

Workers march, rally, strike on GLOBAL MAY DAY



President Nicolás Maduro (left photo) reviews hundreds of thousands marching in Caracas on May Day in defense of Bolivarian Venezuela. Millions marched in Cuba (right photo)). More workers' actions worldwide, including the U.S., 6-7.

By Kathy Durkin

International Workers' Day honors workers worldwide. On May 1, tens of millions of workers turn off their machinery, walk off the job and march together in a show of strength and solidarity. This special day heightens local and worldwide class consciousness.

May Day demonstrations expose the exploitation of labor by global capitalists and recognize workers' struggles against that injustice. Labor unions, social justice groups, socialists, communists, anarchists and other workers' allies participate. All those who fight for workers' rights are out on the streets.

At a time of brutal capitalist globalization, workers, oppressed and poor people face government austerity policies, with cutbacks in jobs and essential social services. They are super-exploited in the corporate race to the bottom, manifested in low wages and unsafe working conditions, even child labor. At the same time, bosses use racism, sexism, anti-LGBTQ bigotry and xenophobia to try to prevent class unity.

The scourge of sexual and physical abuse continues in many workplaces, although the #Me Too movement has brought it to public view. Workers at McDonald's eateries and Google facilities on many continents have walked off the job to oppose this and systemic racism and sexism. Wildcat strikes opposing low wages, unsafe working conditions and bosses' mistreatment have taken place at businesses owned by transnational companies or producing goods for them.

Although May Day is commemorated worldwide — and is even a legal holiday in many countries — it is not an official day in the U.S. where it originated. On May 4, 1886, 500,000 workers struck across the U.S., demanding an

8-hour workday; 40,000 did so in Chicago. European socialists formally set May 1 as International Workers' Solidarity Day in 1889. The idea spread quickly in Europe as workers struggled against low pay and oppressive working conditions in factories.

This May Day workers of all nationalities, cultures, genders, generations, abilities and disabilities demonstrated, many with their unions, socialist parties, and social justice or community organizations. Red flags flew high. Signs called for higher wages; workplace safety; respect on the job; rights for temporary, contract and migrant employees; and the right to unionize without retaliation. Some banners denounced the root cause of these ills: capitalism.

Here are some May Day highlights:

- Execution of a white supremacist2
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U.S.: Hands off Venezuela

A critical anti-imperialist struggle today is that of the people of Venezuela and their government, headed by President Nicolás Maduro, against U.S.-led intervention. The imperialists back self-proclaimed "leader" Juan Guaidó, who represents the wealthy and their allies in Washington.

The Venezuelan masses — industrial and agricultural workers, union members, women, poor and Indigenous people, and revolutionaries — support their president and 20 years of Bolivarian government. On May Day, another massive demonstration — one of many — took place in Caracas in support of President Maduro, following the right wing's failed coup attempt and honoring the working class, backbone of the revolution.

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◆ NYC workers 'air dirty laundry'

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WW Commentary

When the state executes a white supremacist

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Three white supremacists dragged James Byrd Jr., an African-American man, to his death in 1998 in Jasper, Texas, after they chained him to the back of their pickup truck. This lynching was one of the most horrific racist crimes in modern U.S. history and shocked people worldwide. Three men were arrested for this murder: John William King, Lawrence Russell Brewer and Shawn Allen Berry. While Berry received a life sentence, Brewer and King each received death sentences. Brewer was executed in 2011. Twenty-one years after Byrd’s murder, King was executed on April 24 this year. Many people who are normally opposed to executions were happy that this racist man, who was known as the ringleader of the crime, would finally get his justice. The Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, based in Houston, released a statement to the media informing them why they would be opposing King’s execution. The multinational organization is the most active anti-death-penalty organization in the state. The statement noted that politicians were saying the execution was a positive thing that gave justice to Byrd’s family and showed that Texas would punish hate. But not one governor, nor 99 percent of politicians in Texas ever condemned the racist murders committed by the police in their state. The press release read: “Our organization is staunchly opposed to all executions just as we are opposed to all racist acts, including what happened in Jasper two decades ago. We will protest this execution, even though we despise what these three men did in Jasper, and stand in solidarity with the family of James Byrd Jr. “Why? Because it is a hypocritical lie that Texas, its



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

governors and the Texas prison system, which will carry out tonight’s execution, are opposed to racism.” Activist Joanne Gavin said, “We know that the death penalty is itself a racist hate crime. We remember when Clarence Brandley, an African American, was picked up with a white man for the murder of a white high school student where they were both custodians. The sheriff told the two men, ‘One of you two is going to hang for this.’ Then pointing at Brandley, the sheriff said, ‘Since you’re the n — —r, you’re elected.’” Maybe a few cops have been fined \$1, as was the case in the death of Joe Campos Torres, brutally killed by Houston police in 1977 after he was viciously beaten, handcuffed and thrown into a bayou on Cinco de Mayo. “Let’s see if the w — —k can swim,” one of the cops said. Torres’ body was found five days later. The Texas trooper who arrested Sandra Bland was only charged with perjury after her death in the Waller County Jail in 2015. And that charge was dropped by the

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Join us in the fight for socialism!

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward! Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits. Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism. The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth

and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis. The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system. WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs. Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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Anti-imperialists defend Venezuelan Embassy from coup supporters

By Ben Carroll and Sara Flounders
At the Venezuelan Embassy,
Washington, D.C.

May 4 — Several hundred people answered the call to mobilize anti-imperialist forces at the Venezuelan Embassy today to defend it from increasingly violent right-wing, fascist supporters of the U.S.-backed coup attempts in Venezuela.

CODEPINK and ANSWER led the demonstration, which had strong participation from D.C.-area activists, along with others from several East Coast cities. The International Action Center and the No War On Venezuela Campaign helped rally participation and brought signs and chants.

For several weeks, a determined group of Venezuela solidarity activists, known as the Embassy Protection Collective, have steadfastly held control of the embassy. They have done so at the invitation of the legitimate, democratically elected government of Venezuela, led by President Nicolás Maduro, after the Venezuelan staff was forced to leave.

The movement to defend the embassy has repeatedly resisted attempts by U.S. police agencies and right-wing forces



Defenders of Bolivarian Venezuela resist right-wing attacks at its Embassy, Washington, D.C., May 4.

WW PHOTO: BEN CARROLL

gathered outside the embassy to force their eviction. The authorities aim to turn Venezuela's embassy over to U.S.-backed coup forces.

Beginning on April 30, following the announcement of the coup attempt by U.S. puppet Juan Guaidó in Venezuela and its rapid failure, the Embassy Protectors and other anti-imperialists who gathered to defend the embassy have been besieged by right-wing forces.

Anti-war activists resisted the rightists' attempted use of violence and other means to gain control of the embassy.

The rightists have become increasingly more aggressive throughout the week and have hurled racist, sexist and anti-LGBTQ slurs at the anti-war activists. They have also carried out physical attacks, including trying to storm their way into the embassy, often in the middle of the night. Their belligerence has hampered

the delivery of food, medicines and other supplies to the Embassy Protectors.

That the U.S. government allows criminal conduct at the embassy of a sovereign nation is in direct violation of international laws and treaties the U.S. has signed. It also violates Washington, D.C., law; the Embassy Protectors have established their legal residency in the embassy office based on their agreement with the Venezuelan government.

The right wing is carrying out these attacks with a green light from the Secret Service, D.C. police and other state agencies that maintain an ongoing presence at the embassy. The cops violently arrested several of the supporters of the Bolivarian Revolution who have mobilized in the last week to protect the embassy. The right-wing coup supporters, meanwhile, have attacked protesters and defaced the embassy without police interference.

Demonstration challenges right-wing hold on embassy grounds

The May 4 demonstration was initially called to take place directly in front of the embassy. As organizers attempted to open a canopy tent to claim space,

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GEORGIA

University students battle racist higher-ups

By Arielle Robinson
Kennesaw, Ga.

Students, faculty and community members are in ongoing struggle against racism at the University of Georgia at Athens—and also at Kennesaw State University. These struggles are linked to Kennesaw's current president, Pamela J. Whitten, who was previously provost at UGA. At both locations she has been conspicuously unresponsive to opposing racism.

In 2015 the remains of enslaved people were found near UGA's Baldwin Hall during an expansion project of the building. In 2016 the Franklin College Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Baldwin Hall released a 31-page report condemning UGA's lack of accountability for its connections to the institution of slavery. The report states that UGA administrators allegedly intimidated faculty conducting research on slavery.

The Baldwin Hall report relates that UGA professor Scott Nesbit was told by an unnamed administrator that then-UGA Provost Pamela Whitten was "not happy" with critical remarks he made about the university's failure to respond. Allegedly, Whitten "was considering measures that would make it impossible for [Nesbit] ever to gain employment at other universities."

Nesbit is an assistant professor of history, specializing in the U.S. South and issues of race and slavery. According to the report, UGA administration found Nesbit's comments to be a form of "activism" and thus unacceptable.

Whitten became president of KSU in June 2018. The allegation of Whitten's intimidation of faculty at UGA, added to her current administrative nonresponse to matters of racism, comes at a time when KSU students have been repeatedly calling on Whitten to do something about racism on the KSU campus.

In fall 2017, KSU cheerleaders took a knee as the U.S. national anthem played during a school football game. The following year, all five of those who knelt were cut from the squad. After that and other racist incidents on campus, KSUnited was formed. (See Workers World, Feb. 28)

Activist group KSUnited has called on Whitten to publicly release a statement condemning racism and asked that the president support a taskforce to create an anti-racist education center. According to the KSU student newspaper The Sentinel, throughout the school year Whitten refused to release a statement condemning racism, even after being asked directly by student leaders. (April 15)

Finally, in an email sent to KSU students on April 22, Whitten managed to state that

she has "no tolerance for any form of discrimination or racism on our campuses." Despite this, Whitten has not committed herself to meeting with student activists, nor has she expressed any support for the creation of an anti-racist center, saying she needed "documentation" that the center had been planned institutionally.

At an April 26 meeting with Whitten, KSUnited activists brought documentation showing an anti-racist education center was included in campus building plans. But Whitten still would not commit.

KSUnited activists have made it clear

that their struggle against racism will continue, vowing to fight until Kennesaw State University is safe for people of color, women, people in the LGBTQ community and other marginalized groups.

