that hasn't stopped since Feb. 27 and 28, 1989 [dates of the mass uprising in Caracas called the Caracazo].

This found expression in the decisive, fearless struggle of April 13, 2002, when an attempted military coup against Chávez

was defeated. And it was demonstrated in the response to the bosses' strike and oil sabotage from December 2002 to January 2003 — and in all the resistance we have carried out, not letting the right wing oust Maduro by force.

The government continues to pay on the foreign debt in the middle of this imperialist economic blockade. It hasn't touched any monopolies, such as the Polar group and others, when these same monopolies hoard food stocks or distribute them arbitrarily and overpriced!

Living in Valencia, the country's main industrial city, and being a unionist, I can say that its industrial zones are almost paralyzed, that there are stagnant or nearly stagnant industrial sectors, that working conditions, safety and salaries in important sectors, such as energy, oil, health and education have suffered to worrisome levels.

### Capacity of Venezuelan gov't, popular militias to resist

In a public statement by LUCHAS, we urgently requested the dispatch of army officials and soldiers to at least 11,000 zones, so that they can live with the communities and organize the military aspect of anti-imperialist resistance. We need to make the civilian-military alliance a reality in the community. In that statement we said: "In this context, we encourage the people and workers to voluntarily join the '50,000 Popular Defense Units in all neighborhoods, cities and corners of the country, for them to back up and strengthen an integral defense of the motherland,' which President Maduro has asked to implement."

Popular militias or those Popular Defense Units are a work in process. The Venezuelan National Militia has existed for years. There are already 2 million militia members, many of whom are being called on to integrate other army forces as active, permanent soldiers. It's said that the weapons capacity of the army is very modern, and the army has good logistics and respectable professionalism.

We also call for the formation of "Simón Bolívar International Brigades" of solidarity with Venezuela. And we call for: 1) the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), national unions, federations and other social movements and organizations around the world to trade in medicines, food and raw materials with the legitimate government of President Maduro and/or with union and social organizations of Venezuela; and 2) the social organizations of Latin America to organize Solidarity Caravans, and come here through our borders with Colombia and Brazil.

### Nationalization, expropriation?

If [the government] doesn't act soon, resolving the consequences of its stagnation in these economic and social aspects, it will do more damage than any missile or incoming imperialist "humanitarian aid." If it doesn't control problems effectively and for the long term — such as currency exchange speculation, supply shortages, and the price of food and medicines — or encourage the national production of goods and services — in mid-term it will lose its social base and find it difficult to survive.

Among other measures, it has to stop paying the foreign debt, block capital flight, impose progressive taxation on assets, and promote the distribution and control of goods by a communal state run by the workers. Otherwise we will fail.

Let me finish this interview with our motto: "Fight, fight, don't stop fighting for a government of the workers and of the people." □



## Int’l Working Women’s Day: Nothing stays the same

International Working Women’s Day, March 8, is celebrated in many countries to acknowledge past and present struggles for women’s equality and liberation in all spheres of life. These struggles can take many forms — marches, rallies, teach-ins, strikes, direct action, walkouts.

Millions of women, including gender-nonconforming people — in oppressed countries and even in rich capitalist centers — are aware that the origins of IWWD are pro-socialist, anti-patriarchal and overall anti-capitalist.

These same women have also been inspired by the current #MeToo movement, initiated by Tarana Burke, a Black woman in 2007, to show solidarity with women of color victimized by sexual and racist misconduct.

Before the present White House regime came to power in 2016, IWWD had been marginalized inside the U.S., especially compared to its politically conservative counterpart, Mother’s Day, widely celebrated on the second Sunday in May.

Even when Congress declared Women’s History Month in 1975, little was known about the role played by the women’s mass movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s in winning this proclamation.

But as Bob Dylan’s classic lyrics state, “The times they are a-changin’.” Nothing stays the same, including in the belly of the beast, the United States.

The ushering in of the misogynist, white supremacist Trump government, coupled with the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements, have helped elevate much-needed class consciousness about the significance of IWWD among sectors of U.S. society, especially women of all ages, nationalities and gender expression.

Due to these movements, Barry Jenkins, an award-winning Black director, expressed his support for more women directors during the Feb. 23 Spirit Independent Awards ceremony.

