Anti-LGBTQ2S+ bigotry behind yet another fatal hate crime

Lauri Carleton, a clothing store owner in Cedar Glen, California, and a staunch ally of the LGBTQ2S+ community, was murdered in cold blood on August 18. Her killer, later fatally shot by sheriff’s deputies, subjected Carleton to homophobic slurs before shooting her and had posted anti-LGBTQ2S+ content on social media.

The reaction of this small town west of Los Angeles has been one of shock and disbelief but also anger, especially in the LGBTQ2S+ community.

But this violent hate crime against an ally did not occur in isolation. At least 15 transgender and gender non-conforming people have been murdered so far in 2023, the majority trans women of color. Mass shootings at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando in 2016 and Club Q in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 2022, the tragedy of Carleton, have been natural was declared its opposite.”

The spate of bigoted legislation has fomented the hatred behind the tragic deaths of Carleton, of trans and gender non-conforming people, and of other members and allies of the LGBTQ2S+ community. That is the context in which the uptick in hate crimes has to be viewed.

But what is the root of those many bills, which range from bathroom bans to bans on gender-affirming care for minors to “Don’t say gay” bills and more? Right-wing Republicans, some of them outright fascists, are pushing the bills. Did they just appear from out of nowhere?

The extreme right wing of the capitalist class is just that — a wing of the capitalist class. They are but the most extreme representation of the patriarchal value system, which includes anti-LGBTQ2S+ bigotry, that is endemic to class society.

As Leslie Feinberg explained in 1992 in "Transgender Liberation, a movement whose time has come": "In reality it was the rise of private property, the male-dominated family and class divisions [that] led to narrowing what was considered acceptable self-expression. What had been natural was declared its opposite." To put an end to hate-filled acts of violence against the LGBTQ2S+ community and allies like Lauri Carleton, we must get rid of the capitalist system that spawns them. □

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Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite! workers.org  Vol. 65, No. 35  August 31, 2023  $1

Protect Wet’suwet’en land!

By Will Hodgkinson

New details have emerged about the militarized campaign of state and corporate persecution targeting land defenders of the Wet’suwet’en First Nation in so-called Canada. The third annual Peace and Unity Summit was held August 15-16 in Gidimt’en Clan territory, home of the Wet’suwet’en First Nation.

Wet’suwet’en leaders detailed how private security operatives and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) have attacked and terrorized Indigenous activists using tactics taken directly from a U.S. counterinsurgency “playbook” written by David Petraeus, retired U.S. Army general and an architect of U.S. invasions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

For over a decade, the Wet’suwet’en First Nation has resisted the Coastal GasLink Pipeline project, which would devastate the yintah, the Wet’suwet’en unceded homeland. Coastal GasLink is a partnership between the Canadian fossil fuel company TC Energy and the private equity giant Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. (KKR), which bought a 65% stake in the project in 2019.

In 2018, Coastal GasLink got an injunction against protesters, allowing Carleton to hoist a Pride flag outside her store. The killer, later fatally shot by sheriff’s deputies, subjected Carleton to homophobic slurs before shooting her and had posted anti-LGBTQ2S+ content on social media.

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Continued on page 4


Police, abetted by private security guards, regularly harass land defenders, following them, conducting traffic stops, and searching their cabins — often in the middle of the night. One land defender reported receiving a rape threat via a CB radio from a Coastal GasLink employee, which police did nothing to investigate.

Such violence goes hand-in-hand with pipeline projects such as Coastal GasLink, which directly contribute to the ongoing epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW). “Man camps” that house pipeline employees have become centers of human trafficking, sexual violence, and murder, where thousands of Indigenous women have disappeared or been killed. In Canada, the homicide rate for Indigenous women is at least six times higher than for non-Indigenous women. (tinyurl.com/yeyhxmu)

“We absolutely won’t stand down; we have every right to be here,” said land defender Suelydo’ Molly Wickham, a spokesperson for the Gidimt’en Clan. “This is an occupation of our land. Our ancestors have been here for thousands of years.”
The significance of the 1963 March on Washington

The observation of the 60th anniversary of the historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom took place Aug. 26. On Aug. 28, 1963, an estimated 250,000 black and white protesters traveled from all over the country, mainly on buses and trains, to rally to the Lincoln Memorial in solidarity with the Civil Rights struggle in the South demanding an end to racist segregation and violence.

The march also linked the struggle for racial equality with economic justice, especially decent paying jobs for Black communities. The United Auto Workers had a visible presence at the march.

This massive outpouring occurred months after Birmingham, Alabama’s notorious, fascist Police Safety Commissioner, Bull Connor, unleashed vicious police dogs and ordered his men to fire hoses on a May 3, 1963, march of hundreds of black school children.

The historic march happened one month before the horrific bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church by the Ku Klux Klan, also in Birmingham — aka “Bombingham” — that killed four young black girls during their Bible study.

