

Venezuelan masses build resistance to U.S. covert war

By Sam Ordóñez

March 17 — A massive anti-imperialist march filled the streets of Caracas this Saturday, March 16, celebrating another victory against the latest wave of U.S. aggression against Venezuela.

This mobilization is another example of the increasing organization and mobilization of the Venezuelan masses. The latest phase of imperialist aggression was designed to destroy the Bolivarian Revolution, but instead it has sparked a new wave of working-class, anti-imperialist organization.

Venezuela’s conflict with imperialism seems to be entering a period of prolonged siege, where the Venezuelan masses’ ability to organize and develop domestic production, along with the strength of the international solidarity movement fighting to end the blockade, will be the decisive factors.

Electricity restored

According to official sources, as of March 15 electricity has been restored in Venezuela after a power outage that began on March 7. The outage, which lasted a week in some parts of the country, was caused by a failure in the hydroelectric plant known as “El Guri.”

The Venezuelan, Cuban and Russian governments have denounced various forms of attack against the electrical grid. The primary attack was digital, with various cyber attacks originating from Houston and Chicago, according to statements made by President Nicolás Maduro.

These attacks managed to take down the electrical grid’s central data capture and control system. Even Forbes magazine, which describes itself as a “capitalist tool,” published a report March 9 which detailed exactly how the U.S. could realistically carry out such an attack.

Journalist Max Blumenthal revealed that CANVAS, an organization that evolved out of destabilizing groups in the former Yugoslavia, had published a plan for regime change in Venezuela. This plan included a power outage as a “watershed event” for “galvanizing public unrest.” CANVAS, which receives funds from various U.S. state agencies, trained Juan Guaidó and several of his political allies inside Venezuela. (tinyurl.com/yxl6th8w)

There have also been reports of physical attacks, such as detonating explosives at substations and high-technology attacks using electromagnetic waves to disrupt distribution stations. TeleSUR has also reported explosions at the state oil company’s main facility. (tinyurl.com/y53dy9lt)

Juan Guaidó, the self-proclaimed “interim president,” blames the government for failing to maintain the electrical grid. While it is true that the grid needs further investment, the U.S.-imposed financial blockade has cost Venezuela billions of dollars that could

Continued on page 3



WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS
Rally in Caracas against U.S. threats and sabotage, March 16, 2019.

Editorial Combat Islamophobia worldwide!

The world reverberated on March 15 to the horrifying news that 50 people had been murdered and scores wounded, some critically, at the Al Noor and Linwood mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand.

We knew immediately, without the shadow of a doubt, that this was an act of white supremacist terror, aimed specifically at Muslim people. Here in the U.S., the act called up the heart-wrenching memory of white supremacist murders of African-American people at a Bible class in the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C., in 2015, and of Jewish people at worship in the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh in 2018.

Attacks of white terror and white supremacy continue worldwide. To be in utmost solidarity with oppressed peoples, and to be in defense of our own lives, we must focus on what is to be done.

There has been much outrage at the role of social media and Islamophobic, racist rhetoric motivating the killer’s action. Using a head-mounted camera, the white supremacist live-streamed his brutality in real time to the world, documenting his hate-filled language and action. Someone with advance knowledge of the attack announced it, before it happened, on the right-wing forum 8chan.

But the killer’s racist language has been trumpeted for years by white supremacist U.S. politicians. A March 15 Intercept article listed the comments of

Continued on page 10

Meeting with Maduro	3
Labor on the move	4
Make subways accessible!	5
Racism and basketball	8
Editorial:	
Brexit and workers	10



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN
March 17, New York City.

International Working Women's Day 6-7

- Cuban women speak
- Elizabeth Jennings — pioneer
- 1929 Gastonia strike
- Garment workers then and now

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The crime against Yugoslavia 9

Global youth walkout 9

White House protest hits aggression against Venezuela

By Ted Kelly
Washington, D.C.

Over a thousand activists converged on Lafayette Park in front of the White House March 16 in a show of solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela and the government of President Nicolás Maduro. Coming just days after the U.S. sabotage of Venezuela’s electrical grid, which left the country without power for over 48 hours, the protest, called by Answer, was a rebuke to the ongoing coup attempt orchestrated by the Trump administration.

Representing Workers World and the International Action Center, Loan T. and Taryn Fivek spoke from the stage to the rally.



"No sanctions, no coup, Venezuela, we stand with you!"
 WW PHOTO: TED KELLY

“We remember Vietnam, we remember Libya, we remember Syria, we remember Yemen. We know what is happening in Venezuela right now,” said Loan T., from Durham, N.C. “Democracy under capitalism is democracy for the rich, it is democracy for killer cops, it is democracy for Jeff Bezos and for Donald Trump. It is not democracy for working people!”

Leading the crowd in a chant of “No sanctions, no coup! Venezuela, we stand with you!” Fivek, from New York City, linked the struggle against U.S. militarism and occupation abroad to the successful fight waged against the plan to build the second Amazon headquarters in New York. Issuing a challenge to the crowd, Fivek asked, “What are people here willing to do to stop this war on Venezuela? What are people here willing to unite around in order to end U.S. imperialism?”

Undeterred by a hundred or so pro-coup Venezuelans who had gathered to disrupt the rally, the strong column of Venezuela supporters marched past the White House and down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Trump International Hotel. Members of Workers World Party marched alongside activists from Veterans For Peace, Code Pink and the Party for Socialism and Liberation in a united front against the racism and aggression of the Trump administration.

An upcoming D.C. mobilization scheduled for March 30 will unite the struggle to defend Venezuela with the global fight against NATO, from Colombia to Ukraine. NATO will be meeting in D.C. to mark the 70th anniversary of this global capitalist military alliance. Go to no2nato2019.org

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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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WORKERS WORLD this week

♦ In the U.S.	
D.C. protest hits aggression vs Venezuela	2
On the picket line	4
UAW workers, retirees call for better contracts	4
Minn. Amazon workers walk out over grievances ..	4
Struggle for transit accessibility gains ground.....	5
Solidarity with women worldwide.....	6
Ella May: Anti-racist strike martyr	6
Elizabeth Jennings -- a New York City pioneer.....	7
Triangle Shirtwaist fire & garment workers today ..	7
Russell Westbrook incident exposes racism	8
Protest calls for release of trans man.....	8
Georgia rules against DACA students.....	8
Corporate media pave way for war, then and now ..	9
Students, pupils protest climate policies	9
Generals over the White House	10
♦ Around the world	
Venezuela's mass response to power grid attack. ...	1
Maduro: 'Humanity's battle is for socialism'	3
Cuban women's 'revolution within the Revolution' .	6
♦ Editorials	
After New Zealand, fight Islamophobia worldwide .	1
In Brexit, workers' struggles have no borders	10
♦ Noticias en Español	
Manifestación anti-imperialista en Caracas.	12
Una nueva generación de socialistas en EUA	12

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MADURO TELLS U.S. DELEGATION: ‘Humanity’s battle is between socialism and capitalism’

Workers World online editor John Steffin interviewed Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center, on March 17. Flounders is in Caracas, Venezuela, as part of a solidarity delegation of a dozen anti-war leaders from all over North America, organized and sponsored by the U.S. Peace Council. Members of the delegation arrived in Caracas on March 9 and 10. As of March 18, the delegates have finally begun returning home after American Airlines canceled their flights. A full list of delegation participants is at the end of this article.

Workers World: We saw pictures posted on social media of Peace Council delegates meeting with President Nicolás Maduro. What was the purpose of the meeting?

Sara Flounders: The U.S. Peace Council delegates, Comité de Solidaridad Internacional Venezuela (COSI) and President Maduro met to discuss strengthening cooperation and communication. Suggestions were for sending more delegations to Venezuela and more social media exchanges. When Maduro heard from Sarah Martin that there was a demonstration for Venezuela in Minneapolis happening that day, he immediately sent a twitter message to them.

The Venezuelans are very supportive of the upcoming action on March 30 in support of the Bolivarian Revolution in Washington, D.C. They see it as a next step in solidarity in response to the crisis. We told Maduro that the Boston Bus Drivers Union (Steelworkers Local 8751) were driving a bus to D.C. and Maduro said he was ready to join them!

WW: That’s great to hear. I’m sure they would be happy to have him. What is Maduro’s perspective on the current

situation?

SF: Maduro said that for 200 years, since the time of Simon Bolivar and U.S. President James Monroe, there has been a struggle between sovereignty and colonialism. But in a larger way the battle of all humanity today is a struggle between socialism and capitalism.

He said they face right now the heaviest sanctions ever imposed! Even for essential medicines. All their accounts are stolen. The situation is so severe that they are preparing for the U.S. to attack. Through Community Councils, the organizing units are being told to start storing food, water, batteries.

While we met, Maduro received a threatening tweet from Marco Rubio and one from Elliott Abrams. He read them to us with great laughter. He said his government always has to be ready to talk, of course. But Venezuela’s path is determined by all the people, not by a government Washington appoints.

WW: And what is the determination of the Venezuelan people?

SF: After our meeting, we could see the level of determination first hand. We went to the People’s Encampment guarding the Presidential Palace. Thousands are rotating on security 24 hours a day in anticipation of an imperialist attack on the president.

We saw people’s militias and mass outpourings of organized community groups, housing groups, student groups, etc. That day (March 15) the Oil Workers Union had a big rally. They said: We are armed and ready to defend what belongs to all of us.

Madeline Arias, head of the Ministry of



WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

Members of U.S. delegation who met with President Maduro (pictured at left).

Urban Agriculture, introduced us to the union that day, and the union let us each give a short revolutionary greeting to the demonstration. The petroleum union’s women’s caucus told us they want to meet with women from the United States.

Since we were unable to return home as expected, we also attended a massive demonstration in support of the Bolivarian Revolution on Saturday, March 16. There were tens of thousands of people out in the streets. Hundreds of buses brought people into the city from surrounding areas. These kinds of demonstrations have been taking place every Saturday since the coup.

WW: The corporate media in the U.S. say that the people do not support Maduro. Based on what you’ve told us, that is another imperialist lie.

SF: Absolutely. These massive rallies really confirm that the people are mobilized, determined, very enthusiastic and combative. They come with their unions, housing or community groups, schools.

They know the right wing is mobilizing. So they are determined to far outnumber them. It is a political battle in every sense.

The U.S. Peace Council delegation consists of Bahman Azad, the organizational secretary of the U.S. Peace Council; Ajamu Baraka, national coordinator of Black Alliance for Peace; progressive journalist Eva Bartlett; Gerry Condon, president of Veterans For Peace; Darien De Lu, president of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom-U.S.; Miguel Figueroa, president of the Canadian Peace Congress; Sara Flounders, co-coordinator of the International Action Center; Margaret Flowers of Popular Resistance; Joe Lombardo, co-coordinator of the United National Antiwar Coalition; Sarah Martin of Women Against Military Madness; Daniel Shea, board of directors, Veterans For Peace; and Kevin Zeese of Popular Resistance.

VENEZUELA

Mass mobilization answers attack on power grid

Continued from page 3

have been used to upgrade computer systems, buy spare parts or otherwise improve the system.