Meanwhile, at the University of Georgia-Athens, where a racist fraternity video rocked the campus this spring, the Coalition for Recognition and Redress continues to demand the university acknowledge its complicity and connection to slavery and institute concrete reforms to serve those directly impacted by that history. □

When the state executes a white supremacist

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prosecutor when the trooper agreed to give up his police license.

Every day in the U.S., cops commit officially "legal" acts that are a continuation of lynchings committed against African-American people by white vigilantes throughout U.S. history.

On April 24, outside the death house, as execution time neared, the Abolition Movement set up their usual picket line with signs condemning that night's execution. Speaking through the bullhorn, they explained that the execution of a racist was not going to stop racism. They explained that not one governor has ever called for an execution when a young Black man has been shot down by cops. No hate crime bill has been passed to remember the victims of racist police murder: "As much as we oppose tonight's execution, we oppose killer cops who gun down people with impunity. Two hundred and ninety-nine people in the U.S. have been killed by cops just this year, 2019."

Here are some statistics about the death penalty as it exists under this capitalist system in the "modern" era—since 1976.

1. In Texas, 73.6 percent of those on death row are people of color.
2. In Texas, 60 percent of those executed are people of color.
3. Over the last five years, more than 70 percent of death sentences in Texas have been imposed on people of color.
4. Texas has four more executions scheduled this year.
5. African Americans are less than 13 percent of the Texas population, but comprise 43.4 percent of those on death row, according to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

The only conclusion is that the death penalty is racist.

The U.S. is fast approaching the disgusting milestone of 1,500 executions since 1976, with the total now at 1,495. King was the fourth prisoner executed in the United States in 2019 and the third in Texas.

Racism has not ended with King's execution. It will not end until the working class takes state power and presides over a socialist government where any material basis for racism can be eliminated. □



CREDIT: RED AND BLACK

At the University of Georgia-Athens on April 29, students, faculty and community members protest the school's failure to address its history of slavery.

Trump’s labor board stalls vote VW workers fight union-busting

By Martha Grevatt

With 370,000 workers at 61 plants worldwide, Volkswagen is the world’s largest auto company. Last year it made almost \$15.67 billion in profit. Yet while VW can well afford to pay union benefits and wages, the company appears hell-bent on keeping its only nonunion factory union-free.

That one factory is in Chattanooga, Tenn. Open since 2011, it is one of VW’s newest plants. The United Auto Workers narrowly lost a representation election, supervised by the National Labor Relations Board, in 2014.

At that time the election looked like an easy win for the UAW, based on a neutrality agreement signed by both the union and the company. Nevertheless, workers were subjected to a barrage of well-funded, right-wing propaganda via TV, radio, print media and billboards. What finally tipped the scales was a blatantly false statement by U.S. Senator Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) that VW would pull out of Tennessee if the union won.

But pro-UAW workers did not give up the fight for union representation. They formed a members-only, non-majority union, UAW Local 42. They chose “42” because that number was worn by a hometown hero, baseball legend Jackie Robinson.

In 2015 the 160 skilled maintenance workers in the Chattanooga plant voted — by a better than 2-to-1 margin — to be represented by the UAW as a unit.

The NLRB certified the results, but VW refused to recognize the union, claiming an election would have to encompass the whole hourly workforce at the plant to be legitimate. The case was still pending when this year, on April 9, the UAW withdrew from seeking representation for the smaller unit in order to request an election for all Chattanooga VW hourly workers.

Since 2015 the union has grown its base of support among workers outside the maintenance unit. By April 9 a majority

of plant workers had signed cards stating their desire to be represented by the UAW.

Company and state unite to block the union

This time VW has taken the gloves off. The company itself, with help from the politicians, is now openly leading the anti-union campaign. This includes mandatory “captive audience” meetings, where the company makes workers sit through a hard sell for keeping the union out.

One such meeting on April 29 featured Gov. Bob Lee, who extolled the virtues of a nonunion workplace — specifically referring to his management of the nonunionized fabricating company, owned by his family, before his election to state office.

Soon after the meeting with Lee, VW supervisors engaged in intimidating conversations with workers and handed out anti-union leaflets.

VW has the backing of the reinvigorated 2014 propaganda machine, including the group leading the anti-union drive, Southern Momentum. In a thinly veiled appeal to racism, that group is again plugging anti-Northernism, warning about the dangers of a “Detroit-based” union. The misnamed “Center for Union Facts” and National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation have also joined the fray. Local media coverage has been biased against the union.

The company’s arguments are easily refutable. VW hypocritically claimed that no election could take place until the UAW was decertified — through an NLRB election — as the representative of only the maintenance trades at the plant. But VW has spent nearly three years fighting union recognition for those very workers!

The company’s staunchest ally has proven to be the NLRB itself, now that the majority of its members are Trump appointees. The union had asked for an election to be held April 29 or 30, but no election was scheduled. On May 3 the board voted 2-1 to grant VW’s request to



PHOTO: UAW

Chattanooga VW workers were fighting for a union even before this 2015 photograph was taken.

hold off on an election.

Only an unabashedly pro-corporate labor board could render such a decision. That is exactly what Trump had in mind when he appointed John Ring, Marvin Kaplan and William Emmanuel to the NLRB. Ring came from a Philadelphia-based, union-busting law firm, Morgan, Lewis, and Bockius. Kaplan’s former firm, McDowell Rice Smith & Buchanan, brags of “a long-standing reputation as one of the select go-to firms for businesses in difficult times” — a code for “union drives.” (mcdowellrice.com)

Emmanuel (not involved in the VW decision) comes from Littler Mendelson, the same law firm that represents both VW and Nissan. The latter was successful in beating back a UAW drive last year at its Canton, Miss., plant through aggressive intimidation. VW has adopted Nissan’s playbook.

Lack of safety motivates union drive

VW, while highly profitable, has been paying out billions of euros each year since the 2015 “diesel-gate” emissions cheating scandal. Squeezing more product out of fewer workers is a way to recoup some of those losses. So the bosses don’t want any union interference with its profit taking.

In Tennessee, company scare leaflets have warned workers that they could lose pay and benefits through the collective bargaining process. While that is actually a rarity in a first contract, it’s hypothetically possible — but only if the company demands these cuts and the union feels it has to accept them.

VW is obscuring the fact that, without a union contract, a company can make pay cuts and impose worse conditions any time it wants!

Pay and benefits are not the primary complaint, however. Injuries, including repetitive motion injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome, are frequent. The speedup — long the bane of autoworkers and a key reason they organized in the 1930s — is pushing workers to their physical limits.

As Local 42 explains on its Facebook page, “Changes were made in standardized work, line speed increased, a two-line system was changed to a single line feeding into two, [and] injuries increased in a two-month period. Two previous years before changes, injuries were very seldom.”

UAW contracts with Ford, General Motors and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles have language on work standards that make speedup a “strikeable” grievance.

Unhealthy work schedules and last-minute shift changes are also taking a toll. A union contract could require advance notice of shift moves and allow shift preference on the basis of seniority.

Chattanooga workers are now arguing back when supervisors corner them and badmouth the union. Some 30 workers came to the NLRB hearing on the vote request to explain why they wanted a union. The governor’s speech drew a number of boos.

Despite company intimidation, VW workers are fighting for a union.

Martha Grevatt is a 31-year retired Fiat Chrysler worker and serves on the Executive Board of UAW Local 869.

East Harlem May Day Protest supports laundry workers

By Mary Owen
New York

Chanting “Pay the workers what you owe them, wage theft is a crime,” more than 60 activists turned out on May Day for a protest at TYS Laundromat in East Harlem to support Laundry Workers Center members.

TYS owes the workers at least \$200,000 in back pay and \$400,000 in damages, but continues to try to pay them less and then fire them afterwards.

“We are here on this special day — May Day, the workers’ day — to protest bad employers and owners. Thanks to all of you who are here to support our struggle,” said TYS worker Nicolas Benitez. He was cheered by protesters carrying signs reading, “End wage theft NOW! Wage theft is a crime,” “Safe & healthy conditions are the law,” “Respect the workers. No more physical abuse,” and “No walls in the workers’ struggle.”

LWC organizer Mahoma Lopez said, “This employer has refused to pay the money owed to the workers. We are also concerned about the unsafe working conditions and exposure to chemicals that may make workers sick later. We are here

today to let the TYS workers know they are not alone.”

“The laundry workers are mainly women of color, of Asian, African and Caribbean descent,” said LWC organizer Rosanna Rodriguez. “We need a structure change in the laundry industry — to change the conditions of these precarious workers so they can have a better life.” Other rally speakers echoed that theme.

Suzanne Adely of the Food Chain Workers Alliance spoke on behalf of 33 workers’ centers of farm, poultry, warehouse, cleaners and other food-industry workers in the U.S. and around the world. “The LWC models how to build workers’ power in East Harlem,” she said.

“We have to fight the class struggle every day. There are no walls in the workers’ struggle, here and around the world,” said Larry Holmes of the NYC Peoples Power Assembly. “LWC members are heroes of the working class because they have shown us that, whether at laundries or restaurants or other workplaces, the workers will do what they need to do to fight back. And we need to support them.” He urged everyone to sign the International Workers’ Solidarity Network call at workersolidarity.net for

a “May Day every month.”

Also addressing the rally were the Street Vendor Project, fighting for permits and to stop police harassment; Families United for Freedom, representing non-U.S. citizens fighting against detention and deportation; BAYAN USA, fighting for the rights of overseas Filipinx workers in the U.S.; Queens Neighborhoods United, active in working-class, immigrant neighborhoods of Jackson Heights, Corona and East Elmhurst in Queens; Harlem Solidarity and Defense, opposing gentrification and gender oppression; and students from the City University of New York and others.

The rally ended with rousing chants of “Union, Fuerza, Solidaridad!” (Union, Strength, Solidarity!) and “Que Queremos? Justicia! Cuando? Ahora!” (What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!) as protesters headed downtown to a May Day demonstration on Wall Street.

For more information on LWC campaigns, visit laundryworkerscenter.org. □



VW PHOTO: MARY OWEN

May Day means supporting the Laundry Workers Center and its members.

Iowans honor the fallen on Workers' Memorial Day

By Mike Kühlenbeck

Workers' Memorial Day has been observed internationally since 1996. The National Labor School (ENS) of Colombia, a left-oriented research and education organization, estimates 2.78 million workers worldwide are killed, made sick or injured by their jobs every year. (ens.org.co)

Iowans paid tribute to fallen workers during the week of Workers' Memorial Day, an international day of remembrance observed on April 28.