And on March 8, NBA TV, a channel

dedicated to games and news for the male-dominated National Basketball Association, paid tribute to the role that women play in front of and behind the camera in helping to make the NBA the second most popular U.S. pro sport, behind the National Football League.

Even the sports conglomerate, Nike, created an inspiring TV ad for Women’s History Month, voiced by the great Serena Williams, showing women and girl athletes, including those who are trans, Muslim and with disabilities, using sports as a powerful platform for change.

Notwithstanding this progress, mainstream media have fallen short in explaining the real class origins of IWWD, just as with the founding of International Workers Day or May Day, which brought about the eight-hour workday in the U.S. through militant struggle. Corporations will always try to co-opt progressive historical events and leaders in an attempt to increase their insatiable profit line.

It is the responsibility of revolutionaries and activists to resist and to push consciousness to the left within the U.S. population. We must show that unorganized women workers, including immigrants, were in the forefront of organizing for a livable wage and better working conditions in the factories, in the offices and in the fields in the early 1900s. Theirs were the battles that paved the way for IWWD.

Today, that tradition continues globally — with women workers going on strike against the attacks on public education or organizing one-day stoppages against transnationals such as McDonald’s, Burger King or Google for better wages, health care benefits and against sexual abuse.

The real goal of IWWD is to build solidarity for revolutionary change that includes women and gender-nonconforming people — 365 days a year, regardless of borders. □

## Free Chelsea Manning!

No, this is no mistake by our editors — repeating a headline used seven times in Workers World since this brave transgender soldier and whistleblower Chelsea Manning was sentenced to 35 years in prison seven years ago. It is, however, one we didn’t expect to repeat after she received a presidential commutation of her sentence in January 2017.

The U.S. government is persecuting Manning because it hates the truth and refuses to share that truth with the people. Washington despises whistleblowers like Manning, Edward Snowden and the media organization WikiLeaks who expose the crimes of the CIA, Pentagon and State Department — crimes they commit worldwide to protect and expand the property and profits of the super-rich who rule the U.S.

While on active duty in Iraq as an intelligence analyst, Manning released 700,000 classified and sensitive military and diplomatic documents. They revealed details about modern imperialist wars never before made public. This included the infamous “Collateral Murder” tape of a U.S. “Apache” attack helicopter firing on civilians in Baghdad in 2007, killing 11 adults, including two Reuters journalists.

By revealing the crimes of U.S. imperialism, Manning and WikiLeaks carried out a service to humanity. No one should be punished for exposing crimes against humanity. By releasing this truth, they



set an example that can inspire anyone working for the U.S. state apparatus — its military or civilian organizations — who has any sort of feeling of solidarity with the world’s oppressed.

Manning was ordered this March to testify before a grand jury investigating those who are trying to reveal these crimes. She refused to say more

than she already had at her own trial.

U.S. investigators are trying to build a case against WikiLeaks and against its founder, Julian Assange, who has been in asylum in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London since 2012. The U.S. hoped to use Manning’s testimony against Assange and his organization.

Called to testify March 7, Manning objected to the secret nature of the federal grand jury and refused to answer on constitutional grounds. The next day she was arrested and placed in a civil prison, where she may be forced to remain for the life of the grand jury — potentially 18 months — unless she agrees to testify.

Manning has said she will refuse to talk. This is a heroic position for any political prisoner and even more so for Manning because of the increased oppression and brutal treatment to which transgender people are often subjected in prison.

For all of the points made above, Workers World repeats the demand we made during the seven years Manning was in military prison: Free Chelsea Manning! □

### In the U.S.

## International Working Women’s Day celebrated



New York City.

PHOTO: ANAKBAYAN NEW YORK



Transgender contingent, Buffalo.

WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

*A number of commemorations took place on March 8, International Working Women’s Day, in the U.S. Here is a sampling of a few of them.*

In **New York City**, representatives from women’s groups, Malaya Movement, BAYAN USA, GABRIELA New York, International Working Women’s Day Coalition and International Women’s Alliance (Americas), protested in solidarity to end all forms of violence against women and children in the Philippines and all around the world.