Media and imperialist hypocrisy

The U.S. corporate media have focused on Venezuela in the last few months, publishing story after story about the suffering of the Venezuelan people. This has nothing to do with genuine concern for Venezuelans. The media’s reporting has demonized the legitimate government and manufactured the narrative now being used to justify the Trump administration’s economic and covert attacks.

During the blackout, CNN and the New York Times rushed to blame the “corrupt dictatorship” in Venezuela for images of black-colored drinking water and other horrors. They seem to have forgotten Flint, Mich., where the water remains undrinkable years after cameras stopped filming.

Donald Trump, Mike Pence, Mike Pompeo, John Bolton, Elliott Abrams and Marco Rubio talk a lot about “humanitarian aid” and their concern for the Venezuelan people. To even entertain that claim is insulting given their collective public records.

The only thing Bolton and Abrams have done in their entire political careers

is destroy countries and commit war crimes. Marco Rubio spends his time on Twitter and the Senate floor as an enforcer of imperialism’s will in Latin America.

Since Pompeo was a CIA director before he was Secretary of State, only a few people in the world know the extent of his crimes. But as an example of his great humanitarianism, he recently barred entry into the U.S. of International Criminal Court investigators looking into crimes committed in Afghanistan. (AP, March 15)

While his government threatens war with Venezuela, Donald Trump has declared a national emergency to get funds to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexican border — a racist border wall. He recently went so far as to use a presidential veto to stop it from being overturned by Congress. This is the latest step on a path that included the separation of migrant families and the placement of refugee children in concentration camps.

But perhaps the most insulting example of imperialist hypocrisy is Puerto Rico. After Hurricane Maria, the archipelago was without power or running water for months. Some areas still haven’t recovered 18 months later.

While the U.S. government used the fiscal control board, known in Puerto Rico as “la junta,” to destroy anything that

survived the hurricane, the Venezuelan government sent a tanker of fuel. Now police and mercenaries violently repress Puerto Rican dissent and people travel for hours to find a working dialysis clinic. The worst lies that the imperialists have spread about Venezuela have been a reality for almost two years in Puerto Rico.

Solidarity and organization resist imperialism

Despite what the corporate media claim, there has been no descent into chaos. The response to the power outage has been a surge of grassroots organizing to meet the people’s needs. That’s the report from a delegation of U.S. anti-war leaders in Venezuela. (workers.org, March 16)

The government, for its part, enacted plans to ensure that hospitals would continue functioning and distributing drinking water. In the areas the government trucks couldn’t reach, communities organized themselves to collect and distribute water from springs and wells.

Grassroots organizations like CLAP, which distribute food boxes, continued operating throughout the week, and some communities organized spontaneously to share resources and information.

Popular power has placed itself on the frontline in Venezuela’s battle to defend the country’s sovereignty against

imperialism and ensure that the people’s basic rights are met. Popular power is expressed through the more than 500 communes, which represent thousands of communal councils in poor and working-class neighborhoods.

Besides coordinating efforts to meet the people’s basic needs, the communes are also the vehicle for organizing communal militias. Thus they are defending the country both in a literal sense, through the armed and organized masses, and in the more abstract sense of guaranteeing the distribution of food, water and other needs.

The only imperialist tactic that has worked as intended is the financial blockade in the form of unilateral sanctions. The violent “guarimba” street protests in 2014 and 2017 failed to overthrow the Bolivarian government by force. Guaidó’s self-proclamation on Jan. 23 and the attempt to bring in U.S. trucks with so-called humanitarian aid on Feb. 23 failed to split the Bolivarian National Armed Forces.

For now, the U.S. financial blockade, which as of January has also become an oil embargo, continues to cause problems for the Venezuelan economy. The danger of further attacks against the country’s infrastructure remains, as the demonstrators in Caracas know, as they shouted, “U.S. hands off Venezuela!” □

On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

Struggle by Kentucky educators continues

Ten Kentucky school districts have closed since Feb. 28 due to teacher absences, called “sickouts,” because teachers took sick days to protest at the state capitol in Frankfort. Jefferson County Public Schools, one of the largest U.S. school districts, with more than 98,000 students, including Louisville, shut down six times in two weeks.

The Republican-dominated legislature, meeting since February, is considering proposals to change who manages the teachers' underfunded pension fund and also to indirectly support private schools with tax credits — both strongly opposed by educators. The body has only one day left in session, March 28.

Education Commissioner Wayne Lewis, who heads a board appointed by Republican Gov. Matt Bevin, announced March 15 that he would not rule out disciplining teachers who protest on sick days. He asked the 10 districts on March 14 for names of all teachers requesting sick days when districts were forced to close. This is the second year Kentucky teachers used sickouts to protest anti-education-worker legislation.

The Kentucky Education Association, which represents over 43,000 teachers, denounced Lewis’ request, accusing him of trying to intimidate them. The KEA added that Lewis is "using the power of his office to compile an 'enemies list' of educators for the Bevin Administration."

Teachers’ attorney Mark Wohlander sent Lewis a letter March 15 demanding all related department documents be preserved because of a possible federal civil rights lawsuit against the department's "unprecedented interference with [teachers'] First Amendment rights.” (abcnews.go.com, March 15)

Education workers organize in Tennessee

A new coalition of Tennessee teachers hopes to seize the energy that inspired the wave of teacher strikes rocking the U.S. last year and continuing this year. TN Teachers United, formed using a Facebook questionnaire, was launched the week of March 3. The group initially garnered 200 members and hopes to expand to all 66,000 public teachers, as well as to retired teachers, parents, students and community members.

The fledgling TNTU group was connected on Feb. 28 to organizers who led strikes in West Virginia and Arizona. The three primary TNTU organizers, all women and frustrated former leaders of the Tennessee Education Association, are building TNTU on the blueprint of those struggles. Labor Notes, a labor media and organizing group founded in 1979, facilitated the connection. (Commercial Appeal, March 11)

Tennessee per-pupil funding remains the lowest in the South and is in the bottom half of U.S. funding. The TEA lost collective bargaining in 2011, and teacher strikes have been illegal since 1978. Tennessee teachers are leaving the profession in droves due to underfunding and damaging reforms, like teacher evaluations based on student testing. Gov. Bill Lee wants a voucher program to drain public schools and pay for private and charter schools. “We feel like public education is under attack,” organizer Tikeila Rucker told Chalkbeat on March 12.

TNTU aims for full funding for the state’s Basic Education program and a moratorium on state testing. A strike is currently off the table until a strong base of support has been built. But if teachers are forced to strike, says Rucker, it will be because they were not being heard by those who ”have the power to make the change that's necessary."

ILWU shows solidarity with L.A. teachers’ strike

International Longshore and Warehouse Union members in the Southern California District Council contributed their organizing experience and solidarity to help 55,000 Los Angeles teachers win their six-day strike in January. (WW articles, Jan. 22 and 28)

Because ILWU is dedicated to a strong public school system, once the strike was announced it began mobilizing members to attend community meetings and reach out to nearby unions. Its goal was to have experienced union members join the “adopt-a-school” program and help local schools during the strike.

A total of 63 schools were supported by hundreds of ILWU members, past and present, and their families as well as from the Marine Firemen, Steelworkers Union and numerous community groups. This meant picketing with teachers in the rain, bringing them food and ponchos, and showing “we have your back” with signs reading “The ILWU supports teachers.” ILWU members also collected and distributed food to help the 80 percent of low-income students who depend on school meals.

Teachers expressed gratitude to ILWU on social media: “The ILWU kept us afloat,” wrote Michael Gearin. Cathy Familathe, president of SCDC, who wrote a Dispatcher Newspaper article detailing the solidarity, wrote: “This is what we do — we help other unions and union members and ... support working families in our community. ... Defending our public schools is one of the most sacred and important things we can do as union members.” (ilwu.org, Feb. 8). □

At UAW Bargaining Convention

Workers, retirees call for better contracts

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

From March 11 to 13 the United Auto Workers held a “Special Bargaining Convention” in this city. Thousands of delegates from locals all over the country came together to discuss issues pertaining to contract negotiations.

The union, with 430,000 active members, has contracts in a range of sectors, from traditional automotive to academic, health care, other manufacturing, white-collar workers and the public sector. Negotiations for a new contract with General Motors, Ford and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles begin this summer.

While the International Executive Board controlled the order of business, floor comments nevertheless gave voice to a primary concern of the rank and file: eliminating tiered wages and ending the abuse of workers categorized as “temporary.”

A large number of UAW contracts, not only with the Detroit Three auto firms, but in aerospace, agricultural equipment and auto parts suppliers, have allowed companies to pay lower wages to workers hired after a certain date. They work side-by-side with higher-paid workers doing the same work. Often these “second tier” workers have inferior health benefits and pension plans as well.

The current contracts with GM, Ford and FCA have increased the exploitation of “temporary” workers, many of whom have been “temporary” for years. Not only are they paid less in wages and benefits, but they have no seniority and can be readily disciplined or fired. Some delegates correctly called

this category “third tier” and insisted we fight for equal pay for equal work.

Pensions, which were not increased for current or future retirees in the 2015-19 automotive contracts, were another issue delegates spoke about. A large group of retirees, including three busloads from Local 12 in Toledo, Ohio, demonstrated outside and inside the convention. Signs told the leadership: “Retirees built FCA. Don’t let us crumble.”

Lacking from the official convention was any real discussion on the fightback strategy needed to force the capitalists to restore many of the gains that have been taken away in recent years. The rank-and-file activist group Autoworker Caravan held its own meeting during the convention titled “Let’s fight to get the contracts we deserve.”

International Secretary-Treasurer Ray Curry reported to the convention that the strike fund was in excellent financial health. The IEB voted to raise weekly strike pay. Now the union needs to take a cue from the education workers around the country and use the strike weapon to challenge the auto bosses.

Martha Grevatt was a delegate to the UAW Convention.



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT
Retirees demonstrated inside and outside the hall.

Amazon workers walk out after grievances pile up

By Harvey Markowitz
Minneapolis

Workers at the Amazon fulfillment center in Shakopee, Minn., a suburb of Minneapolis, escalated their campaign for workers’ rights on March 8 by carrying out a three-hour work stoppage. The strike occurred during the night shift, when a group of about 30 workers, mostly Somali immigrants, walked off the job to protest the mega-corporation’s management.

A Facebook post went viral as the workers held up a handwritten sign reading: “We are humans, not robots” and listed their complaints on a legal pad. Previously, WW reported that workers’ frustrations were intensified by a panoply of grievances with management: from lacking language translation services, to inhumane intensity of work, to racist selection of workers for promotion, to pitiful health benefits, to hiring schemes that exploit temp workers, to the need for more bathroom visits and prayer breaks. Amazon workers are up against a corporation unwilling to part with profits.

The Shakopee workers organized and held a rally last December—believed to be the first in the U.S. against Amazon—to show unity and express their discontent over not having a voice in how work is handled.

Workers at a fulfillment center in Poland, describing themselves as “workers from Amazon from Germany, Spain, Poland, France, and supporters from Italy,” posted a video on the internet

declaring “Solidarity!” with the immigrant and non-immigrant workers in Shakopee.