While the Washington march is mainly famous for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s iconic “I have a dream” speech, then President John F. Kennedy attempted to sabotage the event with his behind-the-scenes violence-baiting of the march. In June of 1963, Kennedy met with six prominent Civil Rights leaders, including King, hoping to convince them to cancel the march. Fortunately, he did not succeed.

The LGBTIQ+ question loomed large over whether the march would take place due to the pivotal role played by Civil Rights leader Bayard Rustin. Rustin was a conscientious objector as a Quaker during World War II, and he was gay. Some of the march organizers expressed concern that if Rustin’s antiwar stance and especially his sexual orientation became public, it would hurt the outcome of the march. But due to the principled support of the Black labor leader A. Philip Randolph and Dr. King, Rustin maintained his prominent organizing role.

There were other little known but important behind-the-scenes issues, including the lack of leadership roles for Black women activists. That would not happen today.

However, despite these internal and external political issues, this historic march became an important milestone in helping to advance the legal struggle for bourgeois democratic rights for Black people that began post-Civil War and continued post-Reconstruction.

And that struggle continues today in various forms, from Black Lives Matter to the just demand for reparations.

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the ever-receding quest for ever-greener pastures.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on immigrants, Muslims, LGBTQIQ+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

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

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should be distributed to satisfy and plan for the common good, not private profit. The working class is the only class that can lead a socialist revolution to build a world free of capitalism and imperialism.

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

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‘Stop Cop City’ solidarity protest in New York City

By Richie Merino

A solidarity protest occurred in New York City on Aug. 26 against the construction of “Cop City” in Atlanta, and to voice opposition to the Atlanta police department’s hiring event that day. The demonstration took place outside the New York Hilton hotel, as police recruiters were inside.

Atlanta police came to recruit New Yorkers to become cops to suppress the Stop Cop City movement which opposes the construction of a $90 million police training facility in Atlanta, built over the Weelaunee Forest — a land once inhabited by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation before their forced displacement. The cops label anti-Cop City protesters “outside agitators,” but they are the real “outside agitators” — recruiting people from out of state to help quash the popular movement of tens of thousands of Georgia residents.

The protest was organized by the Weelaunee Defense Society NYC, the Black Alliance for Peace, the Palestinian Youth Movement and Dare to Struggle, bringing together a diverse coalition of groups united in their opposition to the project.

The protesters made their stance clear with chants of “Cop City will never be built!” and “APD out of NYC!” rejecting not only the construction of the police training facility but also condemning the fascist violence by Georgia State Patrol officers and Atlanta police.

State troopers murdered forest defender Manuel “Tortuguita” Terán in the Weelaunee forest on Jan. 18. (NPR, March 11)

The protest attracted dozens of participants who shared a common goal: to stop the construction of Cop City and advocate for alternative approaches to community safety. They faced off with New York City police and carried signs and banners highlighting their rejection of Atlanta’s “killer cops” and the need for investment in community resources rather than a costly and unnecessary police training facility.

— Story by Richie Merino

Autoworkers ‘ready to rumble’

By Martha Grevatt

Detroit

United Auto Workers International President Shawn Fain, speaking to the UAW rank and file on Facebook live August 24, announced the results of a membership vote to authorize a strike against Ford, General Motors and Stellantis: 97% in favor of striking, Some locals voted 99% and a few even 100% to support a walkout if the companies don’t agree to an acceptable contract by Sept. 14, when the current contracts expire.

A vote of 90% or more in favor of striking is not unusual in the UAW during contract negotiations; it’s the rule rather than the exception. What makes this vote different is that the new, democratically elected International Executive Board has spent the past few months preparing the membership to take on the auto companies. There have been “red shirt Wednesdays,” in-plant and parking lot meetings and, most recently, “practice pickets.”

Hundreds of rank-and-file autoworkers attended an Aug. 20 Solidarity Rally at UAW Region 1 headquarters. Fain and other UAW members, along with workers on the plant floor, blasted the exorbitant corporate profits and executive salaries, putting forward demands for big pay increases, restoration of the cost-of-living allowance, elimination of pay and benefit tiers, a raise in retiree pensions, and a shorter work week with no cut in pay.

In conclusion Fain asked the question, “Are you ready to rumble?”

The crowd roared, clapped and stomped its feet in agreement. Be ready, come Sept. 15, to join a UAW picket line near you.

Martha Grevatt is a retired Stellantis worker who served on the executive board of UAW Local 869.

Rally for Puerto Rico’s struggle for independence

By Richie Merino

New York City

A rally took place Aug. 26 in front of the U.S. military recruiting station in Times Square in New York City, to demand an end to U.S. colonization in Puerto Rico. The chosen location aimed to raise awareness of the ongoing struggle faced by the people of Puerto Rico against U.S. imperialism, colonization and military occupation.

This demonstration also commemorated 125 years of resistance by the Puerto Rican people, who continue to fight against gentrification, as well as the neoliberal privatization of their public beaches, schools, energy grid, and water resources.

Crows gathered and were educated on La Junta, the fiscal control board composed of wealthy Wall Street capitalists that dictates the austerity-driven economic policies in Puerto Rico.