Under the general theme of “RISE, RESIST, and UNITE,” activists gathered in front of the Philippines Consulate at the United Nations to denounce the worsening human rights crisis in the Philippines under its misogynist President Duterte and to stop the attacks on Filipino women and children. The activists then took their protest to Trump Tower to expose the U.S. administration’s ongoing

xenophobic and neo-fascist attacks on communities of color, women, immigrants, refugees and LGBTQ+ people.

In **Buffalo, N.Y.**, Workers World Party and Buffalo AntiWar gave out nearly 200 yellow vests at Buffalo’s International Working Women’s Day March 2019 in solidarity with working-class women fighting back worldwide.

A multinational crowd came out for International Working Women’s Day in **Cleveland**. Speakers included community activists and elected officials; the latter reflected the increased number of women of color voted into office here and countrywide. A march through downtown followed the rally outside City Hall. The action was called by Cleveland Women’s March, Imperial Women and International Women’s Day March Cleveland.

*Vijou Bryant, Ellie Dorritie and Martha Grevatt contributed to this roundup.*

### Swedish Iraq solidarity

## Group condemns 2003 U.S.-British invasion

*The following statement by the Board of Iraq Solidarity of Sweden was issued March 3 on the occasion of the upcoming 16th anniversary of the criminal U.S.-British invasion of Iraq on March 20, 2003, and the subsequent involvement of NATO in the occupation of Iraq. (Facebook: Iraksolidaritet)*

1. We recall that 16 years have now passed since the U.S. and Great Britain illegally and in violation of international law invaded and occupied Iraq. The invasion resulted in millions of people being killed, wounded or driven from their homes and from their country and in the destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure.

A political structure was imposed on Iraq which fanned division, sectarian violence and terrorism. Despite the conclusion of the occupation, the U.S. continues to consolidate its control and its military presence in the country and throughout the Middle East.

2. A pretext for the invasion was the claim that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. This claim was already shown to be false when the UN team led by Hans Blix inspected the installations in the country. Their findings were later

confirmed. Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction. And even if that had been the case, it would not have legitimized the invasion and the occupation.

3. Iraq Solidarity has previously protested that the superpower USA has used chemical weapons and other weapons with long-term devastating consequences for the civilian population in a war of aggression against Iraq without the support of the United Nations. The Iraqi people are living in a poisoned country.

The U.S. has used uranium weapons and white phosphorus and burned masses of chemicals in open pits outside hundreds of bases in Iraq. This has seriously affected the civilian population. Weapons with depleted uranium had already been used in 1991 during the Gulf War. The city of Basra was in particular seriously affected.

In 2004 the U.S. carried out two big attacks on the city of Fallujah. Since then many of the children at the Fallujah General Hospital were born with severe deformations. In Fallujah, Basra, Najaf, Baghdad, Hawija and other cities children suffer a very high rate of deformations,

*Continued on page 11*



## Union leader, anti-fascist

# Béla Lugosi: More than just an actor

By Mike Kühlenbeck

Hungarian actor Béla Lugosi was crowned “Hollywood’s Prince of Darkness” for his portrayal of the vampire Count Dracula in several films. But today few people know he was a union leader and anti-fascist who fought real-life monsters.

### From actor to activist

Lugosi was born Béla Ferenc Dezső Blaskó on Oct. 20, 1882, in Lugos, Kingdom of Hungary, Austria-Hungary (now Lugoj, Romania), 50 miles from the castle of Vlad III (Vlad Dracula). The young Lugosi was drawn to the arts. He expressed his theatrical aspirations to his father, a conservative banker, who rejected his son’s career choice. Already a rebellious spirit, Lugosi ran away from home to follow his dreams at 12.

After working at odd jobs and as a miner and machinist, Lugosi made his stage debut at age 20 in 1902, adopting the stage name Béla Lugosi the following year. Critics called him “the Laurence Olivier of Hungary,” and he was invited to join the National Theatre of Budapest.

During World War I, Lugosi enlisted in the Austro-Hungarian Army and obtained the rank of captain in the 43rd Division Ski Patrol. He was injured during combat. Once his service was completed, he returned to acting.

As the cinema gained popularity as an art form, Lugosi starred in some of Hungary’s early silent films. He remained in the National Theatre until 1918 when he answered the call for workers’ revolution.