Amazon around the world

Amazon Inc. is infamous worldwide. Its CEO, Jeff Bezos, is currently the richest person in the world, with an estimated worth of \$138 billion. The profits of Amazon surged, nearly doubling, between 2017 and 2018. Yet the corporation paid no federal income taxes.

Bezos also owns The Washington Post. Media watchdog organizations point out biases in its reporting. Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting asserts that the acquisition “instantly made him the most powerful media figure in the nation’s capital — a handy position to be in when your company is seeking multi-billion-dollar government contracts.”

Concurrently, Amazon has offered its cloud computing services to the U.S. government’s surveillance and repression regime. To the tune of \$600 billion, the National Security Agency relies on Amazon’s cloud network to collect metadata and even intimate conversations of U.S. residents, creating a spy apparatus unparalleled in history.

Against such a titanic force, it could appear that Amazon has an unassailable advantage. However, these brave workers standing up for their rights and displaying collective determination will inspire the movements of tomorrow. Amazon’s burgeoning labor vanguard serves as an example to workers around the world. □

Dynamic struggle for transit accessibility gains ground

By **Tony Murphy**
New York

A series of positive rulings have been won in court recently on the issue of public transportation accessibility. They have come as the class forces demanding elevators in the subway have broadened, now including parents with young children in strollers together with disability rights advocates.

On March 5, U.S. District Court Judge Edgardo Ramos ruled that New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority must install elevators in any New York subway station that is being renovated.

This has been called a sweeping decision in terms of its impact. The ruling came after a lawsuit was filed because the MTA had renovated the Bronx Middletown subway station and replaced its stairs in 2013 — but left the station inaccessible.

Then on March 13, New York State Judge Shlomo Hagler ordered the MTA back to the table to meet with disability rights groups and come up with a court-enforceable plan to install elevators in all New York subway stations.

The Hagler ruling was important for a few reasons. It kept alive a case that had seemed in danger of being dismissed. Also, it was strongly influenced by the Ramos ruling.

A year ago, Hagler had responded to the MTA's motion to dismiss the case by ordering the two sides to talk and come to a settlement.

After almost a year, the MTA walked away from the talks. This put the MTA's motion to dismiss the entire case back into play. Hagler could simply have ruled on that motion. If he had ruled in the MTA's favor, the case would have effectively ended in defeat for the plaintiffs.

In explaining why he was keeping the case alive, Hagler lectured the MTA that it is “just plain right” that the New York subway system be accessible. Its notorious inaccessibility, he said, is “just not fair.”

He rejected the notion that installing elevators is too expensive, saying not spending money for accessibility “makes no sense, with billions of dollars spent on other things.”

“The time has come,” Hagler said, for a serious plan. He told the authority that he was giving them “one last opportunity to get it right” — or he will make his own ruling when the case convenes again on May 7.

Hagler referred several times to the Bronx station ruling. Its impact was clearly felt in his courtroom, having reverberated throughout the legal world the week before. Hagler referred specifically to coverage in the New York Law Journal.

Impact of mother's death

There was also another presence in that courtroom: Malaysia Goodson.

At a courthouse rally before Hagler's hearing, expectant mother Christine Coleman spoke, supporting the case and

1-year-old daughter down the stairs — in a station with no elevators and two escalators that only go up — Goodson fell but managed to protect her child, who miraculously survived.

In response to Goodson's shocking death, the MTA — located steps from Wall Street, the home of the world's richest banks and investment firms — announced it was cutting back its plan to install elevators in subway stations because it didn't have enough money.

The response of the movement for transit accessibility was different. Less

media coverage of that protest included the city medical examiner's declaration that Goodson died of a “pre-existing medical condition,” the street mobilization began an increased level of solidarity between the forces calling for true subway accessibility.

For months, MTA board meetings had included delegations of wheelchair users and other leaders of the accessibility rights movement, making the argument over and over that elevators in the subway are a necessity.

On Feb. 25 — the first MTA board meeting after Goodson's death — mothers affected by her untimely death took the microphone to make the same demand.

Holding her baby, who grabbed for the mic as she spoke, Christine Yearwood said, to applause, “Why is accessibility something that [MTA] planners decide is acceptable to cut? The fact that this is predicted to happen after Malaysia Goodson just died on the subway stairs is disgraceful.”

Christine Coleman also spoke at that board meeting, referring to Goodson's death: “I see parents struggle with this all the time, trying to get up and down the stairs. And it's just unacceptable that we don't have a working elevator in every station.”

The federal lawyers who joined the Bronx subway case issued a statement after it was decided, announcing triumphantly, “The Court's decision marks the end of the MTA treating people with disabilities as second-class citizens.” Whether that is true remains to be seen. The MTA has a high-paid legal staff, which it can use to delay justice for years.

At the March 17 commemoration of International Working Women's Day, a rally was held at New York's Penn Station. Protesters saluted women in rebellion around the world — migrants, trans women, Muslims and others who are fighting oppression on all fronts. Included was the demand for transit accessibility, both for people who are mobility-impaired and for parents with strollers. Mary Kaessinger of The People's MTA spoke at the street rally, followed by a roundtable discussion, where a video of women speaking at the MTA hearing was shown.

As the demand for elevators makes its way through the courts, the people's movement for transit accessibility is expanding — and pushing upward on it. □



WW PHOTO: TONY MURPHY

Christine Coleman speaks at courthouse rally before a hearing on the elevator case.

joining 25 people who showed up to pack the court. Coleman was moved to join the fight for transit accessibility after reading about Goodson's untimely death.

Goodson was a 22-year-old African-American mother who in January fell to her death on New York subway stairs.

Carrying a stroller as well as her

than 48 hours after Goodson's death, accessibility rights leaders held a protest and vigil at the subway station where Goodson had died, re-emphasizing the demand for elevators and ramps while laying flowers at the spot in a makeshift memorial.

While the MTA made sure that the

Fight for women's liberation! Build Workers World!

As Marxists, we strive to not just honor history but to make it — to promote 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 — like the Black Lives Matter movement, started by women and gender-nonconforming activists, which 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 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, and trans women are resisting horrific sexual assaults by police and prison guards.

WW continues 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/ to make monthly deductions. Know we appreciate your help in building Workers World — for today and for the future. □

International Work

Cuban women describe their ‘revolution within the Revolution’

By Teresa Gutierrez
New York

“[T]he Cuban woman, in the dark and quiet corner of the home, awaits ... the hour, in which a revolution breaks its yoke and spreads its wings. Everything was enslaving: origin, color, sex. [You must] destroy ... it by fighting to the death. You have destroyed the slavery of color by emancipating the slave. The time has come to liberate the woman!”

These words were spoken in 1869 by Ana Betancourt, a revolutionary who played a leading role in Cuba’s war of independence from Spain.

Betancourt, along with Mariana Grajales of Dominican and Jamaican origins, and referred to as the “Mother of Cuba,” are just two of so many women whose roots of rebellion nurture Cuban soil.

Given this history, it is no surprise that every year when the Federation of Cuban Women arrive in New York City for U.N.-related events, the solidarity movement pours out to welcome them.

Their presence is enriched by the fact that these are people in the process of building a socialist society. How can activists miss this opportunity?

Gathering to celebrate revolutionary struggle

This year, the International Working Women’s Day event was also broadened to include other important and historical leaders of the Cuban Revolution who came for U.N. events.

Miguel Barnet, founder of the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC); Luis Morlote of the Union of Jurists; Manuel Vazquez of the Cuban National Center for Sex Education (Cenesex); and Yenisey Gonzalez, in charge of foreign relations for the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), joined Teresa Amarelle Boué, secretary general of the FMC, who opened the

program on March 16 at the Peoples’ Forum in New York City.

Barnet is a noted author and intellectual of the Revolution who founded UNEAC so that artists could also be organized to serve the Revolution.

Amarelle Boué not only spoke of the gains for women in Cuba but also alerted the Cuba solidarity movement to new developments from the Trump administration.

On March 15, the U.S. announced it would be eliminating 5-year tourist visas for Cubans. This will have drastic negative effects on the economy and will especially affect Cubans who have family in the U.S.

These valued visas are used to visit relatives as well as to buy supplies that are not readily available in Cuba due to the continuing U.S. blockade. The new policy means that Cubans will be forced to make a third-country visit every time they come to the U.S., costing more money and more time.

A March 14 article in the Cuban newspaper Granma emphasized that the Helms-Burton Act, which this new policy is part of, is “meant to re-colonize Cuba” and that Trump is “dusting off the law’s Title III to tighten the blockade and dissuade foreign investors in Cuba.”

Revolutionary triumphs

The tightening of the blockade follows hostile U.S. propaganda against Cuba regarding Venezuela. The U.S. claims that Cuba is behind President Nicolás Maduro’s success in resisting imperialist attempts to oust him.

But as Amarelle Boué pointed out: “Cubans are responsible for defending our Revolution, and the Venezuelans are responsible for defending theirs.”

Cuba does stand in complete solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela, as do China, Russia, India and many other countries. For instance, Cuba has sent doctors to Venezuela, angering

the elite in the U.S. and in Venezuela. As always, Cuba sends doctors, the U.S. drops bombs—or attempts coups.

The U.S. attempts to sabotage the Cuban Revolution have never succeeded. One major reason is Cuban women.

Amarelle Boué reported: “Today, women represent 53.2 percent of deputies in the National Assembly of People’s Power and 48.4 percent of members of the Council of State. They make up 60.5 percent of higher education graduates and 67.2 percent of specialists and professionals throughout the nation.”

These advances are based on the demands by women and also on the political will of the government to meet those demands.

“We have been, as Fidel said, a revolution within the Revolution,” Amarelle Boué noted.

Ongoing revolution

As an example that neither the Revolution nor the Federation of Cuban Women is static, the 10th Congress of the FMC, recently held on March 6-8, took up the theme “not to neglect the gaps that remain, nor the challenges that lie ahead,” as well as emphasizing the need to be “more flexible, more dynamic” and “adapt to the times.”

As “women of their time,” the FMC Congress was organized in a more dynamic way, closer to the grassroots. The goal of the federation is to “win the hearts and wills” of young people so that they “continue to love” the work of the Revolution.

A major item for the Federation is gender equality, a major point of discussion at the Congress.



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Cuban speakers at forum included, from left: Yenisey Gonzalez, Manuel Vazquez, Teresa Amarelle Boué and Miguel Barnet.

Amarelle Boué, as well as the speaker from Cenesex, pointed out that although there has been huge progress on gender equality, sexist patterns still predominate. For example, in a major survey of almost 20,000 Cubans, 74 percent stated that “each individual’s sexual orientation should be respected,” but only half accepted same-sex marriage.

Cenesex, founded by Mariela Castro, has made huge efforts to advance this cause. And as U.S. LGBTQ activists point out, Cuba has made more advances in 60 years on this question than has the U.S.

It’s important to note that while there are, sadly, countless killings of trans people in the U.S., there are virtually none in Cuba.

The Cuban Revolution is so strong. This writer noted at the FMC event that a Cuban diplomat assigned to the U.S. who accompanied the delegation stood at the back of the room.