For 30 years Workers' Memorial Day has not just been a day of mourning, but a call to action in the fight for workers' safety. As vital protections are being stripped away by the Trump administration, this call is as urgent as ever.

On April 25, the AFL-CIO released the 2019 edition of their annual report, "Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect," which details the condition of workers' safety (or lack thereof) in the U.S.

According to the Executive Summary, "Nearly 50 years after the passage of the nation's job safety laws, the toll of workplace injury, illness and death remains too high, and too many workers remain at serious risk. There is much more work to be done."

The report stated that 5,147 workers were killed on the job and more than 95,000 died from occupational diseases in 2017. That means for each day of the year, approximately 275 workers died due to dangerous workplace conditions.

Iowa was the "14th most dangerous state for workers" and was ranked number 36 in workplace deaths, based on data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In 2018, 26 Iowa workers aged 22 to 65 lost their lives. They died from falls, electrocution, collapsing trenches,

being pinned under equipment and struck by machinery, industrial and construction accidents, fire and other causes.

Iowa Center for Agricultural Safety and Health Director Brandi Janssen, Ph.D., told Eastern Iowa News outlet KCRG-TV9 on April 26, "Nearly every occupational fatality is preventable.

"You have to take the time, you have to plan for it. Every industry is responsible, they're responsible for their workers. And none of these deaths that we're talking about today should have ever happened."

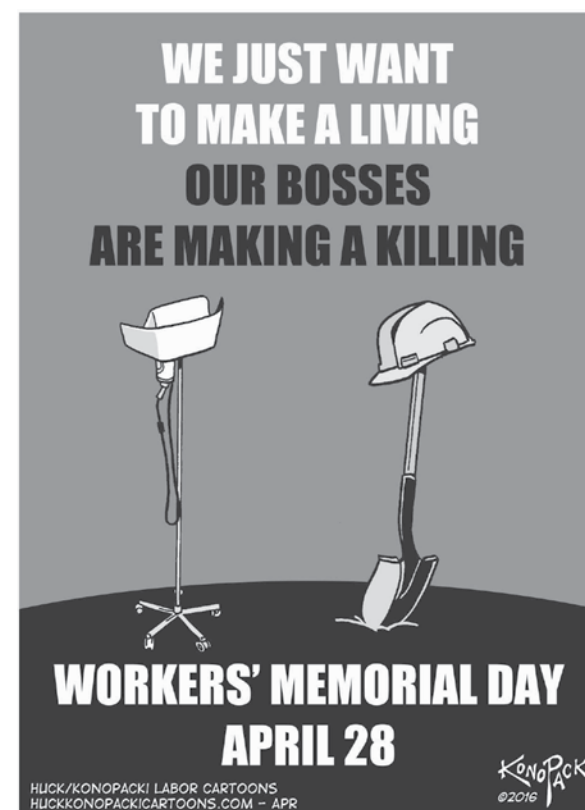
From April 26 to 29, Workers' Memorial Day events were hosted in Iowa cities: Bettendorf, Cedar Rapids, Clinton, Council Bluffs, Des Moines, Dubuque, Iowa City, Keokuk, Sioux City and Waterloo.

Gov. Kim Reynolds attended the ceremony outside the Iowa State House in Des Moines on April 29. Reynolds' appearance can be viewed as a cynical publicity stunt, considering she and her GOP colleagues are in lockstep with the Trump administration's anti-worker agenda.

Reynolds, her predecessor Terry Branstad and GOP legislators have cut taxes for the rich, eviscerated bargaining rights for public union workers, frozen the minimum wage at \$7.25 an hour and recently weakened worker's compensation. They are not on labor's side, but on the side of the exploiters.

Among the findings in the AFL-CIO report, nearly 3.5 million workers across all industries had work-related injuries and illnesses reported nationwide by employers in 2017. However, many cases are underreported, with the real estimate being closer to 7 million to 10.5 million.

Job fatalities decreased slightly in 2017 compared to the previous year, from 3.6 per 100,000 workers to 3.5 per 100,000. Regardless, any injury or loss of life that could have been prevented — and wasn't — is



CREDIT: IOWA LABOR NEWS

unacceptable.

The Iowa Federation of Labor AFL-CIO, in their newsletter, Iowa Labor News, wrote, "We will stand united against the ongoing attacks on workers' rights and protections and demand that elected officials put workers' well-being above corporate interests." □

What's in the recent jobs report — and what's not

By Deirdre Griswold

Much is being said in the capitalist media about the monthly jobs report for April issued by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. According to the BLS, "Total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 263,000 in April, and the unemployment rate declined to 3.6 percent."

This is being reported as good news for workers. But is it really easier to find a job these days?

A closer look shows that the decline in the unemployment rate isn't all it's cracked up to be.

According to the BLS, only "People who are jobless, looking for a job, and available for work are counted as unemployed. ... People who are neither employed nor unemployed are not in the labor force."

The government calculates the jobless rate by surveys, mostly done by telephone, asking people if they worked or looked for work in the preceding week.

Obviously, if you don't have a phone, you're not likely to be counted. There are many homeless people out there who have neither a place to live nor a phone. In 2018, according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, an average of more than half a million people in the U.S. — 553,000 — were homeless each night.

For the most part, they are "neither employed nor unemployed," according to BLS criteria and therefore "not in the labor force." People who have been without work for a long time are classified as "discouraged workers" and simply not counted.

So what the BLS reports each month on the rate of unemployment is useful only as a relative, not an absolute, figure. It doesn't tell us how many people are really out of work, but it does show a trend.

The rise and fall of these numbers, while they in no way present an overview

of the economy, should give us an idea of whether conditions for the working class are improving or worsening.

One of the figures that the Trump administration boasted about was a slight fall in the official unemployment rate, to 3.6 percent, which is being trumpeted as the lowest since December 1969. Does that sound real to you?

Well, it isn't. Because there was also a big drop last month in the number of people who said they were looking for work. And that drop in what is called the "participation rate" accounted for most of the drop in official unemployment. According to the BLS, some 490,000 workers — that's nearly half a million — dropped out of the labor force last month.

This decline in the number of people looking for work has been going on every month since December. And it runs counter to the fact that the population has been increasing in this period. The BLS does not give reasons for why fewer people are looking for work, but becoming "discouraged workers" who have given up on finding a job must be an important factor.

For Black workers, official unemployment rose 0.2 percent to 6.7 percent. That does not account for those who are involuntarily working part-time or are "discouraged."

Wages up? What they don't say

The May 4 New York Times gave its rosy interpretation of the BLS report, writing, "[W]ith average hourly earnings up 3.2 percent from a year ago, ordinary workers are finally sharing in the economy's bounty." Actually, the BLS report said that the wages of "rank-and-file workers" had declined, not risen, in the previous month by a tenth of 1 percent, but did rise over the past year by 2.9 percent, not the 3.2 percent cited by the Times.

However, the BLS reports, "Real average hourly earnings" — reflecting inflation — "increased 1.3 percent, seasonally adjusted, from March 2018 to March 2019."

And the "ordinary workers" who the Times says got an increase of 3.2 percent must include some managers who got bigger increases than the rank and file.

The median wage for workers with some college education but not a four-year degree is just \$835 a week. People with no college education earn considerably less than that and are living below the official poverty level if they support a family.

What is missing in the Times report — and in all the capitalist media — is any recognition of workers' struggles for higher pay in this period. They write as though wage increases have been "given" by employers out of the goodness of their hearts, when the truth is that workers have had to fight tooth and nail for the smallest increases — at a time when millionaires were becoming billionaires.

Completely ignored is the fact that the number of workers involved in work stoppages last year was the highest since 1986.

Strikes and walkouts as workers struggle

It is important to note that the great walkouts by tens of thousands of teachers and other education workers in many states, which began almost a year and a half ago, are not even covered by the BLS statistics on strikes.

What began in February 2018, when education workers in West Virginia hit the bricks, was followed over the next two months by teachers and other education workers walking out in Arizona, Colorado, Oklahoma and Kentucky.

They won improvements in wages and working conditions in these generally low-wage states despite anti-labor laws, some



CREDIT: WW GRAPHIC

of which make strikes by teachers illegal. But the support the workers got from the communities they serve made it impossible for the reactionary governments in these states to move against them.

Along with these strikes and walkouts have been many campaigns across the country to raise the minimum wage. According to a posting last November by raisetheminimumwage.com, the Fight for \$15 campaign had won \$68 billion in raises for 22 million workers, especially in fast food and other service industries.

Yet this reactionary, anti-worker Trump administration has the utter gall to claim credit for any wage increases workers have won!

These struggles were most often spearheaded by people of color, migrants, women and other gender-oppressed workers. They are the very people this government has viciously attacked on a wide number of fronts.

So there is some genuine good news in the latest BLS report: Wages on average are staying ahead of inflation, but no thanks to the capitalist system or its political representatives. We give credit to the workers who have been organizing and fighting the exploiters of their labor. □



Workers march, rally, strike on global May Day

Continued from page 1

Chants of “Evo, Yes! Yankees, No!” were shouted on May Day in Cochabamba, **Bolivia**. President Evo Morales and labor union leaders led the day’s march, following announcement of a 3 percent increase in the minimum wage. The Bolivian Workers Center, under leftist leadership, is now officially a council of state, with power to implement laws. Minister for Social Movements Alfredo Rada said, “This ratifies this is a government of the workers.”

President Morales said, “We pay homage to the union leaders that throughout history have won workers rights and benefits for the people.” He honored the “martyrs of Chicago” — workers killed in the struggle for the 8-hour day in the 1886 “Haymarket massacre.” (Telesur, May 1)

Argentina: Strike stops 'business as usual'

Thousands blocked the streets of Buenos Aires, **Argentina**, during a 2-day strike organized by labor unions and social movements in opposition to President Mauricio Macri's austerity policies. The job actions paralyzed government offices, schools, banks and airports in the capital city. Cuts in subsidies for transportation and utilities have resulted in higher costs for the masses, while layoffs are contributing to worsening impoverishment.

Thousands of workers, socialists, and other leftists and progressive people marched in Santiago, **Chile**. Flags portrayed revolutionary hero Che Guevara, and banners emblazoned with anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist slogans flew high. Police viciously attacked and tear-gassed demonstrators as they protested the neo-liberal policies of conservative billionaire President Sebastian Piñera.

