

#AllEyesonWetsuweten

Indigenous solidarity  
shuts down Canadian Rail

By Stephanie Tromblay

The Wet'suwet'en First Nation faces colonial violence and invasion, as it continues to defend its territory against a multibillion-dollar pipeline project threatening its traditional lands and waters. Wet'suwet'en territorial borders are surrounded by the western province that was named British Columbia by the colonizing nation Canada.

On Jan. 8, the Unist'ot'en Camp protecting Wet'suwet'en territory called for a week of international solidarity: "On Dec. 31, 2019, B.C. Supreme Court Justice Marguerite Church granted an injunction against members of the Wet'suwet'en nation, who have been stewarding and protecting our traditional territories from the destruction of multiple pipelines, including Coastal GasLink's (CGL) liquified natural gas (LNG) pipeline. Hereditary Chiefs of all five Wet'suwet'en clans have rejected Church's decision, which criminalizes Anuk 'nu'at'en (Wet'suwet'en law), and have issued and enforced an eviction of CGL's workers from the territory." (tinyurl.com/sldyrz2)

Church's injunction is illegal. The Wet'suwet'en hold legal rights to their lands: In 1997, the Supreme Court of Canada recognized Aboriginal title of unceded First Nations lands in the Delgamuukw decision.

But rather than opening relations with the First Nations, whose land has never been ceded, the provincial government of British Columbia and corporate lobbyists are conspiring to force "surrender" of First



Ottawa protest Feb. 7 against proposed Coastal GasLink pipeline in northwestern British Columbia.

Nations land rights in order to steal land to construct the \$5 billion (6.6 billion Canadian dollars) CGL pipeline. (tinyurl.com/s3b3w4t)

Force includes the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which violently raided sovereign lands in January 2019, sparking protests across Canada and worldwide.

On Jan. 4, Wet'suwet'en Chiefs escorted out the last CGL contractor. On Feb. 6, the RCMP illegally moved heavy machinery and helicopters onto sovereign, unceded Wet'suwet'en territory and arrested 28 Wet'suwet'en Nation land defenders.

Wet'suwet'en call sparks lightning solidarity

The Jan. 8 solidarity call stated: "Our strength to act today comes from the knowledge that our allies across

Canada and around the world will again rise up with us, as they did for Oka, Gustafsen Lake, and Elsipogtog, shutting down rail lines, ports and industrial infrastructure and pressuring elected government officials to abide by UNDRIP (the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples). The state needs to stop violently supporting those members of the 1% who are stealing our resources and condemning our children to a world rendered uninhabitable by climate change."

On Feb. 5, the Tyendinaga Mohawks blockaded the railroad near Belleville, Ont., at the only eastern link of the Canadian National Railway Co. (CN) between Eastern Canada and Western Canada or the U.S. Midwest. This effectively shut down freight and passenger rail traffic across eastern Ontario. (Progressive Railroading, Feb. 12)

Tyendinaga Mohawks say they will not end their demonstration until the RCMP leave Wet'suwet'en territory.

By Feb. 11, expanding rail protests effectively shut down all routes between Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Kingston, and CN warned of a spillover effect on coastal ports. (tinyurl.com/v3aws6w) CN stated dozens of cancelled freight trains had stalled shipment of every category from propane to feedstock for factories. (tinyurl.com/t58tn4c) And CN's limited railyard space for rolling stock storage added to the shutdown through traffic backup from Halifax, N.S., to Windsor, Ont., and in parts of British Columbia.

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Anti-pipeline protests block traffic at Niagara Falls

Transportation blockades and demonstrations have brought traffic to a standstill on rail lines and ports across Canada in opposition to a natural gas pipeline being run through western British Columbia. The actions spilled over into the Niagara Falls area on Sunday, Feb. 16, closing the Rainbow Bridge that links the Canadian and U.S. borders.



Traffic on the Canadian side of the normally busy international crossing ground to a halt for more than an hour after protesters marched from Highway 420 to gather at the bridge in Canada at about 3 p.m. Protesters also assembled in solidarity in Niagara Falls, N.Y., on the so-called U.S. side of the bridge.

The action was the latest in a string of blockades that have taken place in Canada as protest has mounted against laying the pipeline by Coastal GasLink through the Wet'suwet'en First Nation's traditional territory. The first blockade, set in place Feb. 6, led to a shutdown of passenger rail and freight trains across Canada.

In addition to supporting the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs' rejection of the pipeline, Sunday's peaceful protest at the bridge also

condemned actions by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who arrested supporters and defenders from the First Nation territory.

Speakers at the protest also emphasized other injustices inflicted on Indigenous peoples — from the torture of residential schools to broken promises on treaty rights, to inaction by the government as Indigenous women are murdered or go missing.

The nationwide protests and blockades have continued to bring freight rail shipping in Canada to a halt in some areas and led railway transportation provider Via Rail Canada to stopping passenger trains — all with an economic impact of millions of dollars.

— Report and photo by RJ Redmann

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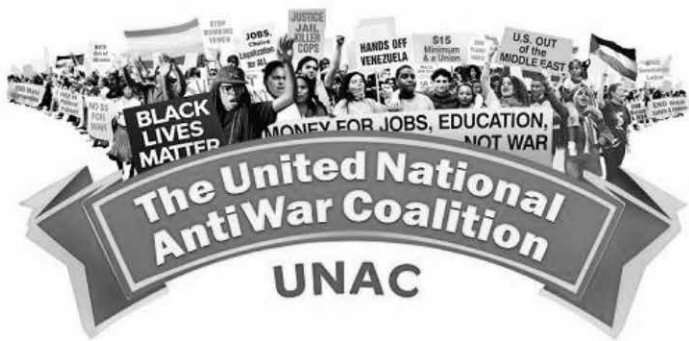
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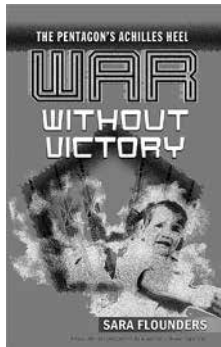
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Some Lessons of the Great Bolshevik Revolution

By Deirdre Griswold



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

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

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

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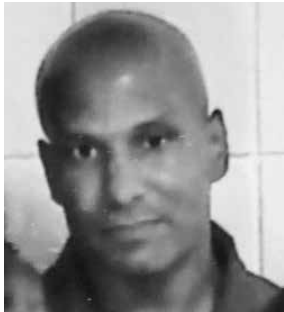
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# Anatomy of a hunger strike

## Part 2 Dee Jay Grant begins his hunger strike

*Demetrius “Dee Jay” Grant (FY6063), an African-American prisoner in Pennsylvania, conducted a months-long hunger strike in 2019 over prison conditions at State Correctional Institution Albion. Grant is known as the “Pro Se Litigator,” the person who exposed the mistreatment of mentally ill prisoners by former Correctional Officer Charles Graner at SCI Greene before Graner became infamous for mistreating Iraqi detainees. Here is Part 2 of Workers World’s interview with Grant about his experiences.*



Demetrius “Dee Jay” Grant

**Workers World:** Describe your experiences during the hunger strike.

**Dee Jay:** Prior to going on the hunger strike I was going through a lot of physical and mental anguish about all the issues that needed to be addressed. I got to the point where I could not eat or sleep, and when I did, I would wake up soaked in sweat, trying to figure out what other options I had besides a hunger strike.

I wanted to bring a different type of challenge to prison officials to get their immediate attention because they were ignoring my complaints.

Once I realized it was my only viable option, I told my comrades Jerome “Hoagie” Coffey, Christopher “Gooch” Young, Gerald “Bas Sengbe” Bennett and Michael “Shabazz” Thorpe, who were fighting prison officials on some of the same issues.

I officially started my hunger strike on April 29, 2019, by telling my counselor, Ms. Robinson, Unit Manager Ms. Frith, Block Sgt. Gould and Block Guard Mr. King. They ignored me despite the fact that the PA DOC Health Care Policy 13.01.01, section viii, D and E establishes detailed procedures for the observation and medical/psychological assessment of prisoners who refuse to eat or drink liquids.

The DOC does not have a policy pertaining to force-feeding prisoners. This is so they can freestyle force-feed a prisoner without having to follow a set protocol, which results in medical abuses.

**WW:** How did prison officials respond?

**Dee Jay:** Prison officials ignored my hunger strike until May 23, 2019, when my comrade Travis “Sunny” Hill told his work supervisor Ms. Kusiak that I had not eaten since April 29 and prison officials were ignoring it.

I was immediately called to the medical office to be examined by Dr. Amanda Hartwell, the Medical Director at SCI Albion. She has a 1.9 rating in her private practice [tinyurl.com/sx3gou9/]. She represents the calibre of medical personnel being hired by the DOC. This should be exposed to the public so they’ll know their tax dollars are being wasted.

I was placed in a Psychiatric Observation Cell (POC) for several days by order of Deputy Superintendent Ennis, Dr. Hartwell and Ms. Jari Smock, Corrections

Health Care Administrator. I was seen by the prison psychiatrist Dr. Gottsman and psychologist Ms. Eddy, who informed prison officials that my hunger strike was not due to any psychological illness.

On May 28, instead of placing me in the prison infirmary, they sent me to the Restricted Housing Unit (RHU) on Administrative Custody (AC) status, allegedly to monitor my calorie intake. That should have been the Medical Unit’s job.

Deputy Ennis manipulated Ms. Eddy into filing an “Others Report,” claiming I was a danger to myself and others. I was moved to the POC to isolate me from other prisoners. I was told I could not have visitors, phone calls, go to the yard or use the Law Library until I ended the strike.

### Assaulted by guards, then force-fed

**Dee Jay:** On May 30, I was told by Dr. Hartwell, Ms. Smock and Nurse Edwards that I had to give them my vitals and if I did not, they would have it taken by force. After I refused to give my consent, seven guards dressed in black riot gear with helmets forcefully entered the cell and assaulted me. I was placed in handcuffs and leg shackles and a hood was placed over my head. I was then placed in a restraint chair while medical staff forcefully took my vitals without legal authority.

As a result of the assault, I have nerve damage in my right hand that medical is still refusing to provide proper treatment for. Once prison officials realized I was not going to end my strike, the guards started harassing me by turning up the air conditioner and the TV sound all day and night.

Despite being isolated I was able to receive messages from some of my comrades, but each day I was growing weaker and thinner. I went from 207 pounds to 143 pounds during the strike.

I had to make a strategic decision to stop drinking all liquids in order to force the medical unit to provide me with nutrition. I know this sounds crazy to someone out there reading this but under the circumstances I had to because they would have just let me die.

On June 25, after almost two months and 174 consecutive missed meals and after five days without water, the forced-feeding began.

### Complaints bring retaliation

**WW:** Forced-feeding — how did they do that?

**Dee Jay:** A lieutenant would come to the cell door with four guards dressed in black riot gear with helmets, plus a sergeant with a video recorder. The lieutenant would read the “use of restraint chair” policy, telling me if I did not follow his orders to be strip searched and handcuffed, they would use force against me, including the use of pepper spray and taser.

After being strip searched, done to demean me, I would be placed in handcuffs and leg shackles, and placed in a restraint chair. Each of my legs and arms would be strapped down. A belt would be placed around my waist and a shoulder harness would go on last. I would then be wheeled to a medical room where two

nurses were waiting.

First, my vitals would be taken and then the feeding tube would be inserted into my nostril until it went down into my stomach. Sometimes the tube would get stuck in my nostril and the nurse would try to force it down, causing severe pain and bleeding. Some of the nurses would deliberately let the tube get stuck in my throat, cutting off air, causing me to choke. They would try and make it as uncomfortable for me as they could, but I still would not let it discourage me.

### Weight loss and seizures

**Dee Jay:** For the first month I was force-fed pureed foods twice a day. On July 25, things changed — they started force-feeding me only once a day. Then they told me I would be provided nutrition and hydration only if my body weight was under 150 pounds. Then I was told nutrition and hydration would not be provided on weekends, Wednesdays or when there was an institutional emergency.