As he listened to his comrades on the stage, his face expressed such a look of pride and love as they spoke of their work in the Revolution. A diplomat in a suit, agricultural workers, women who work at home, LGBTQ people who march at Pride in Cuba—all defend the Revolution.

As Amarelle Boué said: Cubans are defending their Revolution. The Cuban masses will never give up on socialism. History has shown this. □

Int’l Working Women’s Day protest

Solidarity with women worldwide

By Monica Moorehead
New York

The International Working Women’s Day Coalition held its annual rally, march and forum here on March 17 to reinforce its decades-long theme that every issue is a woman’s issue. The rally gathered in front of busy Penn Station, where various

women and gender-oppressed activists spoke on the plight of nurses in New York, who have voted to go out on strike; the massacre of Muslim worshippers in New Zealand; the fight for decriminalization of sex workers; the war on transwomen of color; and more.

Following the rally, the group marched and chanted inside Penn Station to show solidarity with low-wage women workers at Dunkin’ Donuts, McDonald’s, KFC and other shops.

The march ended with an indoor forum, where a panel of representatives from Migrante—a Filipino women-led



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

im/migrants rights group—Domestic Workers United and Picture the Homeless led a discussion on strategies and tactics their groups are currently exploring. They stressed that having strong alliances with others is key to building a global movement to defeat capitalism and imperialism.

The issues of human trafficking and sexual violence were discussed in the case of Cyntoia Brown, a 31-year-old African-American woman who has been imprisoned since the age of 16 for killing her abuser. International support has won her an impending clemency release from prison on Aug. 7. □

Working Women’s History Month

Ella May: Anti-racist strike martyr

By Martha Grevatt

Ella May, a textile union leader killed during a 1929 strike in North Carolina, was born in 1900 in Tennessee. Her family had been small farmers, but before she reached adulthood her father was a wage worker in the logging industry that had invaded rural Appalachia. Logging was dangerous work, killing May’s father and leaving her husband, John Wiggins, disabled. Her family then moved to the Piedmont region of North Carolina where she found work in the burgeoning textile industry.

By 1929 John Wiggins had left the family. While some labor historians have misidentified her as Ella May (or Mae) Wiggins, Ella May dropped her married surname after Wiggins’ exit.

Her own family’s suffering, and the suffering she saw all around her, motivated this strong-willed woman to fight the bosses.

Textile companies were leaving New England for the South, which lured business with the promise of cheaper wages, exploitable child labor and a union-free environment. Women in the northern mills had a history of striking for better wages

and working conditions, going back to the early 1800s. Life was hard, but since the 1912 “Bread and Roses” strike in Lawrence, Mass., unions had made gains in the North.

Southern mill hands—derisively referred to as “lintheads”—were paid starvation wages while typically working 11-hour days or nights. Hard work offered no escape from poverty; pellagra, a disease caused by malnutrition, took the lives of many children.

Ella May herself lost four of her nine children, one at 17 months and three in their first months of life.

Gaston County, N.C., was home to many textile mills, including the world’s largest: the Loray Mill in Gastonia. Ella May lived and worked in nearby Bessemer City at American Mill No. 2. These and other mills employed thousands—a majority women. Children often toiled alongside their parents out of economic necessity.

The mills were often owned by Northerners, who paid substantially lower wages in the South. Mill owners perceived Southern workers to be individualistic and disinclined to unionism. When Northern organizers arrived in North Carolina in

Continued on page 11

King Women's Day

Elizabeth Jennings — a New York City pioneer

By Dolores Cox

More than a century before Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Ala., bus in 1955, an African-American woman refused to give up her seat on a horse-driven streetcar in New York City.

Elizabeth Jennings refused to relinquish her seat in July 1854. As a result, she was brutally attacked and thrown off the streetcar. She was 24 years old and on her way to church. Streetcars in the 1830s and 1840s were privately owned, and the drivers decided who could ride or not. They carried whips to keep African Americans away.

In a segregated system, African-American travelers were not welcome, and challenging the system was dangerous. By the late 1840s, there were special public buses that African Americans could ride, which were marked with signs on the back or sides reading “Colored Persons Allowed.” However, these buses ran infrequently, irregularly and often not at all.

A New York Tribune February 1855 article about the Jennings incident and subsequent court case reported: “The conductor undertook to get her off, first alleging the car was full, when that was shown to be false. He pretended the other passengers were displeased at her presence. But [when] she insisted on her rights, he took hold of her by force to expel her. She resisted. The conductor got her down on the platform, jammed her bonnet, soiled her dress and injured her person. Quite a crowd gathered. But



Elizabeth Jennings.

she effectually resisted. Finally, after the car had gone on further, with the aid of a policeman they succeeded in removing her.” (tinyurl.com/y4ysuhp8)

The African-American community was enraged, and the day after the incident they held a rally at Jennings’ church. Just as Rosa Parks did, Jennings took her case to court. She sued the streetcar company, the driver and the conductor. She was represented by a law firm in which a future president of the U.S., Chester A. Arthur, was a lawyer; the firm was hired because it had demonstrated skill in the area of civil rights the year before.

News of the Jennings’ incident and lawsuit went national. In 1855, a Brooklyn Circuit Court judge ruled in Jennings’ favor: “Colored Persons if sober, well behaved and free from disease, had the same rights as others and could neither be excluded by any rules of the company,

nor by force or violence.” She won \$225 in damages. As the Tribune reported, “Some jury members had peculiar actions as to colored people’s rights.”

Within a month of the Jennings decision, however, an African-American man was barred from a railway car. He too filed a lawsuit and settled out of court. But streetcar segregation in New York City didn’t end until more than 20 years later, a decade after the Civil War.

Jennings taught in the city’s African-American schools and later in the public school system in the 1850s and 1860s. She married in 1860 and became Elizabeth Graham. In 1895, she founded the first African-American kindergarten.

Her father, Thomas Jennings, owned a tailor shop and was well respected. In 1821, he had been the first Black person to receive a patent for dry-cleaning clothes. He was also a civil rights activist and with others formed the Black Legal Rights Association. Jennings also worked with Frederick Douglass to eliminate slavery in the U.S. Frederick Douglass’s newspaper also reported on Elizabeth Jennings’ incident and case.

After the Civil War began in 1861, a resolution was passed in July 1863 which allowed wealthy New Yorkers to buy their way out of the draft. Angry working-class, mostly Irish immigrants in lower Manhattan were resentful and rioted for four days, targeting mostly African Americans and abolitionists in what became known as the “Draft Riots.” Blacks were exempt from the draft — because they

were not considered citizens.

Resentful white immigrants assumed that newly emancipated Blacks in the South would migrate to New York and compete for jobs. The white mobs looted and destroyed homes, and they burned down the Colored Orphanage Asylum. The official death toll was 119 — more than 70 Blacks were lynched, many more beaten or killed. Elizabeth Jennings’ 1-year-old son died during the violence. Jennings herself died in 1901.

African Americans fled uptown to Harlem, Brooklyn and New Jersey, resulting in a 20 percent decline in their population in lower Manhattan. The New York City “Draft Riots” are considered the largest civil uprising in U.S. history.

In 1873 the New York Civil Rights Act was passed, giving legal rights to Blacks on public transportation. A street sign in lower Manhattan on Park Row today carries Elizabeth Jennings’ name.

During Women’s History Month this March, NYC’s First Lady, Chirlane McCray, announced that a monument to Elizabeth Jennings Graham will be constructed and dedicated in Grand Central Station in Manhattan to honor one of the city’s influential women. Monuments will also be constructed and dedicated to three women in other boroughs as part of the “She Built NYC” initiative.

Sources: NY Historical Society, July 2018; baruch.cuny.edu; MSNBC, Jan. 13 and Feb. 25; New York Times, Feb. 13, by Amisha Padnani and Veronica Chambers.

The 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist fire and garment workers today

By Kathy Durkin

More than a century ago, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City was a notoriously anti-union company and the focus of several job actions and union organizing. This sweatshop was a death trap. On March 25, 1911, a horrific fire broke out there.

Doors were blocked and fire escape exits were locked. The sole fire escape broke as workers fled. Firefighters’ ladders did not reach the top floors. The result of this needless tragedy: 146 workers died, 129 of them women ages 16 to 23.

Company greed caused this avoidable disaster. Yet Triangle owners were acquitted in court for responsibility in the deaths of these precious young people. The value of each human life was assessed at only \$75, paid to the grieving families who sued the company.

This fire and terrible loss of life shocked workers and other progressives. Protests followed. Hundreds of thousands of people joined a funeral procession organized by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union on April 5, 1911. The Women’s Trade Union League demanded fire safety legislation. Due to pressure by labor activists, New York state investigated factory conditions and implemented workplace safety rules.

This writer’s grandmother was a garment worker at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. I submitted the story below about her, along with a piece of fabric, for inclusion in historical archives about the Triangle fire. The fabric will be incorporated into a 320-foot-long, 2-foot-wide

ribbon, comprised of hundreds of pieces of fabric memorializing the disaster victims. They were contributed and sewn together by participants in a collective ribbon-making session at Manhattan’s Fashion Institute of Technology on March 16-17.

Initiated and coordinated by the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition, the ribbon will then be cast in metal, forming the main element in the permanent memorial to be mounted on the Brown Building facade, site of the fire. The group organized the two-day commemorative event that included poetry, music, panel discussions and family memories.

Immigrant, garment worker, activist

The following is the story about my grandmother:

“My grandmother, Sophie Stoller Bubrick, and my grandfather, Paul Bubrick, arrived in the United States in 1907, having fled anti-Jewish pogroms in their country, Poland, which was then occupied by imperial Russia.

“My grandmother worked at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory for several years after her arrival in New York. Always an organizer and activist, she was the person to whom the workers came with grievances against sweatshop bosses, as she was not intimidated by anyone.

“My grandmother participated in the March 8, 1908, march of 15,000 garment workers, mostly immigrants, through New York’s Lower East Side. They marched for better working conditions in the sweatshops, an end to child labor, higher wages and the right to vote.



Bangladesh garment workers protest on anniversary of horrendous building collapse.

“From November 1909, to February 1910, my grandmother participated in the ‘uprising of the 20,000,’ garment workers who struck against three companies, including Triangle, to oppose sweatshop conditions. The strike was initiated by Clara Lemlich, age 19, a Russian Jewish immigrant, and backed by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. My grandmother had to walk from the Upper West Side to downtown Manhattan to join the picket lines, as she had no money for transportation costs.

“Then in 1911 the Triangle fire raged, killing mainly Eastern European Jewish and Italian immigrant women and girls. My grandmother did not go to work that day due to illness. But she lost many young friends.

“My grandmother continued to be a fighter for workers’ rights and social justice for the remainder of her life. Sophie

Stoller Bubrick died in 1983 at the age of 98. It would have pleased her that the fabric used in her commemorative ribbon is red, as my grandmother was a proud communist.”

Globalized capitalism: profits before safety

The days of on-the-job injuries are far from over. Conditions are hazardous for the 700,00 women agricultural workers in this country, exposed to pesticides, heat stroke, dehydration and sexual abuse. Factories, including poultry and meat-processing plants, are dangerous places to work, especially with speed-ups. Hospital, restaurant, hotel and domestic workers face harm, too.