The rally, which was organized by A Call to Action on Puerto Rico, also honored the memory of Puerto Rican Independienta Franky Velgara Valentín, who sadly passed away on Aug. 25, 2022. Various organizations were represented at the gathering, including Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño, Partido Nacionalista de Puerto Rico (Juntas NY y NJ), Jericho Movement, and Workers World Party.

Rallies will continue in the coming months to mobilize support and strengthen the movement to end the U.S. colonization of Puerto Rico. The ultimate goal is to achieve independence and sovereignty for the people of Puerto Rico. Their rights and aspirations will be respected once the U.S. is booted from the island.

Puerto Rico will be free! Throw the Yanquis to the sea! 😎

— Story and photos by Richie Merino

Protesters in New York demand an end to U.S./French domination in West Africa

By Richie Merino


Speakers passionately demanded the withdrawal of U.S. and French troops from West Africa and the closure of military bases in Niger. Their powerful voices highlighted the U.S. and Europe’s ongoing colonial exploitation of Africa’s rich natural resources.

With emphasis on the dire consequences of this criminal domination, the speakers shed light on the harsh living conditions faced by the masses of people in Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and other West African nations, where extreme poverty and the lack of basic necessities persist. The protesters united against U.S. and French imperialism, advocating for self-determination for the continent.

— Story and photos by Richie Merino
Health care workers

COVID-19 cases are on the rise again, and health care workers have not forgotten how hospital bosses failed them during the height of the pandemic. Multiple strikes and labor actions are still happening across the U.S.

Respiratory therapists at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center have joined the Ohio Nurses Association, affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers. The vote in early August was 101 to 19, showing the overwhelming support of respiratory therapists for their right to collective bargaining. They join over 190,000 nurses across Ohio who belong to the ONA.

“This is a big step forward in building solidarity in the healthcare workforce to improve working conditions and quality care for our patients,” said Ohio State University Nurses Organization President Rick Lucas, RN. (Ohio Nurses Association, Aug. 9) OSUNO is the Ohio State University branch of the ONA.

In New Jersey, nurses at the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital began a strike on August 19 and 20. The RWJ nurses are members of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 4-200. They voted down a hospital contract proposal and issued a 10-day strike notice. Nurses had been striking at the top of the nurses’ list of demands.

Kelsey Khan is one of the striking nurses. She describes an average day in the life of a staff nurse at RWJ, where she was assigned six patients, including an elderly confused person at risk of falling; a patient receiving a blood transfusion, which requires careful monitoring; a COVID-19 patient whose oxygen levels were dropping; a patient who needed blood drawn immediately; and a patient who was frustrated because they hadn’t been cleared to go home.

According to Khan: “The first contract proposal was voted down by a striking 96% of members. This is because the proposal had no action plan to safely staff units based on acuity (how sick patients are) and included a contracting ratio altogether. Nurses refused to accept an offer that prioritized profits over our patients.” (labornotes.org, Aug. 29)

Graduate students

After nine months of negotiating and a five-month strike, University of Michigan graduate students have proven that solidarity and withholding labor are effective in defeating the capitalists in the university administration. In April, a judge rejected the university’s attempts to force the graduate students into Graduate Employees Organization (GEO) to end their strike. The strike continued through the summer until the university capitulated, and the union won a contract that the union leadership is calling historic.

The new agreement includes a 20% raise over three years for graduate student instructors on the Ann Arbor main campus, while those on UM’s Dearborn campus get a 10.5% increase. Graduate student instructors on the Ann Arbor main campus, while those on UM’s Dearborn campus get a 10.5% increase.

High Tech, Low Pay


Low-Wage Capitalism

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

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Capitalism at a Dead End

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

High Tech, Low Pay

A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class

Samuel Marcy with an updated introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of Low Wage Capitalism.

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Protect Wet’suwet’en land!

Continued from page 1 years, and they think they can come in here and harass us, intimidate us, fine us, jail us to the point that we’re going to get off our own land? They’re trying to remove us like they always have from our own territories.” (Ricochet Media, May 8, 2022)

As Wet’suwet’en leaders described at the Summit, many of these brutal tactics come from “Insurgencies and Countering the Summit, many of these brutal tactics come from “Insurgencies and Countering the Summit, many of these brutal tactics come from “Insurgencies and Countering the Summit, many of these brutal tactics come from “Insurgencies and Countering the Summit, many of these brutal tactics come from “Insurgencies and Countering the Summit, many of these brutal tactics come from “Insurgencies and Countering the Summit, many of these brutal tactics come from “Insurgencies and Countering the Summit, many of these brutal tactics come from “Insurgencies and Countering the Summit, many of these brutal tactics come from “Insurgencies and Countering the Summit, many of these brutal tactics come from “Insurgencies and Countering the Summit, many of these brutal tactics come from “Insurgencies and Countering the Summit, many of these brutal tactics come from “Insurgencies and Countering the 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