I later found out this was part of a five-phase plan created by Dr. Hartwell, Dr. Herbeck (Medical Director at SCI Fayette) and the Medical Director for the PA DOC Bureau of Health Care Services. The plan was to manipulate my body weight, causing me to become constipated and emaciated, which was very painful. As a result, I developed a lot of medical problems.

When prison officials found out I was receiving messages from my comrades and support from a few guards, I was immediately moved to the Restricted Housing Unit and placed in a hard cell, which consists of a concrete bed, toilet/sink and a desk. After I kept having seizures brought on by the stress of the hunger strike, I was moved back to POC.

After I filed numerous grievance complaints, they moved me back to a hard cell in the RHU, where I was subjected to unauthorized cell searches while I was out of the cell. The guards would take all my linens (blanket, sheets, towel and washcloths), leaving me with no way to keep warm or shower.

I had five false, fabricated misconducts filed against me, but other prisoners on the pod would give me support. They let the guards know if they did anything to me they would contact their families and outside officials, which they did on several occasions. [tinyurl.com/vek4q2d]

No matter how difficult things got, I would stay strong by quoting Winston Churchill’s speech about “never, never, never giving up no matter how hard or long.”

But it was getting to the point I was in too much pain because of the “Five-Phase Plan” which triggered a lot of seizures. When I would ask the guards for medical help, they would ignore me.

*Joe Piette edited this talk, in communication with Grant. Next: Part 3: ‘Much more to be said and done’.*



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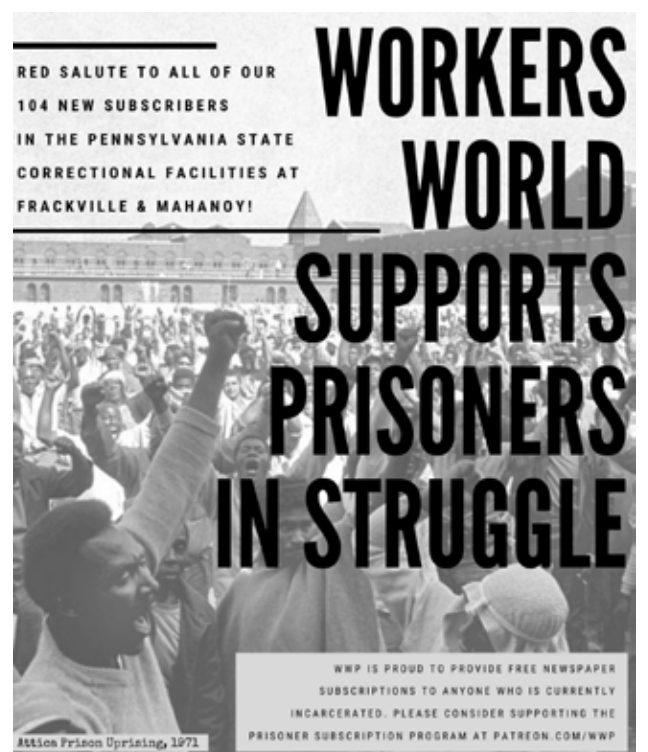
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# Big Oil and Gas spread the ‘Big Lie’ about toxic waste

By **Betsey Piette**  
Philadelphia

Hydraulic fracturing, known as “fracking,” is the process of forcing chemical-laden water into underground shale formations in order to extract natural gas and oil. This practice escalated in the early 2000s.

When communities negatively impacted by fracking protested, the energy industry launched massive advertising campaigns promoting natural gas obtained by this process as the “cleaner energy” and touted its safety. Industry executives ridiculously labeled it “green” technology.

The energy companies based their arguments on comparisons with coal and nuclear power. They dismissed scientists’ concerns that the methane gas released by fracking was a more harmful greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide linked to global warming. The drillers claimed well water contamination was “naturally occurring.”

Despite voices cautioning that this was another fraudulent, but lucrative, scheme, the global development of “unconventional” fossil fuel drilling fueled a frenzy on Wall Street by 2014. At the time, Washington’s ban on exporting gas and oil from the U.S. caused many industry analysts to question whether domestic sales of fracked oil and gas brought in sufficient earnings to offset the cost of securing land leases and paying for fracking.

The Obama administration saved the industry by reversing some prohibitions against exporting U.S. gas and oil. Suddenly there was a rush to create

pipelines and facilities to accommodate export abroad, which reaps higher earnings than domestic profits.

By 2016, fracking was used in two-thirds of all new wells, reported the Energy Information Administration. There were 1 million active oil or natural gas wells across 33 states.

The Trump administration enabled the energy industry to expand the use of fracking by lifting export restrictions. The result was a 300 percent increase in drilling permits. Trump’s rollback of environmental protections directly benefited this industry, already seriously under-regulated.

By 2017, U.S. oil production from fracking grew to around 9.6 million barrels a day — nearly double that of a decade earlier. Hydraulic fracturing enabled the U.S. to become the largest oil and gas producer in the world, with natural gas production increasing by 70 percent from 2005 to 2018. However, greenhouse gas emissions also rose, increasing 13 percent in just two years from 2016 to 2018.

## A trillion gallons of wastewater a year

The fracking process involves the use of 2 million to 8 million gallons of water per well, depending on the rock formation. The water is mixed with chemicals that are often toxic, even carcinogenic. Companies frequently refuse to disclose the contents of these chemicals, claiming they are “trade secrets.”

As the natural gas flows to the surface, it brings wastewater with it, which contains salts and chemicals — and also, radioactive materials that occur naturally in underground formations. Labeled

“brine” by the industry, this wastewater often contains high levels of the chemical element radium.

Fracking produces nearly 1 trillion gallons of toxic wastewater each year. In January, Rolling Stone magazine reported on an investigation showing that this toxic liquid is making workers sick and is spreading contamination across the U.S.

Among workers most affected are truck drivers paid to haul away the brine. Often unknowingly, these tanker-truck drivers carry “hot loads” that average around 9,300 picocuries of radium per liter and can run as high as 28,500 picocuries.

Radium, which is abundant in brine, is so dangerous it is subject to tight restrictions, even at hazardous-waste sites. Because radium contains the carcinogens radium-226 and radium-228, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission requires industrial discharge to remain below 60 picocuries per liter of each.

The documentary film “Gaslands,” directed by environmentalist Josh Fox and released in 2010, focuses on fracking’s impact in several states. It explains that one fracking injection will yield 200 to 300 tanker trucks of toxic, radioactive waste. Each industrial well site contains dozens of surface pads which each contain 20 or more wells. Fracking at only one well site may require 38,400 to 172,800 tanker-truck trips over its lifespan.

Drivers are rarely given protective clothing, and tanker spills are common. The Department of Transportation requires that trucks carrying radioactive materials be clearly designated with placards containing a radioactivity symbol.

However, the industry flouts this regulation, as warning signs are rarely displayed on trucks hauling brine.

## Energy industry labels toxic brine ‘safe’

Claiming that brine is “completely safe,” energy companies have concocted many methods to dispose of this dangerous, deadly mix.

One common practice in Pennsylvania was to dump the brine directly into nearby rivers until it was exposed when wastewater filtration centers near Philadelphia and Pittsburgh reported extensive corrosion in their systems’ pipes. Then it was banned.

Another increasingly common disposal method is to pump millions of gallons of brine deep into injection wells. It has been proven that this practice can trigger damaging earthquakes in areas near wells.

Perhaps the most insidious industry practice has been to offer free brine to states and rural townships for use along highways as a winter de-icer and for dust control on unpaved roads. This way to “dispose” of brine deposits high radioactivity in the soil where it will stay forever, endangering nearby communities. Yet, this practice is legal in 13 states!

Consumers who buy a turquoise jug of liquid de-icer AquaSalina at their local hardware store can spread brine with radium levels of roughly 2,500 picocuries per liter on their patio, sidewalk or driveway. The industry has knowingly designated this commercial disposal of carcinogenic brine as “beneficial use.” This bottled radioactive waste is even labeled “safe for environment and pets”! □

## On the picket line

By Sue Davis

### Struggle over unemployment benefits for striking workers in N.Y. state

On Feb. 6, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed a bill granting unemployment benefits for workers who have been on strike for two weeks.

But that didn’t help the 3,400 General Motors workers in Buffalo, Lockport and Rochester who were on strike from Sept. 15 to Oct. 25.

An Oct. 10 Payday Report article exposed that Cuomo was sitting on a bill the New York State Legislature passed in June making unemployment available to striking workers after one week. The United Auto Workers lobbied vigorously for it due to the impending strike. But major industries countered against it. The only conclusion — then and now — Cuomo sided with the bosses.

The expose was picked up by the Oct. 11 Albany Times-Union, which quoted Cuomo spokesperson Rich Azzopardi who called the newsletter “a piece of garbage” that “is not worth the server storage it’s taking up.” But such trash talk only led to the Oct. 12 New York Daily News heaping pressure on Cuomo to do the right thing and put his pro-labor talk into action.

After Cuomo finally signed the bill, New York State AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento commented: “This is

a huge victory for unionized workers who until now had to endure an incredible hardship by waiting seven weeks to claim unemployment benefits.” (Payday Report, Feb. 7) Kudos to Mike Elk for writing the whistle-blowing article.

### L.A. teacher strike helps end racist random searches of students

A year ago, one of many demands of the Los Angeles teachers’ strike was ending random searches of mostly Black and Brown students. Before the strike the United Teachers Los Angeles had teamed up with Students Deserve and the American Civil Liberties Union to launch the Students Not Suspects campaign, which organized forums and protested at school board meetings about why searches weren’t making schools safe.

By the time the teachers walked back in, they had won a partial victory against the racist practice, which was started 30 years ago with the goal of keeping weapons out, but mainly terrorized and victimized students. The district agreed to a pilot program: 14 schools would opt out immediately, with 14 more two years later.

But strike momentum spread. Last May, after a school board seat opened up, a union ally won. In June, the board voted to end the searches at the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

### 25,000 grocery workers to take strike vote in D.C. area

Local 400 of the Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) has been negotiating with owners of Giant and Safeway for the past five months, and they’re no nearer to a worker-friendly contract. (OTPL, Feb. 6) Both

multimillion-dollar companies are playing the austerity game — trying to force the workers to accept horrible contract terms. The bosses want to freeze pay for new workers in Washington, D.C., and Maryland at minimum wage for the next three years, keep part-timers hired after Oct. 30, 2013, at 24 hours a week (so they’re ineligible for benefits) and set top-of-scale increases far below those in other states. They also want to cut their health care contributions, forcing workers to pay large increases for weekly premiums. They’re also waffling on their promise of secure pension benefits, with plans for future cuts.

But Local 400 is fighting back. They called a press conference and rally on Feb. 19 in D.C. to announce they will take a strike vote if they can’t reach an acceptable contract by a date to be announced at the rally. If members vote to strike, more than 25,000 workers at hundreds of stores in the greater D.C. area will walk out. (ufcw400.org, Feb. 12) Stay tuned.

### Strike threat works for St. Louis janitors

Some 2,100 janitors, members of Service Employees (SEIU) Local 1 in St. Louis, announced Feb. 10 that they’d won a three-year contract with raises and new benefits, including protected categories of gender identity and expression. Thanks to months of advocacy, civil disobedience and the threat of a strike, the majority Black and Brown workers focused their struggle on economic and racial equity. The average wage increase is 14 percent, bringing hourly pay from \$10.50 an hour to \$11.97. With these the highest raises janitors have ever seen, it’s estimated they will add \$15.3 million to the local economy. SEIU union rep Nick Desideri applauded the workers who “came together, showed their strength in the street, and won their strongest contract ever because of it.” (St. Louis American, Feb. 13). □



# Rebel Diaz rocks Boston for Chile

By Steve Gillis  
Boston

Police forces killed four anti-government protesters in Chile during the first week of February. In the U.S., revolutionary hip-hop artists Rebel Diaz played an East Coast tour to benefit organizations on the front line of the people’s rebellion in Chile. They include Hijos de la Primera Linea (Children of the First Line) and CODEPU (La Corporación de Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos del Pueblo/Corporation for the Promotion and Defense of the Rights of the People).

Since early October, mass protests have taken over the streets of Santiago, the capital, to demand reversal of government-imposed transportation fare hikes. Police responded by murdering at least 27 protesters; blinding over 500 people by shooting pellets, bullets and gas canisters at their eyes; and arresting 9,794 people, including 1,100 children and youth.