The Trump administration is only too glad to oblige corporate heads by rolling back hard-won worker safety protections

Continued on page 9

Russell Westbrook incident exposes ongoing racism

By Monica Moorehead

Russell Westbrook is a super-talented guard for the Oklahoma City Thunder and a former most valuable player. On March 11, during a National Basketball Association regular season game between the Oklahoma team and the Utah Jazz in Salt Lake City, Westbrook, who is African American, was verbally assaulted from the stands by a white fan, Shane Keisel, and his white spouse. Both fans were recorded telling Westbrook to “get down on your knees like you’re used to.”

Westbrook’s response was to tell the couple, “I’ll f-ck you up.” (The Undeclared, March 13) Westbrook called their remarks “racial” and “inappropriate.”

Westbrook has since apologized to the spouse, but not to Keisel, who all of a sudden deleted his twitter feed full of racist and xenophobic rants, with Westbrook the main target. Westbrook was fined \$25,000 for having an angry exchange with the fan, which is in violation of National Basketball Association regulations.

Keisel and his spouse, whose name was not made public, were subsequently banned for life from attending Jazz home games. Footage from a 2018 playoff game between the Thunder and the Jazz resulted in another fan being banned from Jazz games after calling Westbrook “boy.”

The Utah team’s Black players immediately came to Westbrook’s defense, especially center Rudy Gobert, forward Thabo Sefolosha and guard Donovan Mitchell. Mitchell stated, “As a Black man living in a community I love and playing on a

team that gives me the opportunity to live out my dreams, this incident hits close to home. Racism and hate speech hurt us all, and this is not the first time something like this has happened in our arena. The Utah that I have come to love is welcoming and inclusive and [Monday’s] incident is not indicative to our fan base. We don’t want to create a negative environment for our athletes who potentially want to come to Utah.”

Sefolosha posted on Instagram: “I stand 100% with Russell Westbrook on what happened in yesterday’s game. I love our fans but there are limits that cannot be crossed! Support and cheer for your team and enjoy the action, but fans like Shane Keisel, who use that platform to spur their hateful and racist views, need to be held accountable.”

Sefolosha, who is of Black South African descent, had his leg broken two years ago by members of the New York Police Department outside a nightclub.

Current and retired NBA players from other teams have stated that they faced racist taunts from white fans, especially in Salt Lake City. Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf, Draymond Green and Kenyon Martin reported being called the N-word. Abdul-Rauf, a Muslim, was forced out of the NBA when he bowed his head during the playing of the national anthem during the 1990s.

The white owner of the Jazz, Gail Miller, made a pre-game speech on March 14 claiming that Salt Lake City is not a racist community. She said in part: “We believe in treating people with courtesy and respect as human beings. From time to time, individual fans exhibit poor behavior

and forget their manners. Some disrespect players on other teams. When that happens, I want to jump up and shout, ‘Stop!’” (deseretnews.com, March 14)

Inequality between fans and players

What happened to Westbrook is a constant reminder that sports reflect U.S. culture, a culture riddled with white supremacist views. Consider the fact that Earl Lloyd, one of the first African-American players drafted in the NBA in 1950, was accused by a white fan of having a “tail.”

While today close to 75 percent of the players on the NBA’s 30 teams are African-American, the fan base is overwhelmingly white. This reflects both the location of corporate-sponsored arenas in suburban areas and high ticket prices. The Black population in the U.S. still remains a little over 12 percent. (news.gallup.com)

Overall the NBA includes 450 to 500 players. While salaries range from six figures for rookies to eight figures for a handful of superstar players, many fans, especially if they are white, view Black players as well-paid gladiators, open to all kinds of abuse.

Even teams with the worst records make hundreds of millions of dollars in profits for their billionaire owners from television, ticket prices and concession stand revenues during the 82-game regular season. The owners rake in even more if the teams play in the postseason.

Players perceived to be fearless, passionate and uncompromising in their play on the court, like Russell Westbrook, or who take strong political stands, like Abdul-Rauf, can easily become open targets of racist attacks. These include physical assaults, with fans throwing beverages or garbage at them during and after games.



Russell Westbrook

Since the Westbrook incident, more and more NBA players are demanding better respect and treatment by the fans through their union, the National Basketball Players Association. One proposal, which may be implemented sooner than later, is to play a public service announcement in each NBA arena before each game outlining a code of standards for all fans. If they do not adhere to this code, they will face the consequences of being ejected immediately from games or eventually banned for life.

The president of the association, Michelle Roberts, who is African American, stated, “We should all insist that a zero tolerance policy needs to be implemented at arenas in the face of misconduct by fans. Players don’t have the luxury of being able to unilaterally ban unruly fans from the arenas, a la [New York Knicks owner] James Dolan. The arenas, therefore, have to do a better job of insulating our players.” □

Georgia rules against DACA students

By Arielle Robinson
Atlanta, Ga.

Undocumented students who are recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy, or DACA, have been barred from attending Georgia’s top universities. An Atlanta Federal Appeals Court upheld this reactionary policy of the Georgia Board of Regents March 6. (tinyurl.com/y5hnwydm)

Implemented under the administration of President Barack Obama, DACA allowed undocumented children brought to the U.S. before the age of 16 to remain here and not face deportation. However, the Georgia Board of Regents Policy 4.1.6 states that a person not legally in the U.S. will not be admitted to any institution in the University System of Georgia; for the last two years, it has not admitted all academically qualified applicants.

Atlanta civil rights attorney Nathanael Horsley has said this decision discriminates against DACA students — and that the court is saying that “it’s okay for the state to discriminate against [DACA students]. DACA students did nothing wrong and did what they needed to do to be with their parents.” Horsley called the ruling unconstitutional and a violation of the equal protection clause under the 14th Amendment. He may take the case to the Supreme Court. “We’re evaluating our options of what we’re doing next,” Horsley said. (gacivilrights.com)

The ruling specifically affects DACA students who apply to attend the University of Georgia, Georgia Tech or Georgia State. In 2016, three students filed a lawsuit challenging Policy 4.1.6.

Judge Gerald Tjoflat, who wrote the decision for the three-judge panel, claimed these students are not in the U.S. legally, and therefore the Board of Regents may have created the policy because they see these students not living in Georgia after college — “because they are removable at any time.”

“As DACA recipients, they simply were given a reprieve from potential removal. That does not mean they are in any way ‘lawfully present’ under the act,” Tjoflat ruled.

Policy 4.1.6 was enacted by the Board of Regents in 2010, months after Kennesaw State University police arrested student Jessica Colotl on a minor traffic violation. Colotl had been brought from Mexico to the U.S. as an undocumented person at age 11. After her arrest, it was learned that Colotl was paying in-state tuition.

After an outcry from people opposed to undocumented immigration, the Board of Regents enacted a separate policy stating that one must be “lawfully present” in the U.S. to be able to pay in-state tuition. Therefore, students not considered lawfully present in the U.S. must now pay out-of-state tuition to attend Georgia universities, even though many have been living in Georgia for their entire lives and graduated from Georgia high schools.

The recent exposure of wealthy parents buying their children’s way into college shows the unjust nature of capitalism. Education is simply a commodity that’s only a “human right” for the rich. Education is essentially inaccessible to working-class and immigrant families because of their secondary status in U.S. society. □

Protest calls for release of trans man

By Jim Raynor
Atlanta

A militant, colorful and loud protest was held outside Immigration and Customs Enforcement headquarters here March 11 in support of Chin — also known as Yuen Tsui. Chin is a young trans man who has been held in solitary confinement for 14 months. The demonstration was supported by the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance and Southerners on New Ground (Song).

Demonstrators demanded ICE release Chin, first, from solitary confinement and, then, from Irwin County detention, which serves as a private jail for ICE prisoners. ICE has claimed it holds Chin in solitary due to his gender identity. A hearing was held the next day about these demands, but no ruling has been issued yet. Chin’s father and sister spoke, as well as leaders of the two sponsoring organizations.

To demand that Chin’s request for parole be granted, sign the petition at tinyurl.com/yxfx7qfz/. □



Chin's father, Eddie Tsui, and sister, Nancy Benabe.

How corporate media pave way for war, then and now

By John Catalinotto

For a decade, beginning in 1990, the U.S. and Western European propaganda machines indoctrinated their populations to support a war of aggression against Yugoslavia, which started on March 24, 1999.

Now, on the 20th anniversary of that war, it is valuable to review how the various NATO powers carried out the process of war preparation. What makes it especially important today is the fact that similar steps are being taken to prepare the way for an assault on Venezuela — which can still be stopped.

Demonstrations will take place over the next two weeks to highlight the importance of those events 20 years ago. On Sunday, March 24, the International Action Center is holding a rally at the U.N. headquarters in New York to commemorate and protest the 20th anniversary of the start of the criminal U.S./NATO 78-day bombing campaign that killed 3,000 people and tore apart Yugoslavia. (iacenter.org)

And on Saturday, March 30, the United National Antiwar Coalition will march in Washington, D.C. Although the march had been originally timed to coincide with the beginning of NATO's 70th anniversary meeting there, current events have driven the anti-war organizers to focus on solidarity with Bolivarian Venezuela, under the slogan "U.S. hands off!" (unacepeace.org)

Taking steps to destroy Yugoslavia

From 1990-99, the NATO powers — with German and U.S. imperialism in the lead — were taking every step to weaken and destroy Yugoslavia.

From the start, Berlin aided reactionary separatist forces in each republic of the multinational socialist federation of Yugoslavia. This gave rise to wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, along with the separation of Slovenia and



Yugoslav mother views wreckage of homes after NATO bombing in 1999.

Macedonia. Since German imperialism had the closest contacts with the Croatian and Bosnian reactionaries and the largest economic interests in the region, this initiative put German imperialism in the lead of seizing influence in the Balkans.

To regain hegemony over Berlin and the other NATO powers, Washington pushed the conflict toward open war, where the Pentagon's preeminent place in destructive power would predominate. The U.S. used a battle provoked by the "Kosovo Liberation Army" at the town of Račak in the Kosovo province of Serbia on Jan. 15, 1999, as a pretext. Claiming it was a massacre, the Bill Clinton administration played up the need for "humanitarian intervention." (Sound familiar?)

Clinton stepped up the drive toward war. With support from Germany and France and using bases in Italy, the U.S. began bombing and firing missiles at mainly civilian targets in Serbia on March 24. The bombing lasted for 78 days and killed 3,000 people. Bridges, schools and hospitals were hit, along with the Chinese

Embassy in Belgrade and Yugoslav television and radio studios.

Heroism in defense of Yugoslavia

Many of the residents of Serbia and Montenegro — whether Serbs, Roma, Jews or other Yugoslav peoples — showed their heroism during the 78 days of open war. They walked in open spaces and defiantly defended bridges wearing T-shirts with targets on them. Those in the military were ready to fight and camouflaged their equipment so well that the bombing destroyed few tanks.

Parents sent their children to grandparents in the villages, while carrying on their work in the major cities.

Under the pressure of the destructive bombing and even more blatant threats of invasion, the Yugoslav government finally conceded and accepted NATO's terms. Even the accepted terms, however — which included the Kosovo province remaining part of Serbia — were ignored by the victorious NATO military power.