Elsewhere in Latin America, mass demonstrations denounced the reactionary governments of President Lenin Moreno in **Ecuador** and President Jair Bolsonaro in **Brazil**.

On May 1, workers in **Mexico** won the right to collectively bargain with employers through labor unions, free of retaliation. The \$2 daily wage for factory workers has attracted U.S. companies to manufacture there and super-exploit the workers, spurning unionized workers in the U.S. But Mexico’s workers are fighting back.

Cuba celebrates 60 years of revolution

Some 1,427 international guests from over 100 countries, representing 140 labor organizations, joined the people of **Cuba** on May Day. The masses commemorated the 60th anniversary of their socialist revolution, hailed the Communist Party of Cuba and showed solidarity with Venezuela and other progressive governments in Latin America.

The huge march in Havana and the many demonstrations throughout the island were ever more important as a show of strength against the saber-rattling Trump administration, which threatens to intensify the inhumane blockade of Cuba because the country supports President Maduro.

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermúdez, on his way to Havana's Plaza de la Revolucion José Martí, tweeted: “The people are united: workers, campesinos, students and all Cubans.” He said Cuba “offers a firm and revolutionary response to the statements loaded with threats, provocations, lies and slander of the Yankee empire. Cuba ratifies that we are free, sovereign, independent and socialist.” (Granma, May 1)

In San Juan, **Puerto Rico**, demonstrators holding shields faced off against police. Protesters demanded the ouster of the U.S.-imposed Federal Financial Control Board, established to monitor the island's finances for Wall Street and strip its resources to benefit U.S. imperialist interests.

COSATU: 'Workers must transform society!'

May Day was commemorated on the African continent from **Algeria** in the north, in the continuation of the mass movement for “a new democratic regime,” to **South Africa** where workers rallied.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions congratulated the thousands of workers who participated in May Day activities around the country. The organization pledged to ceaselessly work to build a

federation that fights for its membership, is a social force for transformation and a home for all workers.

Referring to white business owners who, with foreign capital, still dominate the economy, and to the poverty, unemployment and inequality inherited from apartheid, COSATU asserted the need to deepen the organizational capacity of the workers' movement and to “drive a pro-working class transformation of society.” (cosatu.org)

Demonstrations sweep Europe

Members of labor unions CCOO and UGT marched in Madrid and other major cities and towns in **Spain**, demanding a rollback of probusiness policies and “reforms” enacted by the conservative government, resulting in a loss of secure jobs and a rise in “precarious” employment.

Activists in the Yellow Vest movement, labor unions, socialist parties and other progressive organizations marched in Paris, **France**, against President Emmanuel Macron's tax benefits for the rich at the expense of workers and poor people. Police attacked and tear-gassed demonstrators.

The German Federation of Trade Unions (DGB) reported that 381,500 people participated in 481 labor union actions calling for workers' rights across **Germany**. Anti-fascists and other left forces also rallied. Many protesters denounced capitalism and ultra-right nationalism. In Berlin, police attacked anti-capitalist protesters. The DGB called for rejection of the far right in upcoming elections.

Private sector union confederation GSEE and public sector umbrella union ADEDY held a 24-hour strike with rallies in Athens, **Greece**, against “exploitation and social inequalities.” PAME, the Communist Party-affiliated union, held the largest rally. Rail, ferry and other transportation services ground to a halt.

On “May 1 Labor and Solidarity Day,” hundreds of thousands of members of labor unions and leftist parties marched for workers' rights in several cities in **Turkey**. The large labor unions that organized the demonstrations denounced a government-proposed severance pay “reform.” In Istanbul, protesters were thwarted by police from marching to Taksim Square, where 34 people were killed by police during a 1977 May Day rally. This year, police arrested 137 protesters in Istanbul and harassed demonstrators in other cities.

Stop U.S.-backed Israeli aggression!

Waving Palestinian flags, workers rallied in Ramallah on the **Occupied West Bank**, demanding their rights, jobs, higher wages and improved living conditions. They called on the world community to pressure Israel to end its occupation and ensure Palestinians a life of dignity.

In Gaza, Palestinians demonstrated for an end to Israel's 12-year, U.S.-backed blockade, which has caused a human catastrophe there, with extreme poverty, 52 percent joblessness and incomes of \$2 a day. In the days after May Day, Israel bombed Gaza, killing 24 Palestinians as of May 5.

Thousands rallied in Dhaka, **Bangladesh**, demanding better wages and working conditions for all workers, and paid maternity leave and protections from workplace sexual and physical abuse for women garment workers. They demanded reinstatement of thousands of garment workers fired for striking over paltry wages. Garment workers' federations and leftist forces, some carrying red flags, were out in force. Four million super-exploited garment workers annually generate \$30 billion in exports made there for global brands.

Workers marched in **Pakistan** and throughout **India** with their labor organizations. Socialists, communists and other leftists participated.

'We want permanent jobs! End precarious labor!'

In Seoul, **South Korea**, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions organized a protest of 27,000 workers and reported 57,000 demonstrators came out in 13 other cities. They marched for the right to unionize, equitable rights and wages for temporary contract workers, permanent jobs—and an end to precarious labor which particularly impacts poor and disabled workers.

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ON MAY DAY U.S. workers on the rise

By Betsey Piette

The year leading up to May Day 2019 in the U.S. saw increasing numbers of successful strikes and workers' actions from coast to coast, involving retail, restaurant, tech industries, education workers and the gig economy.

In the Carolinas on May Day, thousands of teachers, wearing red shirts, walked out and shut down schools, converging on state capitals in **Columbia, S.C.**, and **Raleigh, N.C.** They demanded an end to years of stagnant wages and lack of investment in schools. The convergence of red-clad protesters led both right-wing and big business publications to ponder "Advocating for 'our children' or a 'Marxist' event"?

Workers World welcomes these teachers' protests, which are not isolated events. Workers struggles are gaining momentum around the country.

In **Boston**, a vibrant march organized by the May 1st Coalition wound through the working-class, mainly Latinx, communities of Everett, Chelsea and East Boston, with drumming and chants of "Si se puede" and "Whose streets? Our streets!" Community groups included Comitè TPS Massachusetts, Chelsea Collaborative, La Comunidad and many others.

Workers fixing a roof held up their tools in solidarity as marchers passed by with placards "No Walls in the Workers' Struggle" and "Build Global Solidarity." A woman in a Stop & Shop shirt said proudly, "I work at Stop & Shop; we just went on strike and won!" Garage mechanics, spattered with oil, held up their fists and smiled. School students stopped to take literature.

The banner of the United Steelworkers Local 8751, representing Boston school bus drivers, defended the Bolivarian Revolution and former bus driver Venezuelan President Maduro. The New England Carpenters Union banner read, "Workers of the World Unite." Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), fresh from their victorious Stop & Shop strike, were there, along with UNITE/HERE Local 26 representing victorious Harvard University and Marriott workers.

The Boston Independent Drivers Guild, representing Uber/Lyft workers, marched alongside Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere (FIRE) and the International Workers Solidarity Network. After rallying at Harvard University, the Harvard TPS Coalition joined the march in East Boston where strong chants of "Hands off Venezuela" finished the day.

In **New York City**, demonstrators at the Trump Building, 40 Wall Street, denounced capitalist exploitation of immigrant workers. "No walls in the workers struggle/No hay muros en la lucha obrera!" was a common theme and "From Palestine to Mexico, border walls have got to go" was a popular chant. Ralliers emphasized continued solidarity with Venezuela after another failed U.S.-backed coup attempt on April 30.

Speakers tackled issues including women-hating as a workers' issue, dignity for sex workers and the crime of wage theft. They called for solidarity internationally with Venezuela, Palestine and Haiti and expressed continued opposition to ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raids and deportations.

Kicking off at City Hall in **Philadelphia**, marchers demanded Gov. Tom Wolf close the Berks Family Detention Center, a concentration camp with refugees and asylum-seekers outside Philadelphia. Abolish ICE and Juntos, an immigrant-led Latinx community organization, were rally organizers. Speakers called on District Attorney Larry Krasner to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and for an end to mass incarceration and police brutality.

Mike Wilson, of Workers World Party and Philly REAL Justice, spoke at the statue of racist, fascist former Police Commissioner and Mayor Frank Rizzo, who targeted the city's Black communities. Wilson contrasted the unified struggle to tear down Rizzo's statue with the divide-and-conquer tactics of Trump's war on migrants.

At media-monopoly Comcast's building, Fermin Morales from Comitè Boricua Filadelfia-Camden highlighted the U.S. assault on Venezuela, declaring the need for a workers' world, free from capitalism. Marchers then went to the site of prison contractor Aramark, demanding it end multiple contracts with ICE.

In **Cleveland**, marchers followed the route of the city's historic, strongly socialist 1919 May Day protest. Chanting "No war on Venezuela, stop all attacks against immigrants," participants called for a resurgence in the struggle for socialism. Hosted by the Committee of 100 Years, endorsements came from many left and socialist groups, including Cleveland State University's Student Socialist Society, Democratic Socialists of America-Cleveland and Workers World Party.

The **Durham** (N.C.) Workers Assembly initiated a march with short protests at the new police headquarters, City Hall and McDonald's. Primary demands included no ICE raids, mass incarceration and police brutality. Speakers called for a \$15/hour minimum wage and union rights for all, no restructuring of city worker jobs, no to racism and U.S. hands off Venezuela. There was support for Black, migrant, trans, queer and Indigenous people; and solidarity with women workers, especially in low-wage jobs and those facing sexual harassment. The day's theme was: "No Walls in the Workers Struggle. As the Durham working class, we reclaim our city!"

Endorsers included Raise Up-Fight for \$15; United Electrical Workers (UE) Local 150, N.C. Public Service Workers Union; A. Philip Randolph Institute; Duke Grad Student Union; and Workers World Party.

In **Houston**, members of Familias Inmigrantes y Estudiantes en Lucha and the Central American Resource Center held huge banners on a bridge over the



Columbia, S.C.



New York

Boston

Heading to Wall Street.

PHOTO: HENRY LUNA VIA FB

Southwest Freeway, the city's busiest, on May Day. Slogans emphasized building bridges, not walls and solidarity with immigrants. The International Union of Painters and Allied Trades brandished a large SOLIDARITY banner with a huge clenched fist. FIRE's 6-foot sign, "HONK to support Refugees," generated cacophony from drivers, lots of thumbs-up, pumped fists and peace signs.