People who have increasingly been impoverished by decades of neoliberal austerity—orchestrated by governments that trace their roots to the U.S.-sponsored fascist coup that overthrew socialist President Salvador Allende on Sept. 11, 1973—have been in the streets every day.

Today’s protesters, not satisfied with billionaire President Sebastián Piñera’s fare-hike reversal, are demanding his government resign. They also call for a Peoples’ Convention to scrap dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet’s 1980 laws for a new Constitution. (Pinochet ruled Chile from 1973 to 1990.)

‘Repression led to resistance’

Rodstarz and his brother G1 of Rebel Diaz explained to a packed house at the Boston Teachers Union hall on Feb. 8 that massive repression has led to massive resistance by young people, union members, Indigenous peoples, migrant workers and social organizations.

Moonanum James, a member of the Wampanoag Nation and co-leader of United American Indians of New England, opened the event on a stage framed by flags of the Mapuche Nation, who live in South America’s southern region.

Samuel Ordóñez, a representative of the immigrant rights’ group COSECHA, came straight from a victorious hunger strike at the Massachusetts Statehouse for migrant workers’ right to have a driver’s license. He spoke in solidarity with the Chilean people. So did Kristin Turgeon, representing Workers World Party.

Members of Harvard’s TPS and DACA Coalition (Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals), Bishop Felipe Texeira’s liberation flock, students from University of Massachusetts Boston and school bus drivers from United Steelworkers Local 8751’s Team Solidarity, which sponsored the concert, pumped fists and rocked in solidarity with the Chilean revolution. Zumix,

a youth mentoring and professional sound equipment organization in East Boston, shook the house.

Families from the local Chilean community filled the tables. Children led the way on the dance floor. Eroc Arroyo and Opti Brown, from Boston’s legendary Foundation Movement, wowed the audience with their classic raps and effervescent optimism.

No one wanted A Desalambrar’s final set to end. Their guitars, wooden flutes, chimes, Andean percussion and sublime, militant poetry brought Chile’s New Song Movement of Victor Jara and other martyrs of the 1973 massacre at Santiago Stadium to glorious life for a new generation of artists and fighters.

Eyewitness: Chile

Throughout the four-hour event, Nesto Nieves of REDio Vision and Rodstarz projected scenes onto the walls from the front lines of today’s Chilean rebellion. Their eyewitness footage was difficult to watch, as it showed and reported police shootings, rapes, torture, use of poison gas and fire, and gruesome murders.

The front-line footage also showed rare and thrilling scenes of street battles led by Hijos de la Primera Linea, together with the peoples’ forces, sending Chile’s police running in an historic military retreat.

Rebel Diaz also projected Prensa OPAL, Chile’s live-action coverage of a Jan. 25 street battle in Santiago—a must-see for those who want to understand and lend solidarity to the struggle there. (prensaopal.cl)

Rodstarz said his parents were leaders of the MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria/Revolutionary Left Movement). The group was targeted



Members of Rebel Diaz, Nesto Nieves (with camera) of REDio Vision, A Desalambrar and Mapuche flag.

by National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger and President Richard Nixon’s CIA, International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, Wall Street and Chilean generals in their bloody coup.

The military murdered and imprisoned tens of thousands of Rodstarz’s parents’ comrades and co-workers. They fled to Chicago and then to the Bronx for their family’s survival.

Rebel Diaz dedicated their homage to Florence Reece’s anthem for the 1931 Harlan County coal miners’ strike to the Boston School Bus Drivers’ Union. The group reminded the world that now is the time to act and declare: “Which Side Are You On?” (tiny.cc/rgb3jz)

*The writer is a member of the Executive Board of United Steelworkers Local 8751, the Boston School Bus Drivers Union.*

## California grad students wildcat for COLA

By Martha Grevatt

In 1948 the United Automobile Workers became the first union in the U.S. to win cost-of-living allowance (COLA) language, also known as an escalator clause.

General Motors agreed to raise workers’ pay in sync with inflation. UAW contracts with Ford, Chrysler (now FCA) and GM all had COLA until it was taken away



Santa Cruz police arrest striking grad students, Feb. 12.

during the 2009 GM and Chrysler bankruptcies.

A militant, determined group of UAW members have launched a new fight for COLA. Not traditional autoworkers, they are graduate student teaching employees at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC). Nevertheless, they are demanding a traditional escalator clause to offset the high cost of living in Santa Cruz.

Graduate student workers throughout the University of California system are represented by UAW LOCAL 2865. They are under a master contract ratified by 58 percent of the members statewide last year, but rejected by a majority of members at UCSC. Despite a no-strike clause in their contract, in December UCSC grad students began a “grad-ing strike” to push for COLA.

Because of the no-strike language and because the UAW International did not authorize the strike, it’s considered a wildcat.

*Continued on page 9*

## Indigenous solidarity shuts down Canadian Rail

*Continued from page 1*

Defiant rail blockades effective

Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, Canada’s largest trade and industry association, which typically ships goods on some 4,500 rail cars a day, called for increased government intervention. CM&E President Dennis Darby stated his stakeholders—from chemical companies to Dannon Yogurt—have called in alarm over the rail shutdown, vital to Canada’s freight infrastructure. Canadian National moves \$250 billion a year over its transcontinental network.

The shutdown also impacts wheat and barley farmers. “Delays will result in farmers being unable to deliver their grain,” Dave Bishop, chair of the Alberta Barley Commission, said. “We are still recovering from the harvest from hell and need reliable grain movement in order to get back on track.” (NPR, Feb. 14)

Corporate media are attempting to foment anti-Indigenous sentiment with warnings of possible propane shortages. (tinyurl.com/rq8sylv)

As of Feb. 12, Via Rail Canada said 157 trains had been cancelled, affecting over 24,500 passengers on the Toronto

to Montreal rail corridor. Via Rail service in B.C. province was also shut down by a blockade near New Hazelton, disrupting service on the freight’s northern B.C. mainline. The RCMP arrested 28 people at a Houston, B.C., rail blockage.

Canadian National obtained injunctions to end rail demonstrations near Belleville, Ont., New Hazelton, B.C., and near Winnipeg. Tyendinaga Mohawks defied the provincial court injunctions to open the Belleville blockade.

Ontario Provincial Police were forced into negotiations with the sovereign Mohawks, who have now created a second rail blockade site within Tyendinaga Mohawk territory. And Kahnawake Mohawks have blockaded a Canadian Pacific line near Montreal’s South Shore. APTN News (Aboriginal Peoples Television Network) reports local non-Indigenous allies are bringing supplies to Mohawk blockade sites.

Protests of the ‘history of violence’

As solidarity protests spread, demonstrators disrupted the British Columbia Legislature during Lieutenant Governor Janet Austin’s delivery of the government’s “throne” speech. Protesters

camped outside chanted “Shame!” as politicians sought help from hired security to enter the building.

On Feb. 15, 100 protesters physically blockaded a rail line in East Vancouver and handed out flyers that stated: “We want to recognize the shared history of violence experienced by Indigenous people and Punjabi and Chinese communities in so-called B.C.” (tinyurl.com/uyr8pwj)

Wet’suwet’en are raising the B.C. Environmental Assessment Office’s failure to consider the known threat of violence toward Indigenous women, girls and two spirits from fossil fuel project work camps. Canada’s National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls found “substantial evidence” that resource extraction projects are connected with violent attacks on Indigenous women, children and two-spirit people. CGL plans include construction of 14 such “man camps,” one to house 400 men some 13 kilometers from the Unist’ot’en Healing Centre. (tinyurl.com/tao3qzw)

Unist’ot’en Camp stated on Feb. 10: “Our matriarchs were arrested while holding a ceremony to call on our ancestors and to honor missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. We, the Unist’ot’en, know

that violence on our land and violence on our women are connected. During the ceremony, we hung red dresses to remember the spirits of the murdered women, girls and two spirit people taken from us.”

Andrew Brant from Tyendinaga said the Mohawk are returning the support shown by First Nations in B.C. during the 1990 Oka crisis when Mohawks of Kanesatake, Que., faced the Canadian military over the expansion of a golf course. “We are going to stand with them now,” said Brant. “We’ve gotten driven out of so many places, this is all we have left. We can understand what they are going through.” (tinyurl.com/usuf43x)

How to support the Wet’suwet’en

Solidarity from other First Nations and allies during the unfolding climate crisis has increased support for Indigenous demands for “Land Back.” For how to support the Wet’suwet’en against illegal CGL pipeline construction, go to tinyurl.com/rppq5ke/. To contribute to the Unist’ot’en Legal Fund, go to tinyurl.com/tvg96xj/.

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



# Black labor: From chattel slavery to wage slavery

## Part 2 The invention of the cotton gin — and insurrections

By Sam Marcy

*The following is excerpted from Chapter 2 of Marcy’s “High Tech, Low Pay: A Marxist analysis of the changing character of the working class,” first published in 1986. Marcy was the late chairperson of Workers World Party. “High Tech, Low Pay” is available as a free download at [workers.org/marcy](http://workers.org/marcy).*

### The invention of the cotton gin

While the compass as a technological device in the field of navigation was appropriated by the developing bourgeoisie from an earlier mode of production dating back many hundreds of years, the invention of the cotton gin in 1793 belonged strictly to the era of capitalist development. Its invention was called forth by the development of capitalist trade and commerce. Its influence on slavery was stupendous.

A great deal has been written about Eli Whitney as the inventor of the cotton gin and as a great scientist, which he certainly was. However, according to some accounts,<sup>1</sup> the first gin made in Mississippi was constructed on the basis of a crude drawing by a skilled slave. This was probably not very unusual in light of the fact that even among the first slaves brought to this country from Africa, many were skilled craftsmen. Also in both the South and the North there were skilled free Blacks.

Since the slaves were never recognized in law as persons, the slave owners could appropriate their property as well as any inventions they might conceive of.

The cotton gin has often been described as the very soul of simplicity. However, it should be borne in mind that cotton has been spun, woven and dyed from the earliest times. Cotton formed the staple clothing of India, Egypt and China. Hundreds of years before the Christian era, cotton textiles were woven in India with matchless skill and their use spread to the Mediterranean countries.

In the first century CE, traders brought fine muslin and calico to Italy and Spain. The Arabs introduced the cultivation of cotton into Spain in the 9th century. By the 17th century, the East India Company was bringing rare fabrics from India.

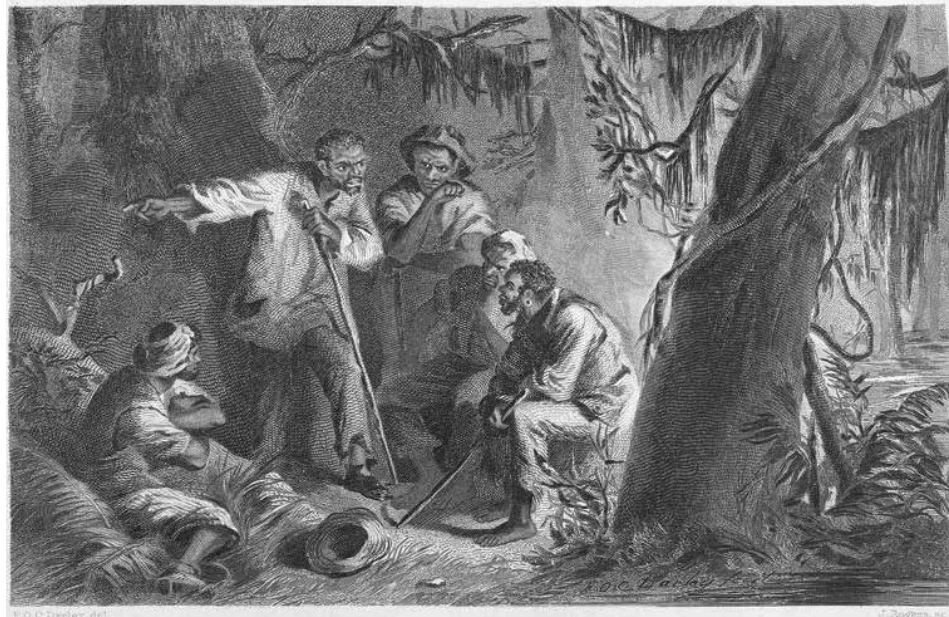
Before the arrival of the Europeans in the Americas, cotton was skillfully spun there and woven into fine garments and dyed tapestries. Fabrics were found in Peruvian tombs that even belonged to pre-Inca cultures. Cotton was first planted by the Europeans in Virginia’s Jamestown Colony in 1607.