Daily existence in Hungary was a nightmare few could escape. Lugosi had long protested the low wages, exploitative working conditions and unfair treatment of young actors. He soon recognized the contributions artists could make to political struggles.

### Hungary: supporter of 1919 revolution

Lugosi supported the Hungarian Communist Party, which was founded in December 1918, and its leader, Béla Kun. Following the example of revolutionary Russia, a mass uprising overthrew the old

regime beholden to the ruling class. The Hungarian Soviet Republic was founded on March 21, 1919.

While the Red Flag of the fledgling republic waved over the parliament building for only 133 days, Kun’s government introduced the first legal protections for ethnic minorities, the 8-hour workday and higher national wages.

Lugosi led a demonstration of actors in March 1919 and emerged as a high-profile organizer. He was instrumental in founding the Free Organization of Theatrical Employees, which later expanded into the first film actors union in the world, the National Trade Union of Actors.

Don Rhodes wrote in “Lugosi: His Life in Films, on Stage and in the Hearts of Horror Lovers” that “Lugosi helped combine the Free Organization of Theater Employees and members of the film industry in the National Trade Union of Actors, and acted as its general secretary.”

The NTUA’s first statutory congress began on April 17, 1919. Lugosi’s speech included the words: “Half a year ago, I launched the struggle with the decision that the national trade union of socialist actors should be established.” (Arthur Lenning, “The Immortal Count: The Life and Films of Béla Lugosi”)

Among Lugosi’s articles published in “Szinészek Lapja” (“The Actor’s Page”) was one that discussed the exploitation of actors: “The former ruling class kept the community of actors in ignorance by means of various lies, corrupted it morally and materially, and finally scorned and despised it for what resulted from its own vices. The actor, subsisting on starvation wages and demoralized, was often driven, albeit reluctantly, to place himself at the disposal of the ruling class. Martyrdom was the price of enthusiasm for acting.”

The dreams of a new nation were short-lived when the Hungarian Soviet Republic was overthrown on Aug. 6, 1919. Historian Eugen Weber, author of “Varieties of Fascism: Doctrines of Revolution in the Twentieth Century,” described the successive government as the “highly conservative rule of aristocratic cabinets headed mostly by great landed magnates.”



Béla Lugosi during World War I (below) and as “Count Dracula.”

As a brutal “White Terror” backlash swept the country, Lugosi fled to Vienna and worked in Germany’s motion picture industry with a stint in Berlin. He then emigrated to the United States in December 1920.

Meanwhile, in Hungary thousands of Communists and Jewish people were imprisoned, tortured and/or murdered. The Communists led a precarious existence underground and emerged only after the Red Army entered Hungary in 1944.

### U.S.: union organizer, voice against fascism

After docking in New Orleans, Lugosi learned English and went to New York where he continued acting. In 1927, he originated the role of Count Dracula in the Broadway stage version of Bram Stoker’s novel. In 1931, he reprised the role in a film adaptation, making him an international star.

During the Great Depression, Lugosi played an active role in the Screen Actors Guild. As a SAG founding member, he served on the union’s advisory board. Lugosi organized for the union on the set of “The Raven,” which co-starred Boris Karloff, a SAG member who was famous for portraying Frankenstein’s monster, in 1935.

By World War II, Hungarian dictator Miklos Horthy allied with Adolf Hitler and the Nazis. In opposition, Lugosi helped form the Hungarian-American Council for Democracy, calling for “Nazism to be wiped out everywhere.”

As a member of American-Hungarian Relief Inc., Lugosi was a keynote speaker at an Aug. 28, 1944, rally in Los Angeles. He demanded Washington rescue



Hungarian Jewish refugees, pressure Horthy’s Nazi-puppet regime and ease immigration restrictions.

Dr. Rafael Medoff and J. David Spurlock wrote, “He may have portrayed savage villains on the silver screen, but in real life Béla Lugosi raised his voice in protest against the savage persecution of the Jews in his native Hungary.” (Jewish Ledger, Jan. 3, 2011)

Years of typecasting led to fewer roles for Lugosi. The lack of income, combined with a morphine addiction brought on by physical ailments, left him nearly destitute. Lugosi died at his Los Angeles home on Aug. 16, 1956. He was buried in one of his “Dracula” capes.