An evening rally at historic Guadalupe Plaza, sponsored by the Houston Socialist Movement, urged defeating not only Trump, but also capitalism, with worker solidarity. John "Bunchy" Crear, regional leader of the Black Panther Party Alumni Association, spoke on labor movement history, including Chicana farmworkers under the leadership of Cesar Chavez and Black sleeping car porters under A. Philip Randolph, founder of that predominantly African-American labor union. Crear praised young Black activists pledged to carry out the Panthers' revolutionary ideals. Consuelo Ramirez gave a spirited talk on struggles supported by the National Domestic Workers Alliance.

On May 4, demonstrators took over one lane of the busiest street in the immigrant community for a militant action. Chanting in English and Spanish, they then marched to Burnett Bayland Park for a rally chaired by youth from FIRE and Alianza Latina Internacional. Tania Siddiqi with Workers World Party urged support and inclusivity for struggles here and around the world, including issues of gender identity.

Fittingly, speakers included a member of the Carrizo Comecrudo Tribe, original inhabitants

of Texas, who are still resisting attacks on their sovereignty such as the border wall, scheduled to cut through a sacred Indigenous and freed-slave cemetery at the U.S.-Mexico border.

At the **Oakland**, Calif., docks, the International Longshore Workers Union Local 10 and the Inland Boatmen's Union shut down the port to begin a united May Day for worker and immigrant rights.

At the port offices, the dockworkers rallied for all workers, including teachers' demands for more public education funding and for im/migrants to live without fear of deportations or family separation. Then they headed to Oscar Grant Plaza to rally with the ILWU May Day Committee and Oakland Sin Fronteras, a coalition of immigrant rights' organizations and activists.

On the way, marchers stopped at Oakland's Police Department, demanding an end to police terror against Black and Brown communities, and at the Oakland Unified School District, demanding justice for teachers and students. Finally, behind a powerful display of banners, hundreds marched to the Lake Merritt Amphitheater for a rally, closing this momentous day championing workers and immigrants.

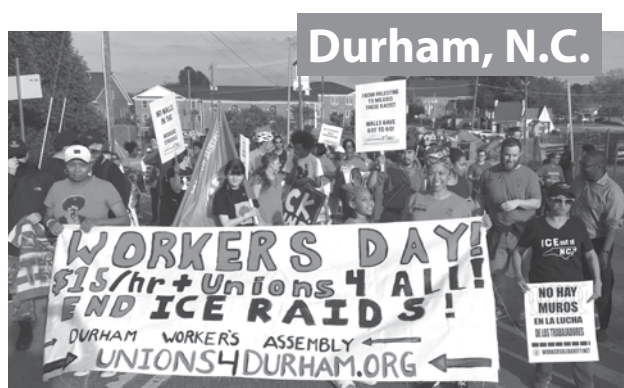
Over 200 people joined in the

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Cleveland

WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT



Durham, N.C.

WW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO



Philadelphia

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE



Houston

PHOTO: JOAQUINA RODRIGUEZ

May Day organizers

VENEZUELA

Battle lines still tense after third coup attempt fails

By John Catolinotto

May 6 — The attempted coup in Caracas on April 30 made it obvious that anti-imperialists in the United States must steel themselves for a protracted struggle against the U.S. ruling class and its aggressive designs on Venezuela.

The right-wing opposition inside Venezuela and its spokespeople—Juan Guaidó and Leopoldo López—have shown themselves to be unable to overturn the Venezuelan government. The people of Venezuela, the government of President Nicolás Maduro and the National Bolivarian Armed Forces (FANB) defeated each of the three coup attempts this year. The remaining alternative is direct U.S. military intervention.

Speaking on ABC television’s “This Week” on May 5, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the administration is making contingency plans for military intervention in Venezuela. He added that he didn’t believe it was necessary to go first to Congress for approval.

In an interview with the Washington Post published May 5, Guaidó said that if offered a U.S. military intervention by John Bolton, he would discuss this offer in the National Assembly. He thus admitted that the only way he could seize the government is with the help of U.S. planes, tanks and troops.

This means that anti-imperialists in the United States have an increased responsibility to prevent a U.S. military attack at the same time that they oppose economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure. This is a severe challenge, especially because the U.S. ruling class, its representatives in both major capitalist parties and the corporate media are all lined up against the Venezuelan people.

FAIR exposes unanimous attack on Maduro

First this movement must battle media lies. Both pro- and anti-Trump sectors of the corporate media are spewing the most vicious and unsubstantiated lies and slanders in order to vilify elected Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his supporters.

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), an organization monitoring coverage in the corporate media, examined 76 articles, opinion videos and TV

commentator segments that discussed Venezuela, which appeared in the New York Times and Washington Post between Jan. 15 and April 15. FAIR found zero opinion pieces that were pro-Maduro/Chavista or even took a position opposing regime change. “Fifty-four (72 percent) expressed explicit support for the Maduro administration’s ouster.” (FAIR, April 30)

In addition, “Not a single commentator on the big three Sunday morning talk shows or PBS NewsHour came out against President Nicolás Maduro stepping down from the Venezuelan government.”

Another example was CNN anchor Jake Tapper’s tweet on May 1: “Maduro government mows down citizens in the streets.” The photo attached to Tapper’s tweet showed Guaidó’s own troops firing guns, so Tapper had to take back that lie.

As for the pro-Trump media, Fox News published the May 1 headline, “Russia put nuclear weapons in Venezuela”—a complete invention.

Ruling-class agreement

The media unanimity indicates that the U.S. ruling class and its strategists see aggression against the Chavistas as essential to its imperialist interests. They defend it despite their lack of confidence in the mediocre gang of war criminals Trump has recruited to his White House to head U.S. intervention. The media gave similar support to George W. Bush’s criminal invasion of Iraq in 2002-03—only to walk it back over the years when Iraqi resistance made that invasion costly.

Not only the anti-Trump media but also Democratic politicians support U.S. aggression against Venezuela. Among leading establishment Democrats, Joe Biden, now running for president, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi have both attacked the Venezuelan government. These attacks align the leading Democrats with the most reactionary elements of Trump’s Republican White House.

Not only Republicans but establishment Democrats call Maduro “repressive” for countering the coup attempts. No one in the anti-war movement should fall for these lies. Consider that the French president has put more Yellow-Vested people in the hospital in one weekend for demonstrating in his country than President Maduro and the Chavistas have injured while opposing three U.S.-backed

attempted coups.

The Venezuela crisis exposes the obstacles for progressive politicians to work within the Democratic Party. When the National Review asked on May 3 for her position on the attempted coup in Venezuela, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez gave no comment but “deferred to the Democratic caucus.”

The implication is that, in order to work with the party on domestic programs like “The Green New Deal” and “Medicare for All,” progressive politicians must concede to the pro-imperialist policies of Democratic Party leaders.

Inside Venezuela

The Bolton-Abrams-Pompeo-Rubio gang and their Venezuelan puppets flopped this week for the third time in an attempted overthrow of the elected Bolivarian government. It took only 12 hours on April 30 for right-wing conspirator Leopoldo Eduardo López to go from co-announcing a coup in support of presidential pretender Guaidó to seeking somewhere to hide, first in the Chilean and then the Spanish Embassy in Caracas.

On May Day, while Guaidó managed to get some backers from the wealthier Caracas neighborhoods into the streets, far more Chavistas came out to defend Nicolás Maduro’s government. On May 2, President Maduro met with 4,500 officers on a base in Caracas, calling on them to go into combat to defend their country from the imperialist threat. Two days later he was photographed in the midst of thousands of soldiers at El Pao, Cojedes.

Maduro told the FANB troops, “We are involved in a battle against imperialism, traitors and coup-makers, a battle on all fronts, along the entire line, for the defense of our dignity, our honor, the right of our republic to exist along with our national identity. The FANB must show to our people that it is united, cohesive, more and more disciplined, subordinate to constitutional command, more and more obedient to these principles and values. It has to show itself as a national force for peace, democracy, constitutional and Bolivarian rule.” (pagina12.com.ar, May 3)



President Nicolás Maduro in midst of troops of the FANB on May 4 at El Pao, Cojedes.

Inside the United States

Many of the International Workers’ Day, May Day, demonstrations in the U.S. this year raised defense of Venezuelan sovereignty against U.S. imperialism.

A center of struggle in defense of Venezuela these days is the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington, D.C. The Bolivarian government, which had used the embassy, left after breaking relations with the United States earlier this year and turned the office over to U.S. individuals and groups who oppose U.S. intervention. These groups have been occupying the embassy to keep it out of the hands of Guaidó’s forces.

On May 1, the people inside were able to keep out Guaidó’s so-called ambassador, Carlos Vecchio, and beat back the coup supporters, just as they were defeated in Venezuela.

The next day, pro-rightist and pro-fascist Venezuelans living in the U. S. who support Guaidó launched a sustained attack on the occupiers. Police arrested people from the Embassy Protection Collective and beat at least one of them. The authorities are preventing food and water from reaching those inside the embassy. The struggle for the embassy continues as of May 6.

The threat to Venezuela remains, despite the lack of popular support in Venezuela for the rightists, the continued support of the National Bolivarian Armed Forces for the constitutional government and the reluctance of even the most right-wing U.S. client regimes in South America—in Colombia and Brazil—to risk military intervention

And so does the responsibility for anti-imperialists in the United States to defend the Bolivarian government from U.S. attack, including death-wielding economic sanctions and mercenary warfare.

To take a stand against U.S. economic sanctions on Venezuela, go to iacenter.org/sanctions-kill/.

May Day: U.S. workers on the rise

Continued from page 7

Portland, Ore., Festival of Resistance at Holladay Park. High school senior Fowzia Ibrahim spoke on growing up as a Black Muslim woman. Mumbi of the All African People’s Revolutionary Party honored the African masses and those whose labor has been systematically exploited. Kimberly Sullivan spoke on the Clark College teachers’ strike in nearby Vancouver, Wash. Performers included the Aztec Dancers and Acchord, a transgender, nonbinary, gender-nonconforming a cappella group.

In a second May Day protest, organized by #OccupyICEpdx, about 100 people marched to the ICE facility, chanting “ICE out of Portland,” “Protect children,” and “No KKK, no fascist USA, no cops,” before joining the Holladay Park event.