The so-called Cotton Belt in the U.S., where cotton has historically been the

main cash crop, extends through North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, west Tennessee, east Arkansas, Louisiana, east Texas, and south Oklahoma, and also in smaller areas of southeast Missouri, southwest Kentucky, north Florida and southeast Virginia.

But prior to the invention of the cotton gin, cotton production was at a very low level. It was almost insignificant in the prevailing Southern economy. The plantation system rested mainly on tobacco and to a lesser extent on rice and indigo.

Rarely has an important technological development taken place which was as simple as the cotton gin. It separated the seeds from the cotton through a process using a cylinder with bent spikes sharpened to form hooks. They were set in a



Nat Turner plans heroic slave rebellion, which he led in Southampton County, Va. in 1831.

ring and revolved through slots in a bar. The teeth pulled away the lint, which was then cleaned from the teeth by brushes. A hand crank operated the whole machine.

What did this machine accomplish? As Eli Whitney himself explained in a letter, “The machine makes the labor 50 times less without throwing any class of people out of business.”<sup>2</sup> Of course, the slave economy was not characterized by unemployment, unlike wage slavery.

The cotton gin tremendously increased the productivity of Black slave labor on the plantations. The figures in cotton crop production speak for themselves. In 1790, before the use of the cotton gin, the cotton crop of the U.S. amounted to 1.5 million pounds. By 1800 it had risen to 35 million pounds. By 1810 it had soared to 85 million pounds, and by 1860 it reached the astonishing sum of 2 billion pounds.

The introduction of the cotton gin thus brought about a profound social revolution.

A machine that could increase the productivity of labor 50 times was nothing less than sensational. It thoroughly revolutionized Southern agriculture as well as Northern production methods.

Furthermore, [the gin] was a response to the tremendous social transformation evoked by the Industrial Revolution in England, which had brought about a skyrocketing demand for cotton and a sharp price increase. As Marx explained it in broader terms, “A radical change in the mode of production in one sphere of industry involves a similar change in other spheres. This happens at first in such branches of industry as are connected together by separate phases of a process, and yet are isolated by the social division of labor, in such a way that each of them

produces an independent commodity.

“Thus spinning by machinery made weaving by machinery a necessity, and both together made the mechanical and chemical revolution that took place in bleaching, printing and dyeing, imperative. So too, on the other hand, the revolution in cotton spinning called forth the invention of the gin, for separating the seeds from the cotton fiber; it was only by means of this invention, that the production of cotton became possible on the enormous scale at present required.”<sup>3</sup>

But how did it affect slavery itself, the “peculiar institution” as it was called at the time? Did the sensational, spectacular development in technology retard slavery or expand it?

From the time school children attend their earliest classes they are taught about the wonders of modern science and what a liberating influence it has. Did the cotton gin at the time help to weaken slavery, as the general conceptions cultivated and promoted by the bourgeoisie maintain? As we shall see, it strengthened slavery. And this happened at a time when it appeared (although it was only appearances) that slavery was in a decline.

Here it is necessary to look at the currents of thought which gave political expression to this phenomenon. For instance, the Continental Congress of 1774 proposed that the practice of importing slaves be stopped. Rhode Island and Connecticut passed laws providing that all chattel slaves brought within their respective provinces be freed, and Delaware prohibited the importation of bondsmen in 1776. Later, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina and Maryland all forbade the importation of slaves.

The slave trade itself, of course, was finally prohibited in the U.S. more than a decade after the introduction of the

cotton gin, in 1808.

But it should not be forgotten that the Constitutional Convention of 1788 wrote a clause into the Constitution making it impossible as a matter of federal law to abolish the slave trade on a national basis before 1808.

The demise of the slave trade has to be viewed in the light of class interests, first of the slavocracy itself. Why would they as slave owners be interested in abolishing it? Why, for instance, would George Mason of Virginia, himself a slave owner and supporter of slavery, condemn the slave trade as “diabolical itself and disgraceful to mankind”?<sup>4</sup>

Only by piercing the veil of capitalist hypocrisy, only by going behind the political rhetoric and seeking out the materialist interests of any given class, only by applying the materialist interpretation of history and analyzing social and political phenomena in terms of class interests, can we understand the politics, the social and political values.

Thus the basic reason behind abolishing the importation of slaves even in the above-named Southern states and castigating the trade as a “disgrace to mankind” was the fact that there had been a huge influx of slaves. Like the excessive influx of any commodity governed by the law of supply and demand, this cheapened the price of a slave. The reasons behind [proposed abolition] were economic in origin, masked in moralistic phraseology.

A surplus of slaves in some of the Southern states motivated the agitation against further importation. Most of this agitation, it should be noted, was before the use of the cotton gin really took off on a mass scale, producing unprecedented profits.

But there was also opposition to the slave trade motivated by an entirely different set of circumstances. This was a thoroughgoing revolutionary development which is highly obscured in U.S. history, particularly as it relates to the early struggles of Black people before the Civil War. The revolutionary development [of insurrections] fired the imagination of enslaved Black people in this country and frightened the ruling class, both North and South.

### Insurrections

The insurrections given the most detailed accounts in modern literature were those of Gabriel in Virginia (1800), Denmark Vesey in Charlestown, S.C. (1822), and, most famous, that of Nat Turner in South Hampton County, Virginia (1831).<sup>5</sup>

However, a great many insurrections took place which are only beginning to be taken note of. The Civil War itself demonstrated many instances of insurrections by Black people. The Black masses under slavery were not the passive, docile force imagined by bourgeois historiography, especially in the literature predating the mass movement of Black people [in the 20th century].

Black rebellions go back in history to the very beginnings of slavery in this country. As early as 1687, “one year previous to the Glorious Revolution in the mother country,” the revolution in England that consolidated the power of the bourgeoisie as against the old feudal aristocracy, there was “widespread revolt throughout the colonies and at a time

*Continued on page 7*



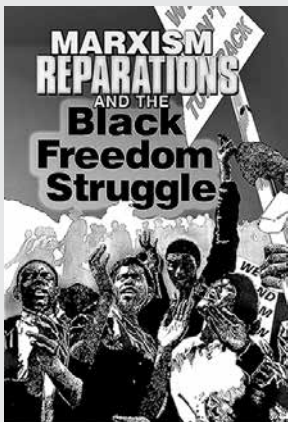
## Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle

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# Malcolm X was killed by the racist masters of the USA

## They are the same ones who assassinated Lumumba and the same ones whom Malcolm fought against his whole life

*The following slightly edited article appeared on the front page of Workers World on Feb. 25, 1965, four days after the assassination. It was written by the editorial staff.*

The bullet that stilled the voice of Brother Malcolm X came from the arsenal of imperialist white supremacy. No matter the hand that pulled the trigger, the missile was guided by the same sinister forces who assassinated Patrice Lumumba and his heroic lieutenants in the Congo.

The vicious perpetrators of the most sadistic violence against the Black People have struck again — and this time at a most vital spot. They have struck again, while their class brothers of press and radio hold up their hands and moralize about “violence” — not the violence of the assassins, but the alleged violence of their victim!

The ruling class that boasts of the greatest array of violence in the history of humankind, the class that has not hesitated to use that violence on the disarmed and the helpless throughout the earth, has struck again and at one of its most important targets.

Malcolm was a leader of the oppressed, one who called for self-defense against the violence of the oppressor and organized the masses with a view to standing up against this violence.

Like Lumumba, he had to be removed. The imperialists will let nothing stand in the way in their drive to rule whatever portion of the earth they can. And the time they could do this peacefully or “democratically” — if it ever did exist — is now long past.

The government has failed to quench the fires of the Black Freedom movement

with the tepid milk and water “civil rights law.” It has failed to bribe the movement’s real leaders. It has failed to beat the movement into submission — either in Alabama or in Brooklyn or Harlem. So it has taken the path of provocation, conspiracy, frame-up — and assassination.

It cannot dispose of the ideas of the most militant leaders of the oppressed, so it must try to eliminate them.

### Innate violence of the ruling class

The depraved, sadistic stooges of the ruling class have been murdering the lesser-known, unsung heroes of the oppressed for centuries. But now the U.S. racist masters have gone in for murdering the leaders.

The ruling class has even launched upon a program of government by assassination because its own ranks are torn by the upward thrust of the oppressed peoples.

In the case of John F. Kennedy and Dag Hammarskjöld, the assassinations were directed at a so-called “moderate” wing of the oppressor class. In Malcolm’s case, it was directed at a militant wing of the oppressed class.

In both cases, the racist, militarist rulers of the United States have the same aim — to divide and rule the masses and to set the country more firmly on the road to war.

The Kennedy assassination revealed the extreme instability of the ruling class and its tendency to resort to the most violent solutions in its internal faction fights. Even before this, the mysterious death of Dag Hammarskjöld in a plane accident while he was apparently pursuing a too “mild” line in the Congo, raised strong suspicions in Europe and Africa that the CIA had really arranged his demise. But the assassination of Malcolm reveals, like the phony “Statue



of Liberty bomb plot” [1964] that far more is now afoot within the country than just a faction fight of the big bosses.

The intrigues, frame-ups, wiretaps and conspiracies against the oppressed that have become so commonplace have given way to bursts of police violence, clubbings, shootings — and assassinations.

We live under such a system and are ruled by such brigands that it is inevitable that, frustrated by failure with other methods, they unleash the kind of violence Malcolm often exposed before he fell victim to it.

The papers, as usual, turn everything upside down. Malcolm was fond of saying that they invariably make the criminal look like the victim and the victim appear to be the criminal. So it is with Malcolm’s own death.

Every single editorial writer for the imperialist racists has managed to say in one way or another that Malcolm “died as he had lived — by violence” or that “he lived by the sword and he died by the sword,” etc. It might almost be thought that it was

Malcolm who had assassinated someone rather than the other way around, so persuasively do these highly paid agents of the racist ruling class write their obituaries.

One might almost think that these meek and gentle newspapers were not absolutely foaming at the mouth over a few youngsters in Harlem last summer [in 1964]. One might almost think that they all stood up in unison to condemn Officer [Thomas] Gilligan and ask his removal from the force for his act of murderous violence against a fifteen-year-old youth [James Powell]!

The hypocrisy and the lies are hard to expose. Malcolm’s murder is being covered up by the very same forces that murdered him — the racist rulers and their penmen, policemen and politicians. But murder will out. The real murderers will be brought to justice.

And Malcolm’s struggle for the line of militant self-defense of the Black People against the violence of imperialism will be vindicated, not least of all, by his own martyrdom. □

## Black labor: From chattel slavery to wage slavery

*Continued from page 6*

when the Negro population of the Old Dominion [Virginia] was about equal to that of whites. ... That was the attempted insurrection in Northern Neck.”<sup>6</sup> All were executed when the plot was discovered and the revolt was crushed.

How interesting, in light of present-day developments in South Africa, that the Virginia Council placed a ban on public funerals for the dead slaves in fear that they would bring out mass demonstrations and might even provoke another rebellion!

One thing to remember in connection with the early slave insurrections is that they were influenced politically by the English Revolution and, much more profoundly, by the French Revolution. The great revolutions of this century (especially in Russia, China, Cuba, Vietnam and Angola and now the emerging revolutionary struggle in South Africa) have also had the most profound effect among the exploited and oppressed masses everywhere.

The spectacular success of the cotton gin in raising the productivity of labor of the slaves tremendously strengthened the South, strengthened slavery and impelled the slaveholders to become not only more aggressive and bellicose but, far more important, more expansionist. Slavery drove into the Southwest and everywhere it could in order to expand its plantations

and garner unprecedented profits. Cotton production was extensive in character, appropriating more and more land, rather than intensively applying mechanical devices. It drove the slaves harder and harder, often beyond endurance.