What had been a sovereign, independent and socialist Yugoslavia was turned into six weakened semicolonies of the West and the tiny U.S. military outpost called Kosovo. Today the existence of an "independent" Kosovo is an obvious fraud, as the territory is little more than a massive military base for the U.S. and a mini-homeland for organized crime.

Since this criminal war against Yugoslavia, NATO has expanded its intervention against Libya in Africa and Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria in Asia. Its current target is Venezuela in South America — using another "humanitarian" pretext.

To add to the crimes of the imperialist powers in the Balkans, they blamed the victims of this aggressive war. The leader of the resistance to the NATO assault, Slobodan Milosevic, Yugoslavia's president from 1997 to 2000, was kidnapped and put on trial in The Hague.

In an act of individual heroism, Milosevic turned the tables and put imperialism on trial. In the end, the international court was unable to prove any crimes against the Yugoslav leader. But he remained in prison, and the case ended with Milosevic's death behind bars in 2006.

Since NATO's intervention against Yugoslavia, the U.S. has turned the alliance into a type of imperialist police force. No longer confined to Europe, NATO has become a worldwide intervention force at the service of the transnational monopolies that exploit global labor and resources.

As the U.S. wages a propaganda and subversive war against Venezuela, anti-war people throughout the world should remember the lessons of the assault on Yugoslavia and prepare for struggle.

Catalinotto, a managing editor of Workers World newspaper, co-edited the book, "Hidden Agenda: U.S./NATO Takeover of Yugoslavia," International Action Center, 2001.

Students, pupils skip classes to protest climate policies

The following article was published in the March 16-17 issue of Junge Welt, a progressive German daily newspaper. Excerpts were translated by Workers World Managing Editor John Catalinotto. A reported million students marched, according to the French newspaper Le Monde.

Hundreds of thousands of young people around the world demonstrated on Friday [March 15] for a radical change of course toward more climate protection. Under the slogan "Fridays For Future," rallies took place in such European cities as Rome, Prague, Vienna, Warsaw, London and dozens of German cities.

In Berlin, Cologne, Dresden and Stuttgart, among other cities, thousands of schoolchildren, students and

supporters marched through the streets with placards. The organizers said there were 300,000 participants in Germany.

Around the globe, more than 2,000 rallies and student strikes had been announced in more than 120 countries — in Germany alone about 200. The wave of protests began early in the morning in Asia and Oceania, where tens of thousands of young people also took to the streets. There were demonstrations in Sydney, Bangkok, New Delhi and Hong Kong.

Participants in these demonstrations carried posters like: "You are destroying our future" and "If you don't act like adults, we will." Posters in Germany said, among other things: "We can survive cut classes, not climate change" and "If the

world were an auto company, you'd have saved it long ago."

According to the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Earth has warmed by about 1 degree Centigrade compared to in the pre-industrial era, and in Germany even more so. According to analyses by the World Weather Organization, the years 2015 to 2018 were the four warmest since records began in the 19th century.

If conditions continue as they are now, the world will probably be a good 3 degrees Centigrade warmer by the end of this century. The consequences include more heat waves, longer droughts and more storms, heavy rain and floods. To stop the trend, greenhouse gas emissions must be greatly reduced.

For months now, young people in many countries around the world have been boycotting classes once a week in protest against the lack of climate protection efforts. Older generations are supporting them.

Around 20,000 scientists from Germany, Austria and Switzerland have signed a statement to emphasise the importance of the climate movement. Parents are also supporting young people through their organization, "Parents for Future." Among other things, they (PF) ask that school expulsions or other disciplinary measures be waived if pupils skip school because they are protesting. Teachers and social workers from a primary school in Berlin came to protest with an entire class. □

The 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist fire and garment workers today

Continued from page 7

in many industries. Peg Seminario, AFL-CIO director of occupational safety and health, says: "When you look at core worker protections and union rights, the administration and the president have been totally anti-worker." (Politico, Sept. 3, 2018)

Capitalist production is aimed at maximizing profits; workers' well-being is not the bosses' concern. This is evident in the super-exploitation of workers in

the global garment industry where safety and health are disregarded until a horrible disaster unleashes workers' fury and world outrage, sometimes bringing reforms.

Conditions in Bangladesh's garment industry are not so different from those at the Triangle factory. Windows, doors and exits are blocked. Fires occur with regularity, including one on March 4 in Dhaka, which injured eight people. The company, Anzir Apparel Ltd., has been

allowed to operate by so-called national inspection bodies, having repeatedly failed to address safety concerns, said the Clean Clothes Campaign on March 6.

About 80 percent of the 4 million workers in Bangladesh's 5,000 garment factories are women. They are among the world's lowest paid workers, exploited by Western brands, who pay little for the products of their labor and care little for their health. The industry annually exports \$30 billion worth of clothes to

U.S. and European retailers.

The deadliest garment industry catastrophe in history occurred in Dhaka on April 24, 2013, when Rana Plaza, an eight-story manufacturing complex, collapsed, killing 1,138 people, mostly women, and injuring 2,500, many permanently. Although some safety measures were implemented afterwards, they are continually endangered by pressure from profit-driven global brands and a pro-corporate government. □

WORKERS WORLD

editorials

In Brexit, workers' struggles have no borders

The process of Britain leaving the European Union — called Brexit — has turned the politics of that country into a shambling wreck. Many Brexit scenarios predict major economic damage to the British economy, the second largest in the world.

What is not being trumpeted is that the worst economic blows of Brexit would fall on the workers.

The major British political parties have split into “leavers” and “remainers.” There are subfactions like “hard exit” — no treaty between the EU and Britain — and “soft exit” — preserving an open border between the Republic of Ireland and the six northeastern Irish counties that remained under British rule after the Republic’s independence in 1922.

In the general referendum on leaving the EU, the “leave” option won with only 52 percent of the overall vote. “Leave” actually lost in the north of Ireland and in Scotland by fairly wide margins.

But Brexit was pushed by some sectors of the English ruling class that resented the power that German and French financial institutions had over their economic dealings. The British bourgeoisie don’t want to have to coordinate with Germany and France when the next crisis of overproduction breaks and the economy of their world totters. The British rulers want unimpeded control of their own destiny — that is, their wealth — and no EU interference.

Now European workers, both in Britain and on the Continent, are facing the devastating fallout of some possible Brexit scenarios.

If a hard Brexit with no agreement occurs, either on March 29 or later, the employment status of 3 million or so non-British workers currently employed in the country will be up in the air. One of the main, “nationalist” points of the Brexiteers in the referendum campaign was a racist pledge to control

immigration, exclude non-British workers and “protect British jobs.”

Similarly, the fate of a million of so British citizens now working on the Continent would be placed in doubt.

Unions in Britain, and more generally in Europe, should be taking a clear, firm, militant position that all workers have a right to their jobs, no matter where national borders are drawn.

Large sectors of the working class in England have already had their standard of living cut significantly before any declaration of Brexit. The British bourgeoisie have imposed austerity cuts in education, health care and housing without any interference from the unelected EU bureaucrats in Brussels.

An additional major impact Brexit would have on workers’ lives is the disruption of trade and transportation, the consequential rising price of goods, and the increased costs and difficulties of travel outside Britain, including trips related to health care.

For instance, of the 16,000 trucks a day, at maximum, that pass through Dover, England, on their way from Calais, France, less than 2 percent are inspected. All others pass with only an internet form. If Brexit happens without provision for a customs agreement, every truck would have to be checked. It’s estimated that workers driving trucks would be in a traffic jam more than 40 miles long.

In Ireland, workers driving the thousands of trucks that currently pass daily from the Republic to the six counties would face similar obstacles. And for women travelling to the Republic to seek reproductive health care, including abortions not available in the six counties, a border newly imposed by Brexit might represent an uncrossable obstacle to their future.

Brexit: yet another reminder that there should be no borders in the workers’ struggles. □

Generals over the White House

The following excerpts are from the book “Generals Over the White House,” written in 1980 by Sam Marcy, founder of Workers World Party. They are vastly more true today. The book can be read at workers.org/marcy.

Do weapons have use value?

Military production in the epoch of imperialism is a special case of commodity production. “The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails,” wrote Marx in his opening chapter of Capital, “presents itself as ‘an immense accumulation of commodities.’” The products of the military-industrial complex are by Marxist definition commodities.

However, in addition to having an exchange value, commodities must also have a use value. According to Marx, a commodity is “a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another.”

[While] the products of the military-in-

dustrial complex ... are use values in the narrow economic sense, their broad sociological significance is that of a cancer which tends to consume the entire body politic. ...

The sum total of the product that emanates from the military-industrial complex is devoid of usefulness to society. This is not readily apparent in the U.S., which was the victorious country in World War II. At the end of the war, after having spent billions and billions of dollars, the U.S. appropriated most of the profitable world markets and sources of scarce raw materials which had belonged to its allies and its adversaries, thereby vastly enriching monopoly capitalism at home.

However, since the Korean war, the U.S. imperialist establishment has consistently lost ground in its military adventures. It has flooded the U.S. as well as the rest



Combat Islamophobia worldwide!

Continued from page 1

elected U.S. officials who have used the exact vile phrases or sentiments of the shooter — Senators Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, Lindsey Graham and Rep. Steve King; former Gov. Mike Huckabee and former U.S. President Bill Clinton.

In his 74-page “manifesto,” the shooter said explicitly he admired U.S. President Donald Trump as a “symbol of renewed white identity and common purpose.” Trump, having described neo-Nazis and fascists who rampaged violently in Charlottesville, Va., in 2017 as “very fine people,” has not condemned the Christchurch massacre as racist or terrorist.

Not an isolated event

The killer in New Zealand did not act alone. He was part of a worldwide resurgence of fascist, neo-Nazi, white supremacy organizing, not just via social media but in the parliaments of Europe. Starting with the success of a Swiss anti-immigrant political party in 1999, right-wing parties have garnered 20 to 30 percent of votes in elections in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and more. (tinyurl.com/y65htly2)

And in 2016 in the U.S. a white supremacist who boasted of his hatred for people of color and immigrants, who demonized women and LGBTQ+ people, was elected president.

A powerful, effective pushback against this surge of white supremacy requires more than answering “hate speech” with other words.

We must look unflinchingly at the fact that white supremacy is a tactic always used by the bosses of capitalism — and the politicians they elect — to divide the global multinational working class and turn us against each other.

In the U.S., laws enforcing discriminatory differences between white indentured servant workers and enslaved African workers were passed by owners as early as 1691. (tinyurl.com/yyd84vz6)

This racist division embedded in the economic system was nurtured in the South by centuries of plantation, coal mine, steel and lumber mill, and now

auto factory owners — and taken national as a political strategy in the 1890s. As different waves of immigrant workers have entered the U.S., they have also been targeted by both racist laws and propaganda.

As for the Christchurch shooter, he was born in Australia, where the first colony in 1788 was made of up poor and working-class white prisoners transported there for small crimes against property. This killer was the product of English colonial racism, which went to war with the Indigenous people whose continent it was, killing them and seizing their land.