Seattle’s March for Worker and

Immigrant Rights was led by Aztec dancers, as 700 people from labor and activist groups rallied, many with “U.S. — Hands Off Venezuela” signs. First stop was the Chateau Apartments in the Black community to protest threatened eviction of the tenants. Next, marchers targeted Amazon-owned Whole Foods for low wages and anti-union policies. Demonstrators then went to Amazon’s enormous “campus” to expose the racist and anti-labor policies of its security contractor, Security Industry Specialists.

During the march, Anakbayan Seattle announced a campaign against Boeing, a major area corporation, because 34,000 immigrants were deported through Seattle

in 2018 using Boeing planes.

Contributing to this article were WW Boston bureau, Judy Greenspan, Jim McMahan, Lyn Neeley, Nathaniel Peters, Gloria Rubac, Susan Schnur, Dave Welsh and Scott Williams.



PHOTO: OREGON LIVE



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN



PHOTO: CAPITAL HILL BLOG

REPEAL HELMS-BURTON!

Washington threatens Cuba—to break Venezuela

By Teresa Gutierrez

The General Director for U.S. Affairs of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs spoke May 3 to a meeting of solidarity activists from the U.S. in New York City. Carlos Fernandez de Cossio alerted the solidarity movement with Cuba about the Trump administration’s increasing attacks against the Cuban Revolution. The current threat is that Washington will tighten the Helms-Burton Law, which imposes economic sanctions, if Cuba does not break its ties with Venezuela.

Earlier in the week, de Cossio was interviewed by Andrea Mitchell on MSNBC. The interview came after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo accused Cuba and Russia of “intervening” in Venezuela. Mitchell opened her interview by calling President Nicolás Maduro a “dictator,” her comment demonstrating the media’s complicity in the U.S. disinformation campaign against Venezuela.

It is Washington that has been dangerously but unsuccessfully intervening in Venezuela with the goal of overturning the Bolivarian Revolution. Its aim of ousting President Maduro has failed time after time.

De Cossio told the New York City crowd that solidarity between Cuba and the Bolivarian Revolution will never be broken. Washington is demanding that Cuba “withdraw Cuban troops” from Venezuela—but Cuba has no troops in Venezuela, he said.

Instead, in keeping with Cuba’s decades-long solidarity missions, it has 20,000 doctors in Venezuela, of whom 64 percent are women. These doctors do not stay in some fancy hotels or military barracks. They live and work in the very communities where they are assigned. They live among the people they serve, just as they do in Cuba.

Title III of Helms-Burton—a ‘stranglehold on Cuban economy’

Washington’s threats are not empty. The Trump administration continues to warn that it will tighten Helms-Burton if Cuba does not break ties with Venezuela. Cubans have called this “political blackmail.”

The Helms-Burton Act was passed in 1996 during the

Bill Clinton administration. Cuba experts consider it one of the most regressive and draconian of U.S. foreign policy initiatives.

Washington passed the act to place a stranglehold on Cuba’s economy.

That was when Cuba was experiencing one of its most difficult periods, which they described at the time as the “special period.” This refers to war-like conditions in times of peace.

The socialist camp had just collapsed, and Cuba lost many of its most favorable trading partners, adding up to a whopping 85 percent of its trade.

Shortages such as food and oil abounded. There was actual hunger at the time.

U.S. imperialism passed Helms-Burton precisely at that moment, with the view that if it tightened the blockade established in the 1960s, it would lead to mass chaos and social unrest in Cuba. Washington predicted that hungry Cubans would rise up against the socialist government.

Once again imperialism misjudged the Cuban masses and their leadership. That social unrest never happened. Instead the country became ever more united and determined to carry on its socialist project.

If any capitalist government lost 85 percent of its trade and the economy dropped so dramatically, there would be unrest and troops in the streets against the workers. But not in Cuba, where Cubans tell us: “The government and the people are one.”

According to the March 14 article, “Helms-Burton Act Meant to Recolonize Cuba,” in the Cuban newspaper Granma, “The Trump administration is dusting off the law’s Title III to tighten the blockade and dissuade foreign investors in Cuba.”

Title III has been the most controversial part of Helms-Burton. De Cossio explained that the provision “allows for U.S. companies and individuals to sue in a U.S. court” and resurrect the issue of U.S. property “confiscated in Cuba.” U.S. companies and Cuban-Americans are demanding compensation for property nationalized by the Revolution.

De Cassio pointed out that the factories and other



PHOTO: GRANMA

Acting in solidarity, Cuban doctors help provide health care in Venezuela.

property nationalized by the revolutionary government and put into the workers hands “were all offered compensation. Mexico, Spain and other countries were compensated.” But the “U.S. and the Cuban Americans who left refused to negotiate.”

Since passage of the law, Title III has been waived repeatedly. Trump, however, announced he would not be waiving it anymore.

The BBC reports, “According to data from the U.S. Justice Department, Cuban-Americans who say that their properties were seized during the Cuban Revolution have filed more than 200,000 claims. The U.S. government has ‘certified’ around 6,000 cases of American citizens or companies who also say that their properties on the island were taken away from them after 1959.” (May 3)

For over 60 years, every imperialist attempt to undermine socialism in Cuba has failed. Trump may take the issue of nationalized property to a world court, but the Cubans have given their answer to the U.S. time and again: “Socialism or death!”

The U.S. movement in solidarity with Cuba must stand up to oppose Helms-Burton now more than ever. Just like the ties between Venezuela and Cuba, this solidarity will never be broken. □

Anti-imperialists defend Venezuelan Embassy from coup supporters

Continued from page 3

they were surrounded by right-wing coup supporters, Secret Service, Homeland Security and D.C. police. The coup supporters pushed, shoved and formed a physical barrier, preventing the demonstrators from setting up the canopy. Police arrested two solidarity activists during the altercation.

The cops and Homeland Security had lined up cordons on opposing sides of a narrow street with barricades. This guaranteed the right wing space at the doors of the embassy and kept supporters across the street. Nevertheless, spirited anti-imperialist chants drowned out the opposition for hours.

The active role of the U.S. State Department and its police agencies in this orchestrated siege of the embassy was clear in their totally favored treatment of the reactionary forces. The police agencies ran the show. As has happened during other U.S. wars, the authorities gathered the rightists to do the barking and growling. Then the cops act like they are neutrals. It is a fraud, just as the coup attempt was a fraud.

One of the rightists’ main tactics to frustrate the movement defending the

Venezuelan Embassy has been to blast music and high-pitched sirens from bullhorns and compressed air horns at all hours. When they are close to anti-war demonstrators, they aim these devices directly at their faces. Ear plugs become an essential defense against this continuing assault.

At night, the rightists project powerful lights and strobes at the embassy.

Pockets of anti-imperialist forces were able to establish a presence throughout the afternoon on the grounds of the embassy. Medea Benjamin of CODEPINK used a creative tactic several times to lead a group that linked arms and moved through the mob of coup supporters and onto the grounds circling the embassy building, challenging the opposition’s hold. This tactic

boosted the morale of those inside the embassy, who greeted this action with raised fists and solidarity waves out the open windows. Huge banners were hung from the roof.

Battle lines drawn, solidarity needed

The struggle to defend the Venezuelan Embassy has international implications for the struggle on the ground in Venezuela. The Venezuelan masses have

held strong in thwarting numerous U.S.-backed coup attempts in recent months, taking to the streets often to defend the Bolivarian Revolution.

Anti-imperialist forces here in the U.S. must prepare for a long struggle and do whatever we can to mobilize solidarity on the ground in D.C. and in other cities across the country.

There is an ongoing campaign to call and email the State Department, Secret Service and D.C. government officials to

demand they stop collusion with the right wing and allow supplies to be delivered to the embassy.

There will likely be more calls for forces to mobilize to D.C. to bolster the defense of the Venezuelan Embassy in coming days and weeks. Workers World will continue to circulate these appeals. Our movement must do all it can to ensure that the group inside is supported to prevent the embassy from falling to the rightist forces. □

Build Workers World! Defend workers’ rights!

Established to honor the historic 1886 struggle of Chicago workers for the 8-hour day, May Day marks the worldwide fight for workers’ rights on May 1. There’s lots of good news this year: Education workers all over the U.S., from K-12 schools to universities, started a strike wave to organize for higher wages and better working conditions. Well-paid Amazon and Google workers have joined low-wage McDonald’s workers in staging walkouts.

While Trump and the global ruling class are waging war on the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela, his administration is making war on Central American im/migrants and refugees seeking entry into the U.S. Workers are threatened with deportation after escaping horrific conditions caused by U.S. intervention in their home countries. Neo-fascist U.S. policies separate infants and children from their parents

at the border and jail underage migrants crossing the border alone.

If you want to fight against capitalist reaction and for socialist change, we invite you to join the WW Supporter Program. The program was founded in 1977. Ever since, our subscribers and friends have helped build the only revolutionary socialist weekly in the U.S. that’s in print as well as on the web.

For a donation of at least \$75 a year — and much more if you’re able — 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 WWSP, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up to donate online at **workers.org/donate/** — it’s easy to set up monthly deductions. We’re grateful for your help in building Workers World — sign up today! □

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Palestine will be free!

Another horrific attack on the Palestinian population occurred over the May 4-5 weekend. Once again, the deaths include some of the most vulnerable—of a people who have already been made entirely vulnerable by decades of apartheid conditions, including routine starvation, imprisonment, unemployment.

Once again, big business media played a numbers game in an attempt to conceal the true nature of the occupation. That a number of rockets were launched from Gaza is used to deflect the fact that 86 percent of the deaths—24 to Israel's 4—were Palestinians.

U.S. politicians jumped at the chance to display their complicity in Israel's continued attempts at genocide of the Palestinian people. In unequivocal terms, President Donald Trump tweeted, "We support Israel 100%."

According to the Jerusalem Post, he also sent a paternalistic, condescending and hypocritical message: "To the Gazan people—These terrorist acts against Israel will bring you nothing but more misery. END the violence and work towards peace—it can happen!" (May 6) Only a couple of months ago, Trump signed an executive order claiming that Israel has sovereignty over Syrian Golan, illegally occupied by Zionist settlers since 1967.

Meanwhile, a new voice of dissent in Congress was immediately attacked. Rep. Ilhan Omar, the Somali-American Muslim congressperson from Minnesota, tweeted, "How many more protesters must be shot, rockets must be fired, and little kids must be killed until the endless cycle of violence ends?"