But the very invention which had become such a tremendous advantage to the Southern planters, like all social phenomena, soon began to develop one of the sharpest social contradictions which ultimately would undo the slavocracy altogether.

*Next: Marcy on “Slavery vs. capitalist production” and “Black labor today.”*

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## Philadelphia

## Anti-Imperialism 101 discussion



Attendees in Feb. 9 open discussion.

WW PHOTO: SCOTT WARREN

The Philadelphia branch of Workers World Party held its third Anti-Imperialism 101 open discussion on Feb. 9. This month’s event focused on Black Liberation and Anti-Imperialism, with guest speakers Makasi Motema from the Peoples Power Assemblies-NYC and Megan Malachi from Philly REAL Justice.

Motema described how capitalist propaganda directed against Black and Brown workers in the belly of the beast parallels the lies told about liberation struggles in the Global South. He laid out how the bosses create a narrative to portray their victims as “violent, lacking in culture and pathologically corrupt.” The capitalists’ narrative also claims that the violence they unleash against people of color is somehow beneficial to them.

Motema cited George Zimmerman’s murder of Trayvon Martin and the U.S.

war against Iraq as examples wherein the actual victims were portrayed as the “threat” to their oppressors.

Megan Malachi led the group in a reading of a passage from Assata Shakur’s autobiography, “Assata.” The group also read from Mumia Abu-Jamal’s book, “Murder Incorporated,” and watched a short clip of the martyred president of Africa’s Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara, discussing imperialism. A lively discussion followed.

Those attending included MOVE Minister of Confrontation Pam Africa, who received a long round of applause when she introduced herself. The next session of Anti-Imperialism 101 on the subject of Anti-Imperialism and Gender Oppression will be on March 10.

— Report by Ted Kelly



Part 2

# Spirit of Harpers Ferry raid lives on

By Shelley Ettinger

*This is a slightly edited version of this article, with added subheads, published on Oct 21, 2009, in Workers World.*

For the masses of workers and oppressed people in this country — those whose days are consumed with trying to survive and feed their families, keeping a roof over their heads and getting some kind of minimal health care or education — for the majority, that is, who grab their news in quick gulps on TV or radio, websites or tabloid newspapers, Oct. 16 was just another day.

That day [was the anniversary of] the raid on the U.S. Army arsenal, at Harpers Ferry, Va. This military assault by an armed, well-trained, united band of Black and white militants was intended to be the opening battle in what would then develop into a widespread guerrilla war that would topple the system of chattel slavery.

The troop had written, hashed out and agreed upon a revised, improved Constitution guaranteeing race and sex equality. It was to be a new charter for the new country they envisioned rising out of the ashes of the old one that was built on the backs of enslaved Africans and wholesale theft of Indigenous lands. With this Constitution in hand, with a pledge to succeed or die, with almost unimaginable courage, 23 people went to Harpers Ferry on Oct. 16, 1859, to take on the slavocracy.

Their leader was John Brown. He was known as “Captain Brown” or “Old Osawatomie” because of his heroic exploits three years earlier, in 1856 in Kansas, where he and his troops waged a series of victorious battles that proved decisive in bringing Kansas into the Union as a free rather than a slave state.

Brown’s tactical brilliance; his unwavering spirit and optimism even in the face of the death of one of his sons and disabling of another; an utter absence of the racism that tainted most of the prominent white abolitionists; and, above all, his bone-deep commitment to the cause to which he devoted his entire life — led the group that assembled to plan and carry out the raid on Harpers Ferry to determine that Brown must lead the charge.

### Black and white militants unite in anti-slavery operation

The group was unprecedented in every way. It was made up of Black and white [fighters] together, just as the farming community Brown had founded and led during the preceding years in North Elba, N.Y., was made up of Black and white families, the first such integrated community in U.S. history. Among the Harpers Ferry squad, decisions were made democratically, not handed down hierarchically. Black and white combatants took part equally in every way.



John Brown

The plan of attack was crafted based on Brown’s long years of study of the tactics of Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey and other enslaved African-American leaders of U.S. slave revolts; of the Seminole nation that had resisted domination by colonial settlers; of the Maroons of the South and of Jamaica and Surinam, escaped enslaved people who fought the settler state forces in daring raids from bases in the hills and mountains; and of Toussaint L’Ouverture, one of the great liberators of Haiti.

In Brown’s view, there were several African-American members of the Harpers Ferry troop, any one of whom ought to take the leadership post for the action. However, the group overruled him, arguing that because of his experience in Kansas and his proven military prowess, it was Brown who must captain their squad.

And so this small band of warriors moved in. They were self-trained. They carried a minimal cache of smuggled weapons. The idea was to seize the arsenal, distribute its contents to the nearby population of enslaved laborers, join with them to liberate the region, establish a base of operations in the woods which would swiftly expand to many bases as ever more freed enslaved people joined up, and wage full-scale war until the abomination of slavery was defeated for good and the new liberationist Constitution was instituted.

### John Brown’s real legacy

The initial steps of the plan went well. Brown and his troop had the element of surprise on their side. They easily overwhelmed the arsenal’s defenses, took hostages and occupied the site. After these early achievements, however, there were a series of setbacks. The government, initially caught off-guard, was able to rally. Ultimately, through sheer strength of numbers and with all the armed might of the state behind it, the Army — under the command of none other than Robert E. Lee, who only a few short months later would take the helm of the secessionist Confederate forces — beat back the brave band of anti-racist heroes.

Commentary from bourgeois historians and military analysts fixes on various faults in the planning and execution of the raid on Harpers Ferry to explain why it did not succeed. Most of it blames Brown, tagging him as some variation of insane, a “crazed terrorist” or the like. This slander against one of the towering figures in the history of the struggle against racism is clearly politically motivated. Even now, 150 years later, racism is so integral, so crucial to the capitalist enterprise, that it is vital to portray the willingness of this white warrior to give his life in the effort to end it as sheer madness.

A truer image of Brown can be gleaned from the words of Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois and Malcolm X, all of whom praised him. Or from his comrade and

collaborator, the great Harriet Tubman, who years later said he had been her “dearest friend.”

Factual inaccuracies also riddle the standard version. African-American journalist and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal

offers an example in his essay, “The Neglected Voices from Harpers Ferry” in a recent edition of “A Voice from Harpers Ferry” by Osborne P. Anderson.

### Mumia backs Osborne P. Anderson’s account

Anderson was the only Black participant in the assault on the arsenal who escaped and survived; so his account, Abu-Jamal points out, ought to be regarded as definitive. Anderson’s account contradicts those who claim that, before they arrived at Harpers Ferry, the troop’s attempts to rally support among enslaved people on nearby plantations were unsuccessful.

On the contrary, Abu-Jamal points out: “Anderson was in a perfect position to speak to the issue of slave betrayal. Instead, he sees none. He found the slaves supportive and overjoyed by the revolt, and counts them among the first to fall during the armed conflict. He was among the contingent that visited the plantations, where he found ‘the greatest enthusiasm.’”

Abu-Jamal continues: “Of the 17 revolutionaries who died at Harpers Ferry, nine were Black men!” This number includes not only those who had trained and arrived together, but several who must have joined the troop when it swept through the plantations along the route. In all, “The majority of men who died at the Ferry were Black men; the majority of Black men who fought and died (five of nine) were slaves fighting for their freedom!”

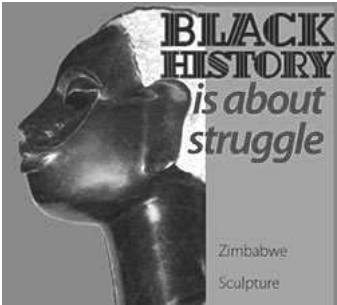
Seven other freedom fighters, including John Brown, were captured. All were hanged before the end of the year. Worldwide outrage and mourning followed.

From Haiti to France to Cuba to Canada, in Detroit, Boston, Chicago and many other U.S. cities, bells tolled, orators spoke, and thousands upon thousands rallied, marched and cried out in fury at the injustice.

In his jail cell, just before he was led to the gallows on Dec. 2, 1859, the great soldier for human liberation wrote these last words: “I, John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood.”

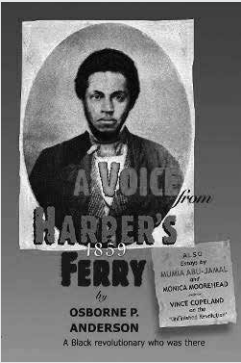
Indeed, the Civil War began just a year and a half later in April 1861. As Union troops marched into battle, they sang the newly penned “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” with its famous opening words: “John Brown’s body lies a-moldering in its grave but his spirit marches on.”

The war had really begun on Oct. 16, 1859. That was the day of the first battle, when a small troop of Black and white guerrilla fighters took up arms against the slave state. By any honest measure, the raid on Harpers Ferry was a success. It was a clarion call for freedom, and it echoes down the years. □



## A Voice From Harpers Ferry

Osborne P. Anderson’s account of the raid on Harpers Ferry appeared in pamphlet form in 1861 right after the start of the Civil War. Now in book form, with essays by Mumia Abu-Jamal, Monica Moorehead and Vince Copeland.



Download it for free at [workers.org/books](http://workers.org/books).

## Honor Black History Month — Support WW

Workers World makes a big deal about Black History Month because racism pervades every aspect of life under capitalism. Everything — from fighting for living-wage jobs to ending police terror, for affordable housing and community-control of schools — is rooted in the centuries-long struggle to end this country’s vicious history of racism, rooted in the worst, violence-driven, superexploitation — slavery.

That’s why every month, not just February, the newspaper chronicles the struggles of peoples of African descent to eradicate institutionalized, systemic white supremacy. Case in point is our continuing coverage of the struggle for political prisoners, like Mumia Abu-Jamal and Chuck Africa, the last of the MOVE 9 who was just released after 40-plus years of criminal incarceration.

WW bases our weekly coverage of the Black struggle here and elsewhere in the African diaspora on breaking imperialist chains and the principle of self-determination.

Oppressed people have the right to fight to end all forms of inequality and injustice — by any means necessary.

If you appreciate our coverage, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program or renew your membership promptly. The WW Supporter Program was established 43 years ago so readers could help WW publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build campaigns needed to fight for revolutionary change leading to socialism.

For a donation of at least \$75 a year — \$100 or \$300 or more if you’re able — members receive a subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues, five free subscriptions to give to friends — and a book for donations over \$75. Write checks (either monthly or once a year) to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up to donate online at [workers.org/donate/](http://workers.org/donate/).

Know that we are grateful for your help in building Workers World! □



# Venezuela Claudio Katz accepts Liberator Award for latest book

By Claudio Katz  
Caracas

*Dec. 17 — The following is from a lecture the author, an Argentine Marxist economist and political analyst, gave at the reception for the 12th Liberator Award for Critical Thinking 2019. It was given for his book, “La Teoría de la Dependencia, 50 años después” (“Theory of Dependency, 50 Years Later”). Simón Bolívar is known as the “Liberator.” Translation by Michael Otto.*

Thank you very much to all the friends and compañeros who created and who sustain the Liberator Award with such tenacity and effort. Thank you for your work, for your conviction and for your perseverance. This prize only exists because of that will and that determination. And congratulations to the organizers for valuing free thinking and critical conceptions. For prioritizing the research that exposes the roots of injustice and for considering the studies that explain how neoliberalism, imperialism and capitalism operate.

For these reasons I am honored to receive this award, which is a recognition of the social commitment of researchers, those who take the side of the welfare of the great masses of the people. Very few countries and institutions dare to promote awards of this kind. Convening, organizing and awarding this distinction is an act of courage and a challenge to the cultural, media and academic apparatus of the ruling classes.

I also congratulate them for again presenting this award while dealing with gigantic difficulties—at a time of so much political dispute in Latin America. We are going through a decisive moment: Either the right wing with its coup mongers will advance and thereby maintain neoliberal rules and U.S. imperialist domination. Or the opposite pole will be strengthened: that of the masses’ progressive and left-wing collective struggle. Either the fascists and their repressive forces will win, or the people who are resisting in the streets on the whole continent will assert their power.

