

Unarmed Black victim of police shooting to face trial

By Tristen Schmidt and Terri Kay
San Francisco

A three-day, pre-trial hearing here ended with the judge's decision to permit multiple felony charges to proceed to trial against Sean Moore, a 43-year-old Black man with mental health needs, who was the unarmed victim of a police shooting. On Jan. 6, Moore was confronted on the steps of his home by San Francisco police officers Kenneth Cha and Colin Patino, after a noise complaint from a neighbor.

Officer Cha first pepper sprayed and then shot Moore twice, seriously wounding him. Moore was initially hospitalized, but is now being held in jail on \$100,000 bail. Public defender Jeff Adachi said in a news conference: "This is a situation that could have and should have been avoided. This is a situation where Mr. Moore did not have to be shot. If the officers had used de-escalation techniques, they could have gone home." (San Francisco Chronicle, Jan. 18)

At the beginning of last week's pre-trial hearing, Moore's attorney, public defender Brian Pearlman, appealed to the judge as Moore was brought into the courtroom in jailhouse orange, shackled and in chains. Moore's family, neighbors and a number of community supporters were present in the courtroom, along with members of the press.

Pearlman told the judge he had requested that Moore be allowed to appear in street clothes. Pearlman also stated that there had been no history of outbursts to necessitate the shackles. The judge claimed since no jury was present in the pre-trial, it was all allowable. He only consented to release one of Moore's wrists from the shackles so that he could write and communicate to his attorney.

The district attorney tried to claim that neither officer was required to testify, as they were "victims" and protected from testimony under a related victim protection statute. The judge denied their coverage as "victims" and the officers will be required to testify at Moore's trial. It was established during the pre-trial that the two officers each had had about two years of experience and neither had received any de-escalation training.

The judge also agreed with Pearlman's argument that the officers had no justification to attempt arrest when they first approached, as neither had witnessed the claimed noise violation reported by Moore's neighbor, for which the neighbor had not filed a citizen's arrest.

Pearlman, attempting to get the charges dropped, also presented two cases related to rights of people in their own homes, one validating that a front porch is part of a person's home (U.S. v. London) and another establishing that police can seek voluntary interviews as long as they don't demand egress (People v. Poole). The judge held that despite these rights and the lack of justification for the attempted arrest in the first place, there were enough questions about the following events to allow the charges to be heard by a jury. □



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Vol. 59, No. 11 • March 16, 2017
Closing date: March 14, 2017

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$30; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.
New York, N.Y. 10011.

From health care to war in Asia

Trump attacks at home and abroad

By Fred Goldstein

The authoritarian Trump clique in the White House — Steve Bannon, Jared Kushner, Steven Miller and Donald Trump himself — are making an end run around traditional capitalist government institutions. They are trying to shape policy and push it far to the right on all fronts without the input of the traditional capitalist establishment.

Trump and Bannon are floating the conspiracy theory that the “deep state,” meaning everything from the regulatory agencies, the mainstream media, district attorneys, courts, the spy agencies, etc., are saboteurs plotting to undermine the White House. This is to clear the way for their attacks on immigrants, on medical care for the masses and on the environment, as well as their shameless giveaways to the banks, the corporations and the richest 1%.

The Trump administration and the Republican congressional caucus are planning to hand over hundreds of billions of dollars in tax cuts to the wealthy as they craft the overturn of the Affordable Care Act passed under Obama. At the same time, Washington is playing with fire in Asia, with dangerous war maneuvers and with the installation of a destabilizing and aggressive anti-missile system in south Korea.

Under the guise of repealing and replacing the ACA, the Trump administration is backing a congressional Republican plan to cut \$300 billion to \$600 billion in taxes for the rich, under the deliberately misnamed American Health Care Act. These hundreds of billions of dollars given the rich will be paid for by cuts in medical coverage for the poor, the elderly and women in general, including those with mental illness and addictions. Estimates of the number of people slated to lose their coverage range from 5 million to 15 million.

The Republicans have rushed their plan through before the Congressional Budget Office can give its assessment of the impact. House Speaker Paul Ryan and Trump fear a negative assessment and therefore have already tried to discredit the CBO in advance, denouncing it for “inaccuracies” and “exaggerations.”

While millions lose health care under Republican plan ...

The Brookings Institute, a mainstream capitalist think tank, has tried to warn the public in advance. It issued a report estimating that 15 million people or more will lose their health care over the next 10 years. Brookings used previous CBO methods and estimates for its analysis.

[As we go to press, the CBO has issued its report on the bill, which far exceeds the Brookings estimates. The bipartisan CBO estimates that in fact 14 million people will lose their health care by 2018, just one year from now. And by 2026, 24 million people will have lost their health care. The CBO also estimates that Medicaid will lose \$880 billion over 10 years under the Trump-Ryan-Price plan.]

... rich get hundreds of billions in tax breaks

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: “House Republicans’ bill to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA) would eliminate ACA taxes on wealthy individuals and insurance and drug companies and greatly expand tax-sheltering opportunities for high-income people through health savings ac-

counts (HSAs). These changes (plus several smaller provisions of the plan) would cost \$594 billion over 2017 to 2026, the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) estimates. At the same time, the plan would seek to offset the cost of these windfall tax breaks by ending the ACA’s Medicaid expansion, radically restructuring the entire Medicaid program by converting it to a per capita cap, and dramatically scaling back the subsidies that low- and moderate-income families use to purchase affordable health care, as well as other coverage changes that would undermine the health and financial security of millions of households.”