Lugosi is best remembered for his work in leading and supporting roles in over 100 films. But his contributions to the struggle for workers’ rights and the anti-fascist cause must be remembered as part of his enduring legacy.

*Additional sources: Stephen J. Lee, “European Dictatorships 1918-1945.”*

## Swedish Iraq solidarity

## Group condemns 2003 U.S.-British invasion

*Continued from page 10*

cancer and other illnesses. Even American Iraq veterans have become seriously ill as a result of the use of these weapons.

4. The question of nuclear weapons has been actualized by the Swedish government in its commissioned “Study of the Consequences of a Swedish Ratification on the Convention against Nuclear Weapons.” Iraq Solidarity wishes to bring to memory that the 2004 UN atomic energy organ, the IAEA, called for a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East. This proposal was later discussed in the UN and in other forums.

The Convention on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons now being discussed is a step in the right direction. Sweden has been a driving force in its adoption, but it has changed its view after pressure from the U.S. Our view is that Sweden should support and ratify this convention. The actions of the U.S. in this question do not further peace either in Iraq or in Sweden.

As part of Iraq Solidarity Month and



the Campaign Against US/NATO bases, the Swedish group Iraq Solidarity is arranging a public seminar in Stockholm on March 20. In the United States on March 30, the United National Antiwar Coalition has called a demonstration in Washington, D.C., to protest the April 4 NATO 70th anniversary ceremonies there and the continued use of NATO as a tool of imperialist aggression, including against Iraq and now against Venezuela. (unacepeace.org) □

## Incertidumbre eléctrica y política en Venezuela

*Continúa de la página 12*

formalmente la intervención humanitaria”, tuiteó antes de la movilización.

Nicolás Maduro habló poco más tarde frente al Palacio de Miraflores. Informó acerca de la cronología de los cinco ataques, tanto físicos a estaciones de generación, como electromagnéticos a redes de transmisión, y cibernéticos al sistema de control automatizado. Afirmó que el 70 por ciento que se había logrado restablecer el viernes en la noche volvió a ser dañado el sábado al mediodía.

Centró las responsabilidades en la estrategia de ataque sobre el sistema eléctrico diseñado por Estados Unidos, la derecha interna, en complicidad con lo que denominó “infiltrados en la empresa”.

Las desconcentraciones de las movilizaciones se realizaron en una ciudad con tranquilidad.

Se trata de una pulseada por restablecer y estabilizar el sistema eléctrico —que presentaba dificultades con anterioridad en diferentes partes de Venezuela— disminuir los daños encadenados que trae el corte nacional prolongado.

El finalizar de la tarde trajo incertidumbre respecto a lo inmediato y lo que vendrá en próximos días. Uno de los ejes de la disputa se centra así alrededor de la interpretación de los acontecimientos.

Los días han pasado a ser una tensión entre el regreso de la luz y los apagones, la normalización necesaria ante un cuadro inédito de asedio que pone a un país a resistir. □



# Venezuela se moviliza contra el imperialismo y el sabotaje eléctrico

Por Sam Ordóñez

10 de marzo - El día 9 de marzo se llenaron las calles de Caracas, Venezuela con miles de personas celebrando el Día del Antiimperialismo Bolivariano. Es una movilización que se ha organizado cada año en esta fecha empezando en 2015, cuando el presidente de Estados Unidos Barack Obama declaró a Venezuela como una amenaza “inusual y extraordinaria.” El pueblo bolivariano también se movilizaba en respuesta al sabotaje del sistema eléctrico del país. El día jueves 7 de marzo empezó una serie de ataques, principalmente de carácter cibernéticas, contra la planta eléctrica de El Guri que suministra a casi todo el país.

En su discurso ante la marcha antiimperialista, el presidente constitucional Nicolás Maduro denunció que la responsabilidad del apagón caía sobre la oposición, ya fracasado su golpe de estado, y sus dirigentes en los Estados Unidos.

Al mismo tiempo, el autoproclamado “presidente interino” de Venezuela, Juan Guaidó, advirtió de forma indirecta que habrían nuevos y ampliados sabotajes. “Debemos anunciar con responsabilidad que se transformará en una crisis por la gasolina,” dijo hablando desde un megáfono en la concentración opositora.