That is why I want to dedicate this award to the brothers and sisters who were murdered in El Alto, Bolivia, to the young people who lost their eyes in Chile and to the demonstrators who were beaten up in Colombia and Haiti. To Marielle Franco from Brazil, to Berta Cáceres from Honduras, to Santiago Maldonado from Argentina [who were murdered by pro-fascist elements]. This award is for them.

## The effects of neoliberalism

The book that I am presenting forms part of the great battle of ideas being waged against the ruling groups. With this motivation I was interested in revisiting the Theory of Dependency, which in the 1960s and 1970s was a very original and fruitful school of Latin American thought.

The Marxist Theory of Dependency was developed by Ruy Mauro Marini, Theotonio Dos Santos and Vania Bambirra and reached great prominence in the 1970s. It explained the underdevelopment of Latin America as due to the loss of resources caused by the subordinate international position of our region in the [world economic system]. It especially highlighted the enormous transfers of value overseas that generate commercial, financial and technological dependence.

In recent decades, neoliberalism has dramatically updated those pillars of the Theory of Dependence. In the past, the specialization in raw material exports was a serious problem, but now dependence on “primarización,” [the specialization in the primary, low-level steps in the production of surplus value in the global value chain]

is overwhelming. It has consolidated the dominant role of exporting crops to the detriment of supplying the needs of the local population; it has encouraged open-pit mining, multiplied environmental calamities and intensified the extraction of all the various forms of fossil fuels.

The profile of operations centered in agriculture, mining and energy increased Latin America’s vulnerability to international price fluctuations for raw materials. For that reason, in recent years we have again suffered the consequences of the stagnation of the prices for oil, copper and soybeans.

Neoliberalism also contributed to the decline of industry in a region affected by the new geography of globalization and the displacement of factory production to the East. It promoted a “precocious deindustrialization,” which is much worse than the offshoring faced by the main economies of the Western capitalist countries.

In South America, traditional industry is in sharp decline and Brazil’s industrial apparatus has lost the magnitude it had in the 1980s. In Argentina, the surgery was brutally implemented with the massive elimination of jobs. In Central America, what rules is specialization in the primary links of the global value chain. This arrangement eliminates any hope of taking part in the more complex activities of that network.

For these reasons, Latin America occupies a marginal place in the technological revolution. With a manufacturing sector in decline, the region is unable to take part in that digital transformation. The neoliberals are keeping quiet about that adverse situation and even many heterodox thinkers are merely giving generic praise to the new “Knowledge Economy,” forgetting that [the digital] universe requires industries, services and growth. In the face of so many platitudes, the Theory of Dependency reminds us that if we continue to reproduce our dependent peripheral integration [in the world system], we will continue being marginalized by the information revolution.

## The scourge of debt

Neoliberalism has also recreated the old nightmare of debt. We had a breather in the past decade due to the rise in prices of raw materials and the resulting influx of dollars. But that respite is over and we again face the scourge of debt, under the oppressive supervision of the [International Monetary Fund] and the investment banks.

[President Mauricio] Macri [2015-19] has left us Argentinians in a virtual state of default while in Ecuador, the Indigenous movement rebelled against the adjustment demanded by the bankers. In Puerto Rico, the debt burden was a determining factor in the great popular mobilization that brought down the governor. In Chile, the drama of the debt is evident in the daily life of all families, who face unpayable loans to finance education, health or retirement.

The crises in Latin America are so acute because of that choking financial combination. The crises are due to the strangulation caused by the external sector, trade imbalances and capital flight. They derive from the great impact of overproduction on raw material prices, which precipitates dramatic situations of inflation or devaluation. In addition, the crises accentuate the decrease in purchasing power and the low income level of the population.

The seriousness of current Latin American dependency is also verified by the terrible deterioration of social indicators. Neoliberalism has multiplied unemployment, labor informality and the pauperization of the middle class, and has torn apart the social fabric of the

region. For that reason, massive emigration toward the North is increasing, small agricultural property is deteriorating and criminality is expanding.

This social dismemberment results from the terrible increase in inequality. That’s why Chile exploded, demolishing all the myths of the model the capitalists praised to the skies. Now it can be seen that Chile is no paradise of growth; it is an inferno of social inequality.

It is therefore clear that neoliberalism has fostered all the old inequalities that were studied by the Theory of Dependency. That conception enables us to understand the Latin American reality.

## Exploitation and drainage of value

In my book I try not only to update, but also to renew a key conception of our cultural history. It jumps into view that the globalized, digital, financialized and precarious capitalism of our period is very different from its equivalent in the past. And those changes can be studied using two legacies of dependency theory.

There is a tradition that highlights the importance of exploitation in the great changes that have occurred in the system. This tradition describes capitalism’s offensive against the workers to weaken unions and demolish workers’ victories. It highlights how the transnational corporations take advantage of the great reserves of low-paid and disciplined labor power in the Asian region in order to reinforce the division between formal and informal workers. That approach analyzes how the segmentation of wage labor was generalized and how the compensation of a workforce below the value of its labor power permeated the developed economies.

Another more significant perspective studies the great drain of resources suffered by dependent economies. It investigates how the dependent industrial cycle was intensified, blocking the processes of accumulation, and it contrasts what happened in Latin America with what happened in the Asian region. My work deepens this line of inquiry and explains why, unlike the Asian region, Latin America suffers from acute drainage of the value generated in the region. That disparity explains, for example, the contrasting trajectories of South Korea and Brazil.

The loss of resources is particularly intense in the agro-mining sector due to the use of extractive methods that deteriorate the environment, erode the soil, pollute the water supply, poison the rivers and destroy communities. Those processes of accumulation by dispossession lead, for example, to the burning of the Amazon to cultivate soybeans and expand cattle ranching.



Simon Bolivar

As the enormous profit generated by those activities is transferred overseas, our region is squandering its resources. Latin America never takes advantage of the good times when the prices of raw materials are high. And we invariably suffer during lean periods when export earnings are low.

Globalization has aggravated that disadvantage by modifying the world’s industrial structure, which accentuates our dependency. Once again, this reality slaps down the naïve beliefs in a prosperous and freely chosen path to capitalist development, supposedly within the reach of any country at any time.

Latin America’s economy was surviving on the old Keynesian model of import substitution and strong domestic markets. But that model has been displaced by a capitalist internationalization, which prioritizes the availability and low cost of the labor force in Asia.

Because of these severe handicaps, the three models of profit management generated within Latin America have faced acute limitations. Neoliberal economic policies—guided by fantasies of comparative advantage and the free circulation of capital—simply accentuated the erosion of that surplus.

Neodevelopmentalists tried to capture part of the profit using models of state regulation. But they formed alliances with agribusiness and high finance, which frustrated the use of that surplus for reindustrialization.

A third and more radical kind of strategy—with greater state control and greater redistribution of income—became a target of hostile concentrated capital. In some cases, governments made serious errors in applying economic policy. In other cases they created jobs, increased consumption and reduced poverty. But they failed to forge the political basis that was needed to sustain the model. I believe that the Theory of Dependency allows us to understand this variety of economic scenarios within the common framework of underdeveloped capitalism. □

# Calif. grad students wildcat for COLA

*Continued from page 5*

Over 1,400 UCSC undergraduate students signed a statement of support for the graduate student teachers, even though that has meant they haven’t received grades for the last semester. Roughly the same number of UCSC faculty have also signed on in solidarity with the strike. The COLA campaign has spread to several other UC campuses.

The grad students escalated the strike into a full teaching strike on Feb. 10. They held demonstrations blocking busy intersections near campus, and did the same on Feb. 12. At least 17 strikers and supporters have been arrested.

The university is taking a hard line, even threatening international students taking part in the strike with deportation and suspending students from class.

This has only served to further infuriate members of Local 2865 at Santa Cruz and around the state.

Mumia Abu-Jamal spoke to the strikers on Feb. 16. He was accepted into the graduate Ph.D. program at UCSC this semester, but just became aware of the strike. His message to the students was: “I read Robin D.G. Kelly’s ‘Hammer and Hoe’ on the history of Black workers in Alabama in the 1930s who were trying to unionize. The landowners unleashed the violence of the state, including help from the KKK, to stop this movement. It was not unlike what is happening with the students in California. State violence is state violence. Class is class. The students’ movement can only grow.”

To learn more and to support the strike, visit @payusmoreucsc on Twitter. □



# What kind of socialism?

A sea change has been taking place in the United States. At last, the polls show that socialism is no longer the “dirty word” it was once, when even to say publicly that you were a socialist — and especially a communist — could mean being ostracized, attacked, fired from your job, even jailed.

Not since the days of labor leader Eugene Debs (1855-1926) has a socialist fared well in U.S. presidential elections. Yet candidate Bernie Sanders, who identifies himself as a “democratic socialist,” is growing in popularity.

Let us suppose that Sanders could win the presidency. His chances are certainly slim, given the lineup of both parties’ richest backers against him, but nothing is impossible. Many social democrats like Sanders have been elected to high office in Europe. They have extracted some concessions from the ruling classes.

But that is not socialism.

Nor is Sanders running for the nomination of a party that professes socialism. The Democratic Party has certainly never endorsed it. On the contrary, it has coexisted with the Republican Party as one

of two ruling-class parties solidly in the camp of capitalism.

The Democratic Party has also been successful in selling imperialist war to the people, getting them to fight and die not for “democracy” but for corporate domination of the world’s resources.

For decades, the Democratic Party also was the party of Southern segregation. But in the North, especially with the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration, the party became associated with government programs to alleviate poverty.

What has changed is not the leadership of the two capitalist parties or their commitment to the profit system, but the sentiment of the voters. Many, especially the youth, have come to realize that capitalism is responsible for the mind-boggling wealth gap in this country. They want change.

Sanders stands for the kind of change carried out by social democratic parties elsewhere that have brought welcome reforms, but that have coexisted with capitalist ownership and control of the means of production.

It is this ownership and control that

gives the capitalists their power, not only over the economic life but also the politics of the country.

**What is socialism?**

Which raises the question, what is real socialism based on? First and foremost, a basic overhaul of the economy to bring about socialism can only begin when the working class flexes its power and takes over the means of production and uses that to solve the problems of poverty and inequality.

There is no reason for poverty in this country — or in the world. The level of productivity capable of meeting peoples’ needs is now astounding. A true workers’ government could immediately eliminate poverty by expropriating the property of the rich and planning economic development based on human need, not profit.

Why shouldn’t the global working class as a whole own and control the means of production? It is all built by workers in the first place.

Why shouldn’t the homeless be sheltered in all the empty mansions and condos that are deserted most of the time,

while their wealthy owners jet around the world?

Why shouldn’t the overabundance of food produced in this country be used to end world hunger, once and for all?

Why shouldn’t every young person be guaranteed an income and health coverage while studying how to move society forward in a sustainable way?

Yet — at a time when the planet itself is engulfed in a crisis created by unbridled capitalism — the old political institutions put in place by billionaires’ money still dictate policy. This cannot last.

Workers World is committed to building a revolutionary movement for socialism. Elections may be a barometer of shifting opinion, but the movement doesn’t end on election day. It grows with every struggle for social justice — with every strike, every protest, every sit-in. The movement builds working-class solidarity against white supremacy, misogyny, the oppression of LGBTQ2+ people and the scapegoating of im/migrants.

Building a truly revolutionary movement holds the key to the future. If you want to fight for real social change, join us! □

## Myles Garrett reinstated, NFL racism remains

By Martha Grevatt  
Cleveland

On Feb. 12, the National Football League reinstated Myles Garrett, a Cleveland Browns defensive end who was indefinitely suspended in November after a fight with Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Mason Rudolph.

Both teams and a number of their players, including Garrett and Rudolph, were fined after the incident. Two other players, Larry Ogunjobi of the Browns and Maurkice Pouncey of the Steelers, were suspended for one game and two games, respectively.

But Rudolph, the only white player involved in the melee, was not suspended at all.

The altercation began Nov. 14, with the game almost over, after Garrett tackled Rudolph. Video footage shows Rudolph tugging on Garrett’s helmet and going for his groin, after which Garrett pulled off Rudolph’s helmet. In a Feb. 13 interview with ESPN reporter Mina Kimes, Garrett recalled that he only hit Rudolph with Rudolph’s helmet after Rudolph charged Garrett.