The Christchurch killer, who identified himself as “working class,” was so brainwashed by colonizing capitalism that he actually called the Muslim people he murdered “invaders ... who colonize other peoples’ lands.” (tinyurl.com/y653rh7g)

His crime and his amnesia about Australia — and New Zealand — are also the history of the U.S. The fact that this country and its economy were founded on the theft of Indigenous lands, and on the unwaged, unpaid labor of people of African descent, has been blotted out from the memory, the understanding or the empathy of many white workers.

Capitalism is soaked blood-red in the tactics and beliefs of white supremacy.

We must fight this hatred — indomitably, untiringly — with every revolutionary tool we have. We must renew our struggle against racism, anti-immigrant bigotry and white supremacy. This must happen far beyond informal one-to-one conversations with friends, family or neighbors.

In every one of our unions, workplaces, community groups, religious bodies, schools from primary to university, we must be strategically, systematically organizing to push back against white supremacist ideology.

The ruling-class capitalists who now dominate the world are bent on holding together a death-dealing economic system that makes them multibillionaires. They have no compunction, and plenty of experience, turning us against each other.

We will outwit them, we will defy them, we will out-organize them. We will show our solidarity as the multinational, multigendered working class by sticking together and defending each other. □

of the world with small pieces of paper whose decreasing value gives evidence of the indebtedness it has incurred as a result of military adventures for which there has been no material return to compensate for the vast expenditures entailed in producing the planes, guns, tanks, and other sophisticated equipment employed. ...

Cranking up the war machine in the very early thirties was a stimulus to the capitalist economy. Cranking it up again in a period of hyperinflation and worldwide capitalist stagnation will operate as a depressant instead. ...

Congress ‘in hands of the military’

[L]isten to an old-line, conservative, southern Democrat, speaking in January 1967 about how the U.S. budget is really made up. Senator Ellender of Louisiana said:

“The truth of the matter is that in many important respects, the Congress and the nation are in the hands of the military. Add to this group the Department of State and

you have a combination that calls the shots. The admirals and the generals strongly backed by the Department of State seem to have the ways and means of getting just about what they want regardless of the monetary difficulties afflicting the nation.

“In contrast to the immensity of a \$75.5 billion budget for the military, we need only take a glance at the budget estimates for the conservation and development of our natural resources. We find here a national commitment of only \$2.5 billion. It is to the conservation of its land and water that the nation must look if we hope to remain strong and prosperous in the decade ahead, but our investment in this field will represent only a tiny portion of the huge sums to be expended during fiscal 1968.” ...

[T]his monumental war budget not only fully confirms the predominant role of the military but underlines once again the dangerous road on which the U.S. government has embarked. □

Ella May: Anti-racist strike martyr

Continued from page 6

1929, they were portrayed as outsiders by the bosses, the media and the clergy. In Gaston County, the Communist Party leadership of the National Textile Union was attacked for being atheistic, “un-American” and in favor of racial equality.

The workers, however, had been pushed to their limits. Mass anger was growing over the “stretch-out,” where workloads were being increased, even doubled, with no pay increase. In fact, wages were falling, as competition was intensifying, profit margins narrowed and companies were driven to cut labor costs to the bare minimum. The demand for woven cotton had also fallen with the introduction of rayon fabric and the loss of overseas business to Asian manufacturers.

Strike!

On March 31, 1929, at a mass meeting outside the Loray Mill, workers were asked by NTU leaders if they wanted to strike. Nearly every hand went up. The strike, which began the next day, spread to other mills, including May’s in Bessemer City.

The mills there were atypical in one respect: They hired Black workers. Normally Black people could not even get a job in the cotton mills. White workers were led to view Black workers as a threat to their jobs. Anti-union leaflets literally posed the question: “Would you belong to a union that opposes White Supremacy?”

May ignored the racist and anti-Communist propaganda and recruited Black workers to the NTU. They were not only her co-workers but also her friends and neighbors.

May emerged as a leader on the picket lines. She brought her strong voice, singing familiar and original songs. Her best known composition, “Mill Mother’s Lament,” opens with the verse: “We leave our homes in the morning/We kiss our children goodbye/While we slave for the bosses/Our children scream and cry.”

Walking the picket lines with their children, women were the backbone of the strike. Along with May, Daisy McDonald and 11-year-old Odell Corley were standout local fighters who also composed union songs. Vera Buch and Sophie Miller were among the national NTU organizers who took on the difficult challenge of organizing these Southern textile workers.

Strikes meet repression

Manville-Jenckes, the Rhode Island company that owned the Loray Mill, was determined to break the strike — as was the local political establishment. After

some 200 striker families were evicted from company housing, the union erected a tent encampment.

Anti-union vigilantes, with the support of local police, destroyed the camp as well as the union headquarters on April 18. A second camp was erected, protected by armed union guards.

On June 7, police attempted to enter the encampment, provoking a shootout that left five policemen wounded. When Police Chief Orville Aderholt died the following day — though it could not be determined who shot the chief — his death was used to justify violence and repression against the strike.

Vigilantes — organized as the Committee of 100, supposedly representing “loyal employees” but mainly consisting of supervisors — kidnapped and flogged union activist Ben Wells.

Strikers, including May and other women leaders, were being routinely jailed. Three women were among 15 union leaders arrested and charged with first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder in the death of Aderholt. There was no evidence that any of them had fired the fatal shot or that the killing was premeditated.

The defense appeared close to winning a “not guilty” verdict when the judge declared a mistrial on Sept. 9. Supposedly a juror “went insane” after seeing the prosecution’s exhibit, a plaster mannequin clothed in Aderholt’s blood-stained uniform.

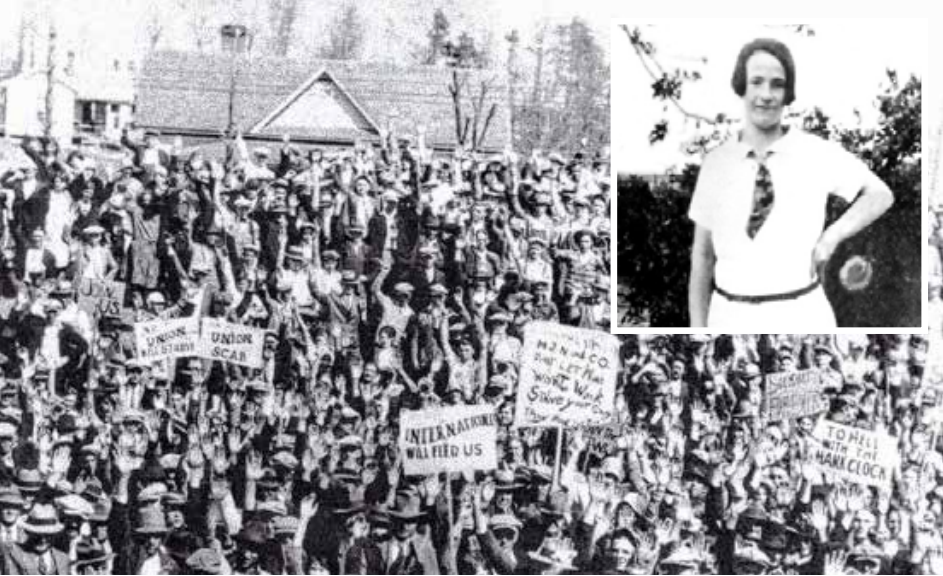
Anti-union forces were furious that no “guilty” verdict had been reached. Mobs comprising mill management and local businessmen destroyed union offices in Gastonia and Bessemer City and assaulted unionists in Charlotte.

A second trial was scheduled for Sept. 30. The state dropped the charges against eight of the original defendants, including the three women. When charges against the other seven were reduced to second-degree murder, a conviction appeared likely.

Vigilante murder of Ella May

Over 20 Bessemer City strikers, including pregnant Ella May, piled into the back of a pickup truck on Sept. 14 and headed to Gastonia to support the framed-up union leaders. Their vehicle was forced to turn around by 10 to 15 carloads of vigilantes, who followed them as they retreated.

The union truck had to brake suddenly when a car sped up and stopped in front of it. The occupants of that car, along with others, surrounded the strikers. A member of this armed group shot Ella May in the chest. She died instantly in the arms of her companion, Charlie Shope.



Strikers at Loray Mills in 1929. Inset: Ella May.

Hundreds of mill workers attended May’s funeral and burial, while others left their work stations briefly to pay respects as the casket passed by. Neither the family nor the NTU had funds for a headstone. Her brother Wesley put a large rock in the ground to mark the plot.

Even in death she garnered the ire of the Gastonia Gazette, which claimed her murder “shades into insignificance when compared with the lawlessness of the communists at Loray.”

Vera Buch later opined that, more than anything, her friend was singled out because she “understood immediately without argument the value of our union principle of racial equality.” (Kristina Horton, “Martyr of Loray Mill: Ella May and the 1929 Textile Workers’ Strike in Gastonia, North Carolina”)

Violence against strikers continued after the funeral with another kidnapping and flogging and more attacks on union offices. After enduring almost six months of anti-union terror, and with many strikers returning to work, the NTU officially called off the strike on Sept. 27.

Remembering resistance

Legal and extra-legal terror against workers was not limited to NTU strikes in Gastonia County. Textile strikes led by the moderate and segregationist United Textile Workers, affiliated with

the American Federation of Labor, were also brutally suppressed. Six strikers were killed in Marion, N.C., in 1929, immortalized by folk singer Woody Guthrie in “The Marion Massacre.”

Eventually seven men were charged with conspiracy to murder Ella May. Dozens of eyewitnesses, including everyone who was in the pickup truck, testified before investigators. Many saw Horace Wheelus, a “loyal” Loray worker, fire the fatal shot. Nevertheless, on Oct. 23 a Gaston County grand jury concluded that there was not enough evidence to charge anyone with May’s murder.

By contrast, the seven charged with the murder of Chief Aderholt received sentences ranging from seven to 20 years. They skipped bail and fled to the Soviet Union.

The drama of the Gastonia strike has been the subject of six novels. Decades later, folk singers Malvina Reynolds and Gary Green recorded songs written about Ella May. In 1977 local unionists finally erected a headstone at her gravesite. Currently a memorial committee is raising funds for a life-size sculpture to be placed there.

Ella May — a woman warrior and a class-conscious anti-racist who gave her life for the betterment of her class — is not forgotten. □

Se acerca una nueva generación de socialistas

Continúa de la página 12

de un sistema basado en robo a uno basado en satisfacer las necesidades de la sociedad. El capitalismo trae consigo el imperialismo, el racismo, el patriarcado y la destrucción del medio ambiente. Los jóvenes de hoy no quieren formar parte de ese futuro. Han visto el daño hecho en casa y en el extranjero. Exigen una política económica moralmente justificable.

Los jóvenes desean un sistema donde la atención médica no esté determinada por la capacidad de pago y donde la vivienda sea un derecho humano. Tienen una solidaridad creciente que exige el fin de la riqueza extraída de muchos por unos pocos, que solo puede lograrse a través del socialismo.

Los jóvenes tienen razón al identificar esta solución. Cuando observamos el dolor causado por la codicia y la explotación económica, y la ira justa de las personas que se levantan para resistirla en todo el mundo, queda claro que la victoria del socialismo sobre el capitalismo es inevitable. Los sistemas de opresión no pueden prosperar para siempre.