Furious conservatives focused their ire on her,

including a video posted by Trump's senior campaign adviser. The video attempted to portray rocket fire in the Ukraine—another place where U.S. intervention has fueled war and destruction—as a Palestinian attack on Israel. (Haaretz.com, May 5)

Even the bourgeois media admit that the tenuous ceasefire reached May 5 was promoted by Israel so the settler nation can try to clean up its image—this time by hosting an upcoming Eurovision singing competition in Tel Aviv!

The fact is that the Palestinians continue to resist and to demand an end to occupation—nothing less.

In an opinion piece published on Aljazeera.com, Haidar Eid, an associate professor at Al-Aqsa University in Gaza, declares: "We, the Palestinians in Gaza, have already made our choice. We will not die dishonorably a slow death while thanking our killers under the self-deception that portrays slavery to the occupier as a fait accompli.

"No, we will continue to fight for our dignity, for ourselves and for our children," continues Eid. "We, members of the Palestinian civil society, have long argued that the way forward should be people's power—the only force capable of tackling the huge asymmetry of power in the struggle against Israel. ... We don't want breadcrumbs. We want to return to our lands, we want our rights under international law to be recognised." (May 6)

Eid's call reminds us here in the U.S.: We exert our "people's power" to continue our utmost solidarity with the Palestinian people. □

Golan is Syria!



WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

A demonstration in front of the Israeli Mission in New York City denounced Trump's recognition of Israel's 52-year illegal annexation and occupation of Golan, a province of Syria. The protest was held May 6 — Martyrs' Day in Syria and Lebanon, and for over 100 years a commemoration of continuing resistance to occupation. U.S. recognition exposes U.S. frustration at its failure — after eight years of U.S.-financed and orchestrated war — to either overturn the elected Syrian government or dismember and occupy the whole country.

—Report by Sara Flounders

Trump administration takes war on women to the U.N.

By Sue Davis

President Donald Trump took his war on the rights of women and gender-nonconforming people to the U.N. the week of April 22. It's bitterly ironic that the Trump administration threatened to veto the U.N. resolution on ending sexual violence during wars and hostile conflicts if the U.N. did not go along with its anti-women, anti-gender-oppressed agenda.

The initial draft of the resolution read: "United Nations entities and donors to provide non-discriminatory and comprehensive health services, including sexual and reproductive health, psychosocial, legal and livelihood support and other multi-sectoral services for survivors of sexual violence, taking into account the specific needs of persons with disabilities."

The Trump administration demanded that the phrase "sexual and reproductive health" be deleted because it could be interpreted as supporting the right to abortion. Even after the German representative who introduced the resolution agreed to take out that phrase, the U.S. then objected to the original phrase, "comprehensive health services," in the original 2008 resolution.

After all reference to health care was deleted from the final resolution — as well as "comprehensive sexuality education," which would protect the rights of gay, transgender and gender nonconforming people—it was passed by a vote of 13 members of the Security Council, including the U.S., no votes against, with Russia and China abstaining.

But there was immediate worldwide push back. Not only did representatives



WW PHOTO: SOPHIA ADAMS

Reproductive rights protesters chant, "Get up! Get down! New York is a pro-choice town" on May 4.

of Germany, Belgium, Britain and France speak forcefully against U.S. bullying, but so did many representatives of the 90 countries participating in the meeting. Calling the U.S. position "intolerable and incomprehensible," France's U.N. Ambassador Francois Delattre stated, "Women and girls who suffered from sexual violence in conflict, and who obviously didn't choose to become pregnant, should have the right to terminate their pregnancy."

In addition to diplomats, other prominent people spoke out against the U.S. policy, including German Foreign Minister Heiko Mass and actor Angelina Jolie in an April 22 Washington Post

op-ed.

The two people awarded the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize, Nadia Murad, a survivor of the Islamic State group's enslavement of Yazidi women and girls in Iraq, and Denis Mukwege, a Congolese gynecologist, issued a statement: "There is simply no excuse for continuing to fail those who have already been victimized, as well as those who continue to be at risk of devastating levels of sexual violence in conflict."

Although the aim of the resolution was to end "the heinous, barbaric and all-too-often silent phenomenon of sexual violence during conflict" and adopt a survivor-centric approach, all references to

expanding U.N. monitoring to track violations of the resolution were expunged from the final text. Russia, China and the U.S. opposed such language.

English barrister Amal Clooney urged the Security Council to prosecute members of the Islamic State group for war crimes, just as high-level officials in the Nazi party were prosecuted after World War II. "This is your Nuremberg moment," she stressed.

The National Organization for Women issued a strong statement on April 23 reminding readers of Trump's first act in 2017: reinstating the so-called "global gag rule," which bars all federal funding for international organizations that provide abortion counseling—even if they also provide nutrition and hygiene; treatment for malaria, tuberculosis and tropical diseases; and maternal and children's health care.

Aid groups condemn this rule, which reflects the far-right, religious conservatism of Trump appointees in the Department of Health and Human Services, saying it is already undermining overall global health care and results in more abortions and increased maternal and child mortality.

It is reprehensible that the U.S. is able to bully the rest of the world to fall into lockstep behind its totally misogynous, insensitive policies that do irreparable harm to women, girls, men, their families and communities worldwide.

The ball is in the court of all who oppose the racist, sexist, anti-LGBTQ2S, capitalist patriarchy of the 0.1% who control this country. On with the struggle to wipe out Trump and all his bourgeois ruling-class perpetrators of war and rape. □

U.S. intervenes against popular uprising in Sudan

By Carlos Lopes Pereira

This article was first published May 3 in Avante, weekly newspaper of the Portuguese Communist Party. Its author, a former member of the Secretariat of the PAIGC, the party leading the struggle for the liberation of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, writes on African events for Avante. Translation by WW Managing Editor John Catalinotto.

The African Union has given the Sudanese military junta two months to hand over power to a civilian authority that manages the transition from military to democratic rule.

By doing this, the Pan-African organization has complied with the demands of the Sudanese democratic forces, which for many months have intensified the struggle against dictatorship and for freedom.

Sudan is the third largest African country in land area and has more than 40 million inhabitants. It is rich in oil and natural gas — despite having lost three quarters of those resources following the secession of South Sudan in 2011. In addition to possessing hydrocarbons [fossil fuels], Sudan benefits from its location on the Red Sea, which is a fundamental passageway for world trade.

Since December 2018, the Sudanese revolt has constantly grown. It started with protests against the rise in the price of bread, then demonstrations in the streets and squares of Khartoum and other cities. Not even the regime's

proclamation of a state of emergency and its brutal repression, with deaths and imprisonment, could stop it.

The popular uprising, with continuous demonstrations at the gates to the Ministry of Defense, which was surrounded by the masses, forced the April 11 removal and imprisonment of longtime President Omar al-Bashir. Officers committed to the regime carried out a palace coup in an attempt to preserve dictatorial power with new faces at the top.

The generals created a Transitional Military Council, which announced it would prolong the state of emergency and promised to hand over civilian governance within two years. This offer was rejected by the prodemocratic forces, who are supported by hundreds of thousands of people in the streets demanding the immediate transfer of power to civilians.

Sudanese democrats are represented by the Forces for Freedom and Change platform, which brings together different political parties, including the Sudanese Communist Party, professional associations and other organizations that oppose the al-Bashir dictatorship. In recent days, they have been in talks with the military junta to form a transitional body with the majority participation of civilians. So far, the generals have refused these terms.

The situation in Sudan is tense: On the one hand the TMC refuses to hand over or even share power with civilians; on the other hand, the masses demand the advance of democratic change.



Sudanese women were at the forefront of recent mass democratic organizing.

U.S. backs military junta

This stalemate is all the more serious since the United States and its allies in the region are supporting the generals in the military junta, with their usual maneuvers of pressure and interference. In fact, while the Sudanese people rejected the illegitimate usurpation of power by the generals, the U.S., Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates recognized the TMC.

Washington envoy Steven Koutsis met a few days ago in Khartoum with Mohamed Daglo, number two in the

TMC. This general, Sudanese democrats explain, is the commander of the Rapid Support Forces, formed essentially from the Janjaweed militias. The democrats say these militias have spread terror for 15 years in the Darfur region, where they have murdered thousands of people and are therefore responsible for crimes against humanity.

Despite the interference by U.S. imperialism, the Sudanese people's struggle will win and, sooner rather than later, realize their aspirations for freedom, peace and progress. □

Workers march, rally, strike on global May Day

Continued from page 6

The KCTU issued a joint statement with a North Korean workers' organization, calling for both Koreas to collaborate on economic projects.

On April 29, the KCTU and immigrant workers' organizations marched with migrant workers in Seoul, chanting: "Stop discrimination and violence against migrant workers!"

Thousands of workers and members of left and social movements marched in

the streets of Manila, the **Philippines**, for livable wages, better working conditions and an end to short-term contract employment. As red banners flew, some demonstrators burned a gigantic effigy of President Roberto Duterte because of his anti-worker economic policies and brutal repression of political activists and dissenters.

Thousands of low-paid workers marched in Jakarta, **Indonesia**, demanding workers' rights, higher wages and improved working conditions. □

Residentes de casas móviles de Iowa luchan contra el aumento de los alquileres

Continúa de la página 12

El 5 de abril, más de 100 residentes indignados de Golfview y aliados de la comunidad se reunieron en la Biblioteca de North Liberty. La reunión dio lugar a la formación de la Asociación de Residentes de Golfview.

Se están realizando esfuerzos de organización similares en las comunidades de Sunrise y West Branch, con la esperanza de crear una red de asociaciones de casas móviles para defender los derechos de los residentes.

Los aliados de GRA incluyen The Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa, Teamsters Local 238 y TeamCAN.

El Secretario-Tesorero del Local 238 de Teamsters, Jesse Case, dijo: "Este es un problema moral y TeamCAN y los Teamsters están listos para luchar junto a la Asociación de Residentes de Golfview (GRA) contra Havenpark". (Comunicado de prensa del 6 de abril)

El reportero deportivo de North Liberty Leader, Don Lund, quien fue elegido para el consejo de GRA, se encuentra entre los residentes de Golfview afectados por el aumento de los alquileres. Lund nació sin brazos debajo de sus codos y sin piernas ni pies. Incapaz de trabajar semanas de 40 horas, los pagos por incapacidad complementan sus ingresos.