What is key to understanding the racist

character of the suspensions — and for that matter the NFL — is Garrett’s recollection that Rudolph also called him a racist slur.

Not meaning for this to be made public, Garrett brought up the slur in a Nov. 20 grievance hearing before NFL Appeals Officer James Thrash. But the NFL then claimed that no audio existed from the hearing to confirm Garrett’s allegation and suspended him indefinitely.

The punishment meant Garrett was not allowed to play for the rest of the season, and if the Browns had qualified for the playoffs, he could not have participated. Until his reinstatement Feb. 12 by NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, Garrett was barred from practicing with his teammates.

When someone present at the Nov. 20 grievance hearing leaked the accusation of a racist slur to the media, Rudolph vehemently denied the charge. And Garrett was immediately criticized. The assumption was that if the slur had happened, then he would have made the claim right away and not waited until the hearing, where he was represented by the NFL Players Association.

In the Feb. 13 ESPN interview, Kimes asked Garrett to recall what happened Nov.

14. Garrett then asserted, in a summation of the events leading up to his suspension, that Rudolph “called me a stupid N-word.” He suggested that the NFL does indeed have access to audio to confirm this.

Garrett expressed regret over the assault, but stated his view that conduct off the field, such as domestic violence, should draw harsher penalties than violence that occurs when tempers flare in a heated game situation.

Now Garrett is being criticized for repeating the allegation, even though he only restated the incident after the interviewer asked him about what had happened. If this was part of his experience, how was he wrong to include it?

Rudolph has again denied using the N-word and his legal representatives — California-based sports law specialists Younger & Associates — tweeted: “This obviously was not the first time Mr. Rudolph had been sacked by an African-American player.” (wkyc.com)

In other words, they are claiming that Rudolph can’t possibly be a racist, because if he were, he would already have used the slur against Black players who tackled him in the past.

The law firm further claims that



Myles Garrett during ESPN interview

“Mr. Garrett maliciously uses this false allegation to coax sympathy.”

However, like Colin Kaepernick, Myles Garrett was punished for speaking out against racism.

Garrett’s union fought with him to get him back in the game — demonstrating that every worker, even an extremely well-paid professional athlete, needs union representation.

Now Cleveland Browns players and fans are welcoming back the talented athlete, who was a top defensive player in the NFL before the suspension and played in the 2018 Pro Bowl. One fan tweeted, “He’s Baccckkkkk! Let’s go.” □

## Guaidó returns to Venezuela after Trump applauds him

By Marco Teruggi  
Caracas

Published Feb. 12 in [pagina12.com.ar](http://pagina12.com.ar).  
Translation by Michael Otto.

Juan Guaidó returned to Venezuela after his tour of Europe and the United States [on Feb. 11]. He entered through the international airport of Maiquetía, in the state of Vargas, half an hour from Caracas. His arrival was announced in the morning and his reception by the government’s opposition was small.

In the airport concourse, more supporters of the government, Chavistas, shouting, “get out” and “country sell-out” [or “traitor”] were waiting for him than were his own supporters. Among those

who confronted and denounced him were workers from Conviasa, the Venezuelan state airline recently punished by the U.S. government as part of its economic blockade. (See videos of Conviasa confrontations: [tinyurl.com/vakbcqw/](http://tinyurl.com/vakbcqw/).)

As expected, Guaidó had no problem entering the international airport, just as had happened last year. At that time his departure via Colombia was organized by the Colombian government and the paramilitary group, Los Rastrojos. He entered again through regular migratory channels.

This self-appointed “president” arrived with his narrative going full blast after his international trip through Colombia, several European countries, Canada and the United States. It was on the last stop,

particularly in Washington, D.C., that he got the photo opportunities which the pro-coup opposition [known as “golpistas”] had hoped for: bipartisan applause at the State of the Union address in Congress and a meeting with President Donald Trump.

**Small turnout for Guaidó in Chacao**

Upon leaving the Maiquetía airport, Guaidó went to the municipality of Chacao in Caracas, one of the city’s main opposition areas, to stage an event. Attendance was small. This once again exposed the gap between the reality in Venezuela and the media fabrication which projects diplomatic support of Washington’s power structure.

Guaidó showed he was incapable of

attracting mass support — or even a moderate amount of support — despite his bombastic and triumphalist discourse. He is weighed down by his political errors, connections to corruption, disappointments and exhaustion — not just his own, but belonging to the entire opposition.

During his talk in Chacao, Guaidó announced that new steps will be taken to put pressure on the government of President Nicolás Maduro, without specifying what they will be: “There are things we will have to say when the time is ripe [...] the steps to apply pressure will only increase, no matter how controversial they are.”

Guaidó called for unity among the different sectors of the opposition. This is a

*Continued on page 11*



# Report from Puerto Rico

## Part 2 PROMESA and earthquakes

On Jan. 8, *Workers World* reporter Phebe Eckfeldt interviewed Alberto Barreto Cardona, a leading member of Partido Mundo Obrero/Workers World Party. Barreto spoke about his recent travels from Jan. 1 to 28 in his home island of Puerto Rico.

The southern coast of Puerto Rico was the epicenter of a 6.4 magnitude earthquake on Jan. 7. The same area of the island was devastated by a 5.9 quake on Jan. 11, with a 5.0 magnitude quake hitting the area on Feb. 4. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, between Dec. 28 and Jan. 15, Puerto Rico suffered over 1,280 earthquakes, with more than two dozen with a magnitude of 4.5 or greater.

The U.S. Congress passed the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA) on July 30, 2016. It was designed by U.S. federal law, relying on the “Territorial Clause” of the U.S. Constitution, to restructure the Puerto Rican government’s massive debt for the benefit of U.S. banks.

The U.S. government appointed members of the dictatorial Fiscal Control Board who imposed financial and political control over Puerto Rico. The board implemented a draconian austerity plan, eliminating essential services, such as medical care, schools, workers’ protections, cutting pensions and reducing the minimum wage for youth. It barred Puerto Rico from receiving protection under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code or from negotiating with debt holders.

**Workers World:** Tell us about the relation between the earthquakes, the people and the overall economic situation in Puerto Rico.

**Alberto Barreto Cardona:** There is a lot of resilience in Puerto Rico. In some way, people were trained by the experience of [Hurricane] Maria [in 2017]. They know that if they want to be taken care of, we only can depend on ourselves. If the government helps, OK, but we cannot put our hope in the government.

Since Maria, the colonial government has been very neglectful. Also, outbursts of racism have come from the U.S., particularly from Trump who has neglected Puerto Rico.

### Washington’s contempt, colonial government’s neglect

The reality is that the lack of governmental assistance is an outcome of colonialism and class. This is because most of the oligarchs who are Puerto Ricans are more concerned about sustaining their power than with helping people. So the importance here is the capacity of people — not only to organize themselves but to intervene in their own community.

It is important to acknowledge the racism that we have experienced. Also, Trump’s lack of intelligence is obvious. During an interview, he said the worst type of Mexicans are Puerto Ricans! He is not going to support any [disaster] assistance to Puerto Rico now. That is not a surprise to us because we know how he feels about the Latinxs at the border and the [im/migrant] children he keeps in jail.

So we are not putting a lot of hope in the U.S. government trying to help the infrastructure in Puerto Rico. And the colonial elite all belong to the Republican Party.



Alberto Barreto in San Juan, Puerto Rico, at a demonstration against colonialist government, Jan. 20.

Even Puerto Rico’s representative in Washington is part of Trump’s reelection [campaign]. We don’t have a lot of faith in the government intervening in [our] situation.

It is important to understand that at the same time this [crisis] is happening, [the government has] not relieved us from what they call “our financial obligation” to pay the debt. So on the issue of the debt, the infrastructure was already bad even before Maria because it had been neglected for years. Then Maria happened. And then these earthquakes. But the context is the demand for Puerto Rico to pay these loans, so they keep increasing all kinds of taxes. They tax people everywhere for any little thing.

We have a country that is depopulating. It is like a big gentrification project in Puerto Rico on a large scale produced by capitalism. It is produced by the reality that we cannot offer our youth jobs. So what you may have in Puerto Rico is an island of people of a certain age, of elderly people who are not part of the productive process. They have retired. They are not working anymore. Our youth are migrating to the U.S. Every time we have a climatic event, there is more [migration].

### U.S. investors grab land, displace residents

Thousands of people left [the island] as a result of this last earthquake [in January], based on their fear that the south of Puerto Rico will continue shaking. They are scared and they are coming this way. So we have the depopulation of Puerto Rico, and then we also have capitalist opportunists from this country moving in and buying land in Vieques [and] in Culebra. All the beautiful places in Puerto Rico are being bought by U.S. investors.

If you look at Puerto Rico and the example of Vieques, think about gentrification on a large scale — how people are being pushed out of Puerto Rico, and the population is being replaced by new landowners and investors from the U.S. These investors are being given tax exemptions, but they keep taxing the Puerto Rican people. In reality, unless we have control over the life and land of Puerto Rico, and unless we become an independent country and

achieve self-determination, we will not be able to correct this situation.

We know we cannot depend on anyone other than ourselves. Hopefully, out of this experience, we can consolidate a major movement for independence. We notice that whenever there is pain and sorrow, people find ways of collaborating and connecting with each other, even when there are differences. I am talking about those among the left.

### PROMESA: Puerto Rican people pay ...

**WW:** Would you talk about PROMESA?

**ABC:** PROMESA is not [like] any other thing when talking about austerity. In capitalist production, austerity [is making the] people pay. That is what I mean. [The government] cuts services and closes schools. In Puerto Rico, a lot of schools have been closed because [the government] is trying to reduce costs to pay this loan that [it] took out to maintain the economy. In Puerto Rico, the structure of production is disjointed internally.

We don’t decide the productive process. That is decided by a foreign class who do not live in Puerto Rico. Whatever investments they put into the economy [are] not in response to Puerto Rico’s productive needs. All money made in Puerto Rico is transferred to banks in the U.S. That money will never reenter Puerto Rico’s economy to affect the quality of life of the people.

For many years Puerto Rico’s government took out all kinds of loans because that is what colonialism is. It is a dependent structure of production. It is a dependent country which depends a lot on the loans that the U.S. gives to Puerto Rico’s government. But there is so much governmental corruption in Puerto Rico. All kinds of politicians have legal cases in court.

### ... and Wall Street profits

So PROMESA means: “Let the people of Puerto Rico pay by budget cuts on services — in medicine, schooling, housing, food stamps (we expect a major cut in food stamps) and welfare — so we can pay Wall Street. That is what PROMESA is. It’s about paying Wall Street — applying cuts in [services to sustain] human life, closing hospitals. We do not have a hospital in Vieques. A lot of people are dying there. People are being affected by the lack of medical care.

At the same time what happens when you have an economic crisis like Puerto Rico is there is migration of the Puerto Rico intelligentsia. Doctors, orthopedic surgeons are leaving the island. They find other jobs in Florida. They feel like they cannot survive financially, and so they are leaving the island. College graduates are leaving the island. So less productive capacity is created by colonialism because people are migrating to the U.S.

**WW:** Were left groups organizing there after the earthquakes?

**ABC:** When I went there, nobody had labels or any way of identifying whether they were from the left, center or right. That is exactly how we want it because it is about community. It is about finding the strength of community and for the community to learn that [is] the only way they can sustain themselves around the contradictions of colonialism, poverty and climate change. Climate change also has to do with capitalism. You cannot separate climate change from how the capitalists profit from abusing nature. That cannot be disconnected.

### Self-determination and independence

We don’t want earthquakes. But whenever there is a major tragedy on the island, we keep discovering we all need to depend on each other because the oligarchs and the colonial government are just interested in sustaining colonialism and are not for self-determination and independence. But that is the only way we will have control of our island or our future and our destiny.