A la hora de escribir, el servicio eléctrico se está restaurando paulatinamente en las zonas afectadas. Según varios oficiales del gobierno, se ha trabajado constantemente desde el comienzo de los ataques para restaurar el servicio y “normalizar la situación.”

Una de las claves de la estrategia golpista ha sido el uso coordinado de los medios de comunicación internacionales, que hasta ahora han seguido el guión injerencista del asesor de seguridad nacional John Bolton, el senador de Florida Marco Rubio y el enviado especial para Venezuela Elliott Abrams, que decían que las fuerzas del gobierno quemaron camiones llenos de ayuda. Pero

el día marzo 10 el New York Times sacó un reporte donde se detalló cómo fueron en realidad las fuerzas opositoras que quemaron el camión en la frontera con Colombia. (tinyurl.com/y5ykjd9e)

Ya debería ser obvio que en su obsesión con conquistar Venezuela los dirigentes del golpe dirán cualquier cosa para justificar un ataque. No está claro porque el New York Times decidió romper con el gobierno estadounidense, pero muestra cómo el imperialismo ha propagado mentiras, usando a los medios de comunicación como parte integral de su ataque contra Venezuela.

### La nueva estrategia de cambio de régimen

Ya un mes y medio después de la autoproclamación de Juan Guaidó, sigue Nicolás Maduro en el palacio de Miraflores y la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana (FANB) sigue en la defensa de la constitución.

El día 23 de febrero se intentó ingresar camiones llenos de supuesta “ayuda humanitaria” que según Nicolás Maduro “ni ayuda, ni humanitaria era”. A pesar de dos días de ataques violentos en la frontera con Colombia, la oposición no logró entrar a los camiones.

Venezuela se defendió ese día porque el poder popular se movilizó contra el imperialismo. La FANB en la frontera luchaba junto a los colectivos chavistas y las milicias civiles. La consciencia y la organización del pueblo chavista pudo evitar la ruptura de la FANB que buscaban los Estados Unidos y su lacayo Juan Guaidó.

La oposición venezolana sufrió un derrote importante el 23 de febrero, mucho más importante que no poder entrar a los camiones, cosa que nunca fue su objetivo principal. Buscaban, mediante provocaciones violentas y manipulación de los imágenes, fabricar un pretexto para la intervención militar de una coalición internacional.

¿Quién habría formado parte de esta coalición? Por una parte se buscaba el apoyo de los países que forman la OTAN (que intervino en ex-Yugoslavia en 1999 y luego en Libia en 2011): Estados Unidos, Reino Unido y otros países europeos. Por otra sería el Grupo de Lima, con la importante excepción de México que rompió con el resto del grupo. Este es un grupo de gobiernos latinoamericanos de derecha, varias de las cuales sufrieron golpes estadounidenses recientes (Honduras en 2009 o Brasil en 2016).

Pero después de la heroica demostración de fuerza por parte de la revolución bolivariana, la Unión Europea salió en contra de la intervención militar, como también lo hizo el Grupo de Lima. Si los Estados Unidos quiere enviar tropas, lo tendrá que hacer sin el apoyo de ninguna organización internacional.

Todo esto dificulta una invasión militar abierta. Entonces, ¿cómo han cambiado los planes del imperialismo en Venezuela? El ataque contra el sistema eléctrico indica que se aplicará una estrategia de desgaste y desestabilización.

Seguirán los ataques económicos desde los Estados Unidos, que ya amenaza con sancionar a terceros países que negocian con Venezuela. Los sabotajes y los ataques cibernéticos también seguirán, y probablemente se ampliarán a otras industrias.

Otra posibilidad es la guerra sucia, crear grupos rebeldes y suministrarlos con armas, para presionar al gobierno y colapsar los programas sociales. Ya cuenta la oposición con sus grupos “guarimberos” como base para esto.

En ambos casos, la guerra económica es la clave. La estrategia desestabilizadora del imperialismo se basa principalmente en “hacer gritar a la economía.” Romper el control que sigue ejerciendo la oligarquía venezolana sobre la economía debe ser la prioridad junto a seguir construyendo la organización popular en el país.