Lund ha vivido en la comunidad durante 20 años y no está dispuesto a rendirse sin luchar. "No tengo dinero ni recursos", dijo Lund en la reunión. "Solo soy un tipo de Seguridad Social que puede ser parte de un grupo y contraatacar, y esto es lo que voy a hacer".

El GRA está exigiendo una reunión con los nuevos propietarios, una solicitud que Havenpark aún no ha aceptado.

Silenciar a los críticos en Waukee

El residente de Waukee, Matt Chapman, un crítico abierto de Havenpark, ha tratado de reunir a los inquilinos de Midwest Country Estates y otros contra las alzas en los alquileres. Le preocupa que el plan a largo plazo de Havenpark sea desalojar a todos los residentes del parque.

Chapman se contactó con representantes electos, escribió publicaciones en línea y fue de puerta en puerta, planteando estos problemas a los vecinos. Por sus acciones, recibió una carta de "cese y desistimiento" de los abogados de Havenpark.

La carta, fechada el 16 de abril, acusó a Chapman de difundir rumores y solicitar información confidencial a los residentes del Medio Oeste, lo que él ha negado. En una entrevista con el Registro de Des Moines, Chapman dijo: "Me hice un punto objetivo".

"Creo que fue solo una intimidación", agregó Chapman. "Solo estaba tratando de ayudar a la gente". Se envió una carta de respuesta de Iowa Legal Aid a Havenpark en nombre de Chapman.

Después de una avalancha de publicidad negativa, Havenpark anunció que demoraría el aumento de la renta hasta el 1 de julio. Esto no cambia el hecho de que muchos residentes todavía no podrían pagar, lo que los obligó a mudarse sin tener a dónde ir.

Para los residentes de estas comunidades, la lucha apenas comienza.

Como dijo Brittany Clowers, residente de Golfview, "el hecho de que las personas de bajos ingresos vivan aquí no significa que seamos" menos que ". [...] merecemos poder tener una casa que podamos pagar". □





FOTO: HOWARD ROTMAN
Primero de Mayo, Everett-Chelsea-East Boston, Mass.

Residentes de casas móviles de Iowa luchan contra el aumento de los alquileres

Por Mike Kuhlenbeck

Más de 22 millones de personas en los EE. UU. viven en casas móviles, según el Instituto de Manufactura de Viviendas. En Iowa, un estado donde la vivienda se está volviendo cada vez más cara, las casas móviles han sido una de las pocas opciones para las personas con ingresos limitados o fijos.

Ahora, debido a una compañía fuera del estado, cientos de residentes de parques móviles corren el riesgo de perder sus hogares. Los residentes en cuatro comunidades de casas móviles de Iowa han sido atacados con aumentos depredadores de alquileres después de que las propiedades fueron compradas por Havenpark Capital a principios de 2019.

La firma de administración e inversión de propiedades con sede en Utah compra comunidades de casas móviles para obtener ganancias a expensas de los inquilinos. Poseen 5,000 sitios de casas en Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma y Texas.

En Iowa, Havenpark recientemente tomó el control de Golfview Mobile Home Court (North Liberty), Midwest Country Estates (Waukee), North American Mobile Home Park (Indianola), Sunrise Mobile Home Village (Iowa City) y West Branch Mobile Home Village (West Branch).



FOTO: CENTRO PARA LA JUSTICIA DEL TRABAJADOR DEL ESTE DE IOWA

Reunión de la Asociación de Residentes de Golfview, 5 de abril.

Los nuevos propietarios saludaron a los residentes colocando avisos en sus puertas para informarles que se habían producido aumentos drásticos en los alquileres en 60 días. El alquiler aumentaría en un 50 por ciento, 60 por ciento o casi 70 por ciento en todas las comunidades de Golfview, Sunrise, West Branch y Midwest.

Si el aumento entra en vigor, muchos residentes se verán obligados a abandonar sus hogares. En algunos casos, los residentes tendrían que dejar atrás "las casas móviles que tenían, o por las que aún estaban pagando la hipoteca", según

un comunicado de prensa del 6 de abril de la recién creada Asociación de Residentes de Golfview.

Los residentes de North American Mobile han expresado su preocupación de que las alzas en los alquileres de Havenpark también vendrán a Indianola.

La Directora Ejecutiva de la Coalición de Viviendas Asequibles del Condado de Johnson, Sara Barron, le dijo a Workers World, "Este tipo de compra a gran escala de comunidades de casas móviles y el aumento dramático de la renta es nuevo para nuestra comunidad. JCAHC fue alertado de la situación por el hijo de un

residente de Golfview.

"Es difícil para mí entender cómo una empresa como Havenpark Capital puede justificar ganar dinero para inversionistas de fuera del estado al tomar dinero de personas que no tienen lo suficiente para satisfacer sus necesidades básicas", dijo Barron.

La decisión ha sido llamada "sin corazón" por los residentes, muchos de los cuales son ancianos o discapacitados. Si bien las acciones de Havenpark son insensibles, son legales según la ley estatal.

El Código de Iowa es restrictivo cuando se trata de los derechos de los propietarios de casas móviles. Los propietarios de parques móviles pueden aumentar el alquiler de los inquilinos con poca antelación y desalojarlos "sin una buena causa".

Barron dijo que las viviendas asequibles son escasas en el condado de Johnson (donde se ubican tres de las comunidades). "Para alquilar un modesto apartamento de dos habitaciones, alguien que gane el salario mínimo actual tendría que trabajar en dos empleos y medio a tiempo completo".

Los residentes de Golfview toman una posición

En lugar de esperar a que cambien las leyes, los residentes de Golfview decidieron actuar.

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Primero de Mayo ‘Este no es el final sino el comienzo de la lucha’

Estas palabras fueron pronunciadas el Primero de Mayo. El año era 1890. La oradora no era otra que Eleanor Marx. Siete años después de la muerte de su padre, ella llevaba la antorcha que le entregó el querido líder de la clase trabajadora, Karl Marx.

El Primero de Mayo de 2019, debe ser visto en la misma luz por los portadores de la antorcha de hoy: como el comienzo de la siguiente fase de la lucha de clases.

Ese es el punto de vista de la Red Internacional de Solidaridad de los Trabajadores, que ha presentado la convocatoria de los Días mensuales de solidaridad de los trabajadores. Esta convocatoria ya ha sido respaldada por cientos de firmantes de todo el país y del mundo.

El llamado a la acción mensual dice en parte: "Entre los muchos desafíos para la solidaridad de la clase trabajadora mundial se encuentra una campaña vil por parte de políticos multimillonarios como Donald Trump para dividir a los trabajadores en base al racismo, el sexismo, la xenofobia, el capacitismo y la opresión anti LGBTQ2S. "La guerra de Trump contra los trabajadores inmigrantes es una guerra contra toda la clase trabajadora. El muro que quiere construir en la frontera es un muro para dividir a los trabajadores.

"¡Pero sabemos que no hay muros en la lucha obrera! Debemos decir esto a los

'Trumps' que juegan el mismo juego en todos los continentes del mundo.

"El mensaje debe ser difundido: cada lucha es una lucha de los trabajadores. Eso incluye a estudiantes que luchan contra el cambio climático, jóvenes activistas que marchan contra el terror racista de la policía, mujeres y personas oprimidas por el género que se levantan y dicen "Yo también" y personas con discapacidades que luchan por sus derechos".

La red ha propuesto el 1 de junio como el primer Día de la Solidaridad de los Trabajadores, al tiempo que nos insta a aprovechar cualquier oportunidad de solidaridad que se presente antes de esa fecha. ¡No hay ruptura en la lucha de clases aunque el Día de Mayo haya terminado!

Por ejemplo, un Día de Solidaridad podría organizarse el 8 de mayo en las ocho ciudades de los Estados Unidos donde los conductores que trabajan para Uber y Lyft realizarán acciones laborales. RideShare Drivers United ha llamado a "Aplicaciones desactivadas" desde la medianoche hasta la medianoche.

Dondequiera que los pilotos se unan, la Red de Solidaridad estará allí. La red también convocó una manifestación en Wall St. el 8 de mayo, el día en que Uber comienza a vender sus acciones en la Bolsa de Nueva York. Los conductores

se enfrentan a recortes salariales, pero a los ojos de los accionistas potenciales eso solo significa más ganancias.

Estos trabajadores explotados no pueden esperar, y no están esperando, a que los burócratas laborales arraigados descubran cómo organizar a los nuevos trabajadores en la economía del trabajo. Esta valerosa acción laboral sigue las huelgas de los trabajadores de Amazon y la huelga global contra el acoso sexual y el racismo de los trabajadores de Google.

Esto no quiere decir que los sindicatos estén anticuados o que ya no tengan un papel en la lucha de clases. Las huelgas de militantes por parte de trabajadores de la educación, trabajadores de servicios de hotelaría, minoristas y supermercados demuestran todo lo contrario.

Pero lo que se necesita ahora es un movimiento global de toda la clase trabajadora, el trabajo organizado y "no organizado" que abarca a los trabajadores más oprimidos y explotados.

Esta es la perspectiva detrás de la celebración de días de solidaridad mensuales. La solidaridad con los trabajadorxs inmigrantes/migrantes será un tema importante, con "No hay barreras en la lucha de los trabajadores" el punto de reunión. Las acciones también honrarán el mes del Orgullo LGBTQ2S en junio, celebrando el

50 aniversario de la Rebelión de Stonewall.

El Día de la Solidaridad de los Trabajadores consiste en derribar todos los muros que dividen a los trabajadorxs, desde el muro físico fronterizo que Trump exige hasta los muros del racismo, la misoginia y todas las formas de intolerancia.

El movimiento de la clase trabajadora debe descartar la idea de que el creciente número de trabajadores precarios es "demasiado difícil de organizar". Esa no era la opinión de Marx cuando escribió en 1848: "La mejora cada vez mayor de la maquinaria, cada vez más rápidamente en desarrollo, hace la subsistencia cada vez más precaria".

Marx veía a la clase trabajadora como la única clase que podía poner fin a la explotación de clase y sentar las bases para una nueva sociedad donde las necesidades humanas son lo primero.

Tenemos que dar la cara a los miles de millones que conforman nuestra clase. Los Días de Solidaridad mensuales regulares y mostrar solidaridad cuando y donde sea que sea necesario, pueden hacer que avancemos.

Como dijo Eleanor Marx, "Debemos hablar por la causa todos los días, y [así] hacer que los hombres, y especialmente las mujeres con las que nos encontramos, entren en las filas para ayudarnos". □