I can’t wait to go back there permanently. I want to be part of this. I want to be part of what I see — an embryonic mass organization emerging that will translate into a true revolutionary path. I could see it. I could feel it. And it will be so broad. All these different organizations — lesbian, gay, people who advocate for identity politics, Taino people, Afro Puerto Ricans — are linking with each other and finding a common enemy: U.S. imperialism. □

## Guaidó returns to Venezuela

*Continued from page 10*

key goal in a scenario where the splits have multiplied among and within the opposition parties. Above all, there are differences over the roadmap to be followed because a growing opposition sector no longer recognizes Guaidó as the so-called “president” or even as a leader.

### U.S. connives, props up Guaidó

The next few days will be important for the Guaidó strategy which aims to connect the international hype with national issues and to generate a scenario of mass mobilizations. Guaidó has been incapable of doing that for almost the entire last year, a situation that has been aggravated by the loss of his presidency of the National Assembly in early January of this year.

It was largely because of that legislative defeat that the

United States created Guaidó’s international roadshow in an attempt to relegitimize him and indicate to the pro-coup sector of the opposition what the next steps will be to try to overthrow President Maduro — or if that’s not achieved — to change the current correlation of forces.

In the meantime, discussions are progressing between the Maduro government and increasingly broad sectors of the opposition — with international support, such as Russia expressed with the visit of Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov [on Feb. 7] — to go forward with the National Assembly elections to be held this year.

It is not yet known when elections will occur or when, prior to that, a new National Electoral Council will be formed. The United States has already announced that it will not recognize that election and will seek to escalate the pressure to overthrow the Maduro government. □





FOTO: FELICIA METTLER

Un camión volcado que transportaba salmuera cerca de Coolville, Ohio, 2017.

## ‘Fracking’

# La ‘gran mentira’ sobre desechos tóxicos

Por Betsey Piette  
Filadelfia

La fracturación hidráulica, conocida como “fracking”, es el proceso de forzar el agua cargada de productos químicos en formaciones de lutitas subterráneas para extraer gas natural y petróleo. Esta práctica se intensificó a principios de la década de 2000.

Cuando las comunidades afectadas negativamente por el fracking protestaron, la industria energética lanzó campañas publicitarias masivas para promover el gas natural obtenido por este proceso como la “energía más limpia” y promocionó su seguridad. Los ejecutivos de la industria ridículamente lo etiquetaron como tecnología “verde”.

Las compañías de energía basaron sus argumentos en comparaciones con el carbón y la energía nuclear. Desestimaron las preocupaciones de los científicos de que el gas metano liberado por el fracking era un gas de efecto invernadero más dañino que el dióxido de carbono relacionado con el calentamiento global. Los perforadores afirmaron que la contaminación del agua del pozo era “natural”.

A pesar de las voces que advirtieron que este era otro esquema fraudulento, pero lucrativo, el desarrollo global de la perforación de combustibles fósiles “no convencionales” provocó un frenesí en Wall Street en 2014. En ese momento, la prohibición de Washington de exportar gas y petróleo de los EE. UU. causó que muchos analistas de la industria se preguntan si las ventas nacionales de petróleo y gas fracturado generaron ganancias suficientes para compensar el costo de asegurar los arrendamientos de tierras y pagar el fracking.

El gobierno de Obama salvó a la industria al revertir algunas prohibiciones contra la exportación de gas y petróleo de Estados Unidos. De repente, se apresuró a crear oleoductos e instalaciones para acomodar la exportación al exterior, lo que

genera mayores ganancias que las ganancias nacionales.

Para 2016, el fracking se usó en dos tercios de todos los pozos nuevos, informó la Administración de Información Energética. Había 1 millón de pozos activos de petróleo o gas natural en 33 estados.

La administración Trump permitió a la industria energética expandir el uso del fracking al levantar las restricciones a la exportación. El resultado fue un aumento del 300 por ciento en los permisos de perforación. La reversión de las protecciones ambientales por parte de Trump benefició directamente a esta industria, que ya estaba muy poco regulada.

Para 2017, la producción de petróleo de EE.UU. a partir del fracking creció a alrededor de 9,6 millones de barriles por día, casi el doble que la década anterior. La fracturación hidráulica permitió a EE.UU. convertirse en el mayor productor de petróleo y gas del mundo, con una producción de gas natural que aumentó en un 70 por ciento entre 2005 y 2018. Sin embargo, las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero también aumentaron en un 13 por ciento en solo dos años, de 2016 a 2018.

### Un billón de galones de aguas residuales al año

El proceso de fracking implica el uso de 2 millones a 8 millones de galones de agua por pozo, dependiendo de la formación de roca. El agua se mezcla con productos químicos que a menudo son tóxicos, incluso cancerígenos. Las empresas con frecuencia se niegan a revelar el contenido de estos productos químicos, alegando que son “secretos comerciales”.

A medida que el gas natural fluye hacia la superficie, trae aguas residuales, que contienen sales y productos químicos, y también materiales radiactivos que ocurren naturalmente en formaciones subterráneas. Etiquetada como “salmuera” por la industria, estas aguas residuales a

menudo contienen altos niveles del elemento químico Radio.

El fracking produce casi 1 billón (millón de millones) de galones de aguas residuales tóxicas cada año. En enero, la revista Rolling Stone informó sobre una investigación que muestra que este líquido tóxico está enfermando a los trabajadores y está propagando la contaminación en los Estados Unidos.

Entre los trabajadores más afectados se encuentran los camioneros a quienes se les paga para que retiren la salmuera. A menudo, sin saberlo, estos conductores de camiones cisterna transportan “cargas calientes” que promedian alrededor de 9.300 picocuries de radio por litro y pueden alcanzar hasta 28.500 picocuries.

El radio, que es abundante en salmuera, es tan peligroso que está sujeto a restricciones estrictas, incluso en sitios de desechos peligrosos. Debido a que el radio contiene los carcinógenos radio-226 y radio-228, la Comisión Reguladora Nuclear requiere que la descarga industrial permanezca por debajo de 60 picocuries por litro de cada uno.

La película documental “Gaslands”, dirigida por el ambientalista Josh Fox y lanzada en 2010, se centra en el impacto del fracking en varios estados. Explica que una inyección de fracking producirá de 200 a 300 camiones cisterna de desechos tóxicos y radiactivos. Cada sitio de pozo industrial contiene docenas de almohadillas de superficie que contienen cada uno 20 o más pozos. La fracturación hidráulica en un solo sitio de pozo puede requerir de 38.400 a 172.800 viajes de camiones cisterna durante su vida útil.

Los conductores rara vez reciben ropa protectora, y los derrames de petroleos son comunes. El Departamento de Transporte exige que los camiones que transportan materiales radiactivos estén claramente designados con carteles que contengan un símbolo de radiactividad. Sin embargo, la industria ignora esta

regulación, ya que las señales de advertencia rara vez se muestran en los camiones que transportan salmuera.

### La industria energética califica la salmuera tóxica como ‘segura’

Al afirmar que la salmuera es “completamente segura”, las compañías de energía han inventado muchos métodos para deshacerse de esta mezcla peligrosa y mortal.

Una práctica común en Pensilvania era verter la salmuera directamente en los ríos cercanos hasta que quedara expuesta cuando los centros de filtración de aguas residuales cerca de Filadelfia y Pittsburgh informaron una corrosión extensa en las tuberías de sus sistemas. Luego fue prohibido.

Otro método de eliminación cada vez más común es bombear millones de galones de salmuera a los pozos de inyección. Se ha demostrado que esta práctica puede provocar terremotos dañinos en áreas cercanas a los pozos.

Quizás la práctica industrial más insidiosa ha sido ofrecer salmuera gratuita a los estados y municipios rurales para su uso a lo largo de las carreteras como deshielo invernal y para el control del polvo en carreteras sin pavimentar. Esta forma de “eliminar” depósitos de salmuera de alta radiactividad en el suelo donde permanecerá para siempre, poniendo en peligro las comunidades cercanas. ¡Sin embargo, esta práctica es legal en 13 estados!

Los consumidores que compren una jarra turquesa de deshielo líquido AquaSalina en su ferretería local pueden esparcir salmuera con niveles de radio de aproximadamente 2.500 picocuries por litro en su patio, acera o camino de entrada. La industria ha designado a sabiendas esta eliminación comercial de salmuera cancerígena como “uso beneficioso”. ¡Este desecho radiactivo embotellado está incluso etiquetado como “seguro para el medio ambiente y las mascotas”! □

## MUNDO OBRERO

### editorial

Un extraño momento de verdad pública ocurrió en el vil discurso del 4 de febrero de Trump sobre el Estado de la Unión cuando los dos partidos estadounidenses que representan a la clase dominante, aparentemente hostiles entre sí en muchos otros temas, se unieron.

Como informó el 5 de febrero el periódico The New York Times: “En uno de los pocos momentos bipartidistas de la noche, republicanos y demócratas se pusieron de pie para aplaudir al Sr. [Juan] Guaidó”, a quien Trump presentó como “el presidente de Venezuela”.

Esta fue una noche en que los demócratas obtuvieron la luz verde de sus líderes para abuchear a los acusados pero absolvieron a Trump, y cuando los miembros del “Escuadrón” se mantuvieron alejados o se marcharon. Después del Estado de la Unión, la presidenta de la Cámara de Representantes, Nancy Pelosi, incluso rompió una copia del discurso en la cara de Trump.

# Venezuela, Trump y los demócratas

Pero en la presentación de Guaidó por parte de Trump, la mayoría de los demócratas se pusieron de pie y aplaudieron al autodenominado no líder venezolano.

Si se necesitaba una nueva lección para demostrar que, sí, los líderes del Partido Demócrata representan el imperialismo vicioso y opresivo de los Estados Unidos, ahí estaba la prueba.

La ironía es que, mientras que el traidor venezolano Guaidó cuenta con el respaldo de la Casa Blanca, el Departamento de Estado, la CIA y el liderazgo del Partido Demócrata, prácticamente no tiene apoyo en Venezuela, ni siquiera dentro de la derecha venezolana.

Guaidó era poco conocido fuera de su distrito local hace un año cuando, con el aliento de Trump, Mike Pence y otros gángsters imperialistas estadounidenses, adquirió suficiente arrogancia para designarse presidente de Venezuela. Durante el año, con el respaldo de Estados Unidos, intentó derrocar al presidente venezolano electo, Nicolás Maduro, no menos de cinco veces.

Cada vez que Guaidó fallaba porque solo contaba con el respaldo de fuera de Venezuela. Mientras tanto, el gobierno revolucionario bolivariano en Caracas, liderado por Maduro, tenía la lealtad del pueblo venezolano en general, incluso después de años del estricto bloqueo económico de Estados Unidos. El gobierno también tenía la lealtad de las fuerzas armadas y había movilizizado y entrenado a una milicia popular.

Los fracasos de Guaidó le hicieron perder el respaldo que tenía hace un año de los capitalistas venezolanos. En una votación en la Asamblea Nacional de Venezuela este enero, los diversos partidos derechistas y antirrevolucionarios en realidad votaron para destituir a Guaidó y reemplazarlo como jefe de la Asamblea.

Aunque Guaidó sea inútil como líder político, todavía representa una amenaza para los venezolanos porque cuenta con el respaldo de Washington y otras capitales reaccionarias en América Latina y Europa.

Eso significa que los antiimperialistas, contra la guerra y cualquier pueblo

progresista en los Estados Unidos tienen el deber de defender al gobierno venezolano existente.

Ahora hay una oportunidad en los Estados Unidos para defender a Venezuela defendiendo a los Protectores de la Embajada de Venezuela. Son activistas políticos que ocuparon la Embajada de Venezuela en Washington la primavera pasada en solidaridad con el pueblo venezolano. Pudieron retrasar la toma de posesión de la embajada por la pandilla de Guaidó.

Cuatro de los protectores, Kevin Zeese, Margaret Flowers, Adrienne Pine y David Paul, enfrentan un año de prisión y multas de \$100.000 por sus valientes acciones legales. Su juicio comenzó el 11 de febrero en Washington. Workers World anima a todos los que pueden acudir a los tribunales para apoyarlos.

*16 de febrero: El juicio del 11 de febrero terminó en un juicio nulo. Para obtener más información sobre cómo ayudar a defender a los protectores, consulte [defendembassyprotectors.org](http://defendembassyprotectors.org).*