Vivimos en un mundo cada vez más interconectado donde la conciencia de clase está aumentando. La unidad entre las masas es siempre una señal de que la clase dominante pronto perderá su control sobre el poder. La fuerza moral del socialismo no puede ser detenida, ni tampoco las masas que la han empujado a la vanguardia de la política estadounidense.

Las huelgas de los trabajadores sólo se intensificarán. A medida que estos movimientos de trabajadores continúen siendo más interseccionales y se unan a movimientos antirracistas, antipatriarcales y antiimperialistas, se volverán incontenibles. Cualquier intento por parte de la clase dominante de suprimir estos movimientos sólo acelerará su propia desaparición.

Los jóvenes de hoy han emergido de las ruinas del mayor desastre económico desde la Gran Depresión. Su experiencia les ha enseñado que el capitalismo no es un motor del crecimiento económico, sino de la canibalización y la catástrofe ambiental. En su lugar, anhelan un sistema basado en la equidad y la justicia económica. La clase dominante está aterrorizada de que pronto lo lograrán. □



Women confront National Guard soldier during the strike.

Venezuela después del apagón

Movilización masiva responde al ataque imperialista

Por Sam Ordóñez

17 de marzo — Una nueva movilización masiva antiimperialista llenó las calles de Caracas el día 16 de marzo, celebrando una nueva victoria contra los ataques del imperialismo estadounidense. Es otra prueba del aumento de la organización y movilización del pueblo venezolano.

La nueva fase de la agresión imperialista buscaba destruir de una vez el proceso bolivariano pero falló, y ahora se encuentra estallido contra un pueblo venezolano que ha renovado su organización popular y antiimperialista.

Según fuentes oficiales la electricidad ha sido restaurada en Venezuela desde el 15 de marzo, luego de un apagón que empezó el día jueves 7 de marzo. El apagón, que duró una semana en algunas partes del país, fue resultado de un fallo en la planta hidroeléctrica conocida como “El Guri.”

Los gobiernos de Venezuela, Cuba y Rusia han denunciado varias formas de ataques contra el sistema eléctrico. La principal ha sido cibernética, con varios ataques dirigidos, según declaraciones del presidente Nicolás Maduro, desde Houston y Chicago.

Esta parece ser la principal causa del apagón, ya que logró desactivar el sistema de captura y control de datos de la red eléctrica. Incluso la publicación Forbes, que se autopresenta como una “herramienta capitalista”, publicó un reporte detallando que sería muy realista para la inteligencia estadounidense hacer un ataque cibernético contra Venezuela. (March 9, forbes.com)

El periodista Max Blumenthal reveló que la organización CANVAS, que evolucionó de grupos que desestabilizaron la ex-Yugoslavia, había publicado un plan para Venezuela que incluía un apagón como evento catalizador de una rebelión contra el gobierno. Esta organización recibe fondos de agencias estatales estadounidenses y entrenó a Juan Guaidó y varios de sus

aliados. (tinyurl.com/yxl6th8w)

También se reportaron varios ataques físicos, como la detonación de subestaciones, y de alta tecnología que utiliza ondas electromagnéticas para interferir en varias estaciones de distribución. También reporta teleSUR explosiones en la principal instalación petrolera del país. (tinyurl.com/y53dy9lt)

Por otro lado Juan Guaidó, el auto-proclamado presidente interino, culpa al gobierno de no mantener la red eléctrica. Es cierto que hace falta más inversión en la infraestructura nacional, pero hay que recordar que el bloqueo financiero impuesto por los Estados Unidos ha causado la pérdida de miles de millones de dólares que el gobierno podría haber usado para modernizar los sistemas digitales y comprar partes de repuesto, entre otras necesidades.

La hipocresía imperialista

Los medios corporativos internacionales se han enfocado en Venezuela en los últimos meses, publicando historia tras historia del sufrimiento del pueblo venezolano. Es muy poco probable que esta decisión se hace por razones humanitarias, ya que con su reportaje han demonizado al gobierno legítimo y crearon la narrativa que justifica la política injerencista de Trump.

Durante el apagón, CNN y el New York Times publicaban historias de agua negra, culpando siempre al gobierno “corrupto.” Pero en Flint, Michigan no ha habido agua potable durante años, y los medios corporativos parecen haberse olvidado.

Donald Trump, Mike Pence, Mike Pompeo, John Bolton, Elliott Abrams, y Marco Rubio hablan mucho de “ayuda humanitaria” y su gran preocupación por el pueblo venezolano. Toda la información que existe sobre ellos desmiente esa ridícula ficción.

Bolton y Abrams no han hecho más que destruir países y cometer crímenes de

guerra en todo el tiempo que han trabajado en la política. Marco Rubio se pasa el día imponiendo la voluntad del imperialismo en América Latina mediante amenazas en Twitter y el Senado.

Pompeo fue director de la CIA antes de asumir el cargo de Secretario de Estado, por lo que no podemos saber todos sus crímenes. Pero como ejemplo de su gran sentimiento humanitario, recientemente anunció que bloqueará la entrada de cualquier individuo que investiga los crímenes de EUA en Afganistán. (AP, March 15)

Mientras sus oficiales amenazan la guerra contra Venezuela, Donald Trump ha declarado un estado de emergencia para construir un muro fronterizo, llegando a usar el veto presidencial para defenderlo. Esto se suma a la separación de familias migrantes, y la práctica de poner a los niños en campos de concentración.

Pero quizás el ejemplo más insultante de la hipocresía del imperialismo es, como en muchas instancias, Puerto Rico. Después del huracán Maria el archipiélago estaba sin electricidad y agua durante meses, y algunas partes siguen así.

Mientras el gobierno estadounidense, mediante una junta fiscal, destruye lo que había sobrevivido el huracán, el gobierno de Nicolás Maduro envió combustible. Ahora, la policía y mercenarios reprimen con fuerza al pueblo boricua y la gente viaja horas para encontrar clínicas de diálisis operativas. Todas las peores mentiras del imperialismo sobre Venezuela son realidades para Puerto Rico durante casi dos años.

Solidaridad y organización para derrotar al imperialismo

A pesar de lo que dicen los medios de comunicación internacionales, Venezuela no ha caído en el caos. La respuesta del pueblo venezolano ante el apagón ha sido organizarse a nivel comunitario para satisfacer las necesidades.

Por su parte, el gobierno puso en función varios planes para asegurar el



WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

Manifestación anti-imperialista en Caracas, 16 de marzo.

funcionamiento de los hospitales, y distribuir agua potable. En las zonas donde no podían llegar con los camiones del gobierno, las comunidades se encargaron de encontrar y distribuir el agua.

Organizaciones de base como los CLAP, que distribuyen cajas de comida, seguían funcionando durante toda la semana, e incluso algunas comunidades se organizaron de forma espontánea para juntar los recursos y la información que tenían.

El poder popular en Venezuela se ha puesto en las primeras líneas del conflicto, para defender la soberanía y asegurar los derechos básicos de la población. Este poder se expresa mediante las más de 500 comunas formadas por miles de consejos comunales en los barrios populares.

Además de coordinar los esfuerzos de asegurar los derechos básicos, las comunas organizan las milicias populares. De esta manera se defienden tanto en términos literales, con el pueblo organizado y armado, como en términos más abstractos como asegurando la distribución de agua y comida.

El bloqueo financiero, en forma de sanciones unilaterales, es la única jugada del imperialismo que se puede decir que fue exitoso. Los ataques "guarimberos" en 2014 y 2017 no lograron derrocar al gobierno bolivariano por la fuerza. La autoproclamación de Guaidó y el intento de ingresar camiones estadounidenses tampoco provocó el quiebre que se buscaba en la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana.

Por ahora, sigue el riesgo de nuevos ataques contra el sistema eléctrico del país y el bloqueo financiero, ampliada desde enero a ser un bloqueo petrolero, de los Estados Unidos sigue causando problemas en la economía venezolana. Hay que prepararse para un asedio prolongado, en la cual será decisivo tanto que el pueblo venezolano desarrolle la organización y capacidad de producción doméstica como el movimiento de solidaridad internacional luchando para terminar con el bloqueo. □

Se acerca una nueva generación de socialistas

Por Makasi Motema

La multitud rugió cuando el jefe del estado imperialista/capitalista proclamó que "Estados Unidos nunca será un país socialista". Donald Trump se convirtió en el abanderado del capitalismo estadounidense durante su discurso sobre el estado de la Unión en febrero y ambos partidos se alinearon.

Pero a pesar de la respuesta atronadora, los gritos bipartidistas de apoyo al capitalismo llevaron un indicio de desesperación. ¿Por qué Trump sintió la necesidad de unir al Congreso contra el avance del socialismo?

La razón es que los jóvenes rechazan cada vez más el capitalismo, y esto asusta a la clase dominante. Los jóvenes han visto el daño causado por los regímenes capitalistas neoliberales, y están

adoptando el socialismo como la única alternativa viable.

La vida de la juventud de hoy ha estado marcada por el dramático despojo de las promesas del capitalismo y la revelación de su cruel realidad. A diferencia de la generación de sus padres, a los jóvenes de hoy se les dijo que no podían obtener un buen trabajo sin un título universitario. Bajo estos términos, aquellos que podrían cargarse con deudas de préstamos estudiantiles de cinco o seis cifras, solo para ser atacados por el mercado laboral posterior a 2008.

Los trabajos de nivel de entrada requieren no solo un título, sino también experiencia relevante. Adquirir experiencia significa asumir la carga de una pasantía no remunerada: regalar su poder de trabajo a una empresa de forma gratuita mientras encuentra otros medios para

apoyarse. Con la desventaja preexistente de los débiles pagos de la deuda, la generación del Milenio llegó a la mayoría de edad en un mundo donde incluso conseguir un trabajo es inasequible.

Aquellos que encuentran trabajo no son recibidos con planes de empleo y jubilación anteriormente estables de generaciones anteriores. En cambio, su empleo, y por lo tanto su supervivencia, es débil en el mejor de los casos. Se les anima a obtener un segundo empleo en la "economía trabajajitos".

Al acumular una estafa sobre otra, los capitalistas exigen que la clase trabajadora se someta no solo a los jefes, sino también a los algoritmos que explotan a los trabajadores con precisión computarizada. Sin seguridad en el empleo, sin planes de jubilación, sin escapar de la deuda y aparentemente sin futuro, la generación

actual entiende que el único medio de supervivencia es dismantelar el sistema antiguo y reemplazarlo con algo nuevo. Para los jóvenes de hoy, el socialismo no es una nueva tendencia de moda, es una balsa salvavidas en un mar de indignancia capitalista.

Un sistema que pone a los trabajadores en control es la única opción racional, la alternativa es una vida de inestabilidad económica. A los capitalistas se les ha dado todas las oportunidades para "reformular" su sistema, y no han encontrado nada. "La esperanza y el cambio" no eran más que aire caliente, y la generación actual entiende esto. Saben que el capitalismo nunca puede ser y nunca será arreglado.

El capitalismo es insostenible. Se requiere una transformación dramática

Continúa en la página 11