### Fracturas en la clase gobernante de EUA

Es importante el dato de que fue el presidente Obama quien primero clasificó a Venezuela como una amenaza a la seguridad nacional, declaración que justificaba las sanciones unilaterales. La actual política injerencista contra Venezuela es producto directo de la política de Obama.

Históricamente, las diferencias entre los dos partidos estadounidenses desaparecen en cuanto a la política externa. Solo falta ver cómo los líderes del partido Demócrata como Nancy Pelosi aceptan sin preguntas las mentiras sobre Venezuela que difunden Rubio y Bolton.

Esta unidad entre los dos partidos de la clase gobernante sirve para proteger al sistema imperialista, asegurando que EUA tomará acción para asegurar las condiciones que se requieren. Pelosi podría haber desmentido la narrativa sobre Venezuela, y frustrar al gobierno de Trump en el proceso, pero los líderes Demócratas siempre ponen los intereses del imperialismo encima de todo.

Ahora, como resultado del fracaso de la maniobra golpista de febrero 23, se están produciendo fracturas en esa unidad. La decisión del New York Times de romper con las mentiras de Abrams, Rubio y Bolton es la señal más reciente de estas tensiones.

Desde el inicio del intento de golpe de estado algunos oficiales electos como Ilhan Omar, representativa del estado de Minnesota, han declarado públicamente su oposición al golpe de estado. Por eso, y por su solidaridad con Palestina, los líderes del partido Demócrata han atacado ferozmente a Omar.

Venezuela sigue bajo una amenaza imperialista, en forma de sabotaje y ataques económicos. Hace falta que el movimiento progresista en Estados Unidos se aproveche de las rupturas que se están produciendo en la clase gobernante para intensificar la campaña antiimperialista y acabar con las sanciones. □

## Incertidumbre eléctrica y política en Venezuela

Por Marco Teruggi

Extractos del artículo publicado el 10 de marzo en [pagina12.com.ar](https://www.pagina12.com.ar)

La noche del viernes (8 de marzo) a sábado trajo cierta tranquilidad en Venezuela. La electricidad regresó en un 70 por ciento del país luego de más de 24 horas de corte. En cada hogar se repitieron los mismos gestos de enchufar neveras, teléfonos, comunicarse, abrir canillas para que salga agua que mandan las bombas eléctricas.

En la mañana las colas se multiplicaron para comprar comida que, bajo impacto de hiperinflación, exceden los montos de dinero disponible en efectivo. Cuando la

normalidad ya parecía un hecho volvió a irse a luz. Eran las once y media de la mañana del sábado.

A esa hora la oposición ya estaba concentrada en la avenida Victoria, en Caracas, para la movilización convocada por Juan Guaidó el pasado lunes. Era la principal actividad en agenda luego de una reunión con algunos sindicatos de la administración pública realizada el martes.

El chavismo por su parte iniciaba su concentración en el centro-oeste caraqueño para dirigirse hasta el Palacio de Miraflores. Fechas como la de este 9 de marzo – el cuarto aniversario del decreto de Obama declarando a Venezuela una

amenaza inusual y extraordinaria – suelen ser una demostración de fuerzas, de imágenes, donde la ciudad queda dividida por zonas que se dan la espalda en lo estético y político: el chavismo, de color rojo, la oposición vestida de blanco. El corte de clases es marcado, con una mayoría de sectores populares y algunos de clases medias en el chavismo, una proporción invertida en la derecha.

Las movilizaciones se desarrollaron en el contexto del nuevo apagón, sus consecuentes efectos de cansancio, enojo, incertidumbre, peligro en hospitales y fábricas. La información circulante por redes fue poca, los grupos de WhatsApp quedaron casi inactivos, los hechos,

pocos, se corroboraron con el paso de las horas.

Guaidó, quien habló con un megáfono, anunció que convocará a una nueva movilización a Caracas, a la cual no le puso fecha.

La tensión se generó con el pedido de “intervención” de quienes estaban allí y la débil respuesta de Guaidó, quien afirmó que podría apelar al artículo 187 de la constitución, que abriría la puerta a una intervención, según dijo, “cuando llegue el momento”. No solo las bases de la derecha piden una intervención. Algunos dirigentes, como Antonio Ledezma, también. “Vamos pdte. @jguaido solicite

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