In addition the CBPP states the 400 highest-income taxpayers would get tax cuts averaging \$7 million each, adding up to \$7.8 billion a year. Millionaires would get annual tax cuts of more than \$50,000 on average by 2025.

Women’s health care on chopping block

Health care for women, especially the poor, is endangered by the provisions to defund Planned Parenthood. One in 5 U.S. women have visited a Planned Parenthood clinic for services like birth control, cancer screenings, tests and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases or pregnancy termination. And 78 percent of them have incomes under 150 percent of the poverty level.

Vox reported, “The more than \$500 million Planned Parenthood receives annually from the federal government — the funding that Republicans in Congress now want to take away — pays for specific health services, like birth control or cervical cancer screening, for people who couldn’t afford them otherwise.”

“Most of the funds (75 percent) are actually reimbursements from Medicaid, the U.S.’s public health insurance program for the poor.

“[The bill] threatens to dismantle the entire private insurance market for abortion coverage, not just public funding for abortion providers: If a woman wants a health insurance plan that will cover abortion, she (and possibly her employer) won’t be able to use tax credits to buy it under this bill.” (March 7)

ThinkProgress noted that 60 percent of Planned Parenthood’s funding comes from Medicaid and Title IX funding for preventative and primary care. “Almost 400,000 women would lose access to preventative care and up to 650,000 would have reduced preventative care within a year” without PP services, estimates the Government Accountability Office. “Research has shown that when low-income women have access to free contraception, there are significantly lower rates of unintended teen pregnancy and abortion.” (March 7)

Pentagon playing with fire in Asia

At the same time that Trump is trying to destroy health care, Washington is playing with fire on the Korean peninsula by holding two months of military maneuvers aimed at the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the People’s Republic of China.

The largest ever “war games” involve 17,000 U.S. troops and 300,000 south Korean troops, as well as advanced U.S. war-fighting equipment. Washington has said the exercises are strictly defensive. But the plans are clearly aimed at “practicing regime change.”

“U.S.-ROK [south Korean] forces will also for the first time carry the OPLAN 5015, a classified war plan signed last year that includes surgical strikes against



Northfork, W. Va., is in one of the poorest counties in the U.S. with the lowest life expectancy. It voted 74 percent for Trump and now stands to lose medical care under the Trump-Ryan-Price plan.

North Korea’s nuclear, missile and command and control facilities. It also specifically calls for ‘decapitation’ raids by Special Forces to neutralize North Korea’s senior leadership, according to press reports.” (The Diplomat, March 8) “Neutralize” means kill.

Washington and the Pentagon justify their war games by citing the DPRK’s launch of missiles into the sea off Japan. But the missiles were launched as a response to the annual war games. The DPRK is surrounded by hostile states, including imperialist Japan, U.S. puppet south Korea, and the U.S. military itself, which has 28,000 troops in south Korea and 54,000 troops in Japan, 12 U.S. bases in Hawaii, and 5,000 troops and numerous aircraft on Guam, among other places in the region.

Anti-missile system aimed at DPRK ...

To add to the provocations as the U.S.-south Korea war maneuvers were getting under way, Washington announced it had begun deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD) at Osari air base in south Korea.

THAAD is a relatively new addition to the U.S. military’s missile defense arsenal. Produced by Lockheed Martin (and priced at more than \$1 billion per system), THAAD consists of a battery of truck-launched interceptor missiles and powerful X-band radar that can detect, track and target inbound missile threats.

The decision to deploy this anti-missile system was made in 2013 and agreed to by south Korea in July 2016, but it was rushed into place for political purposes. In the meantime, there is a huge political crisis in south Korea. Months of mass demonstrations have forced the impeachment and ouster of Park Geun-hye, the reactionary president convicted on corruption charges

The masses of south Korean people are clearly opposed to the deployment of THAAD. This opposition includes Park’s likely replacement, the popular centrist-liberal Moon Jae-in. Moon favors resumption of talks with the DPRK and a return to the “sunshine policy” that aims toward reunification. So the Pentagon seized this window of time before new elections to install THAAD.

... and at China

THAAD’s powerful radar is also a threat to China because when it is pointed at the DPRK it does not stop there. It can see deep into China. The PRC government has said that whether the U.S. deployed THAAD would be a litmus test about relations.

Now that it has been deployed, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has denounced it as a provocation that will upset the “strategic equilibrium” in the

region. Wang, while expressing concern over the nuclear tests by the DPRK, gave the U.S. imperialists a clear message that the PRC will stand by the DPRK in any conflict [by] “insisting China and North Korea remained as close as ‘lips and teeth’ — an expression famously used by Mao Zedong.” (Guardian, March 6)

This phrase was used by Mao during the Korean War, when 3 million Chinese volunteers helped to repel the U.S. imperialist invaders. So the message is unambiguous.

Expanding role of generals, decline of State Department

The sudden deployment of the THAAD missile system in the midst of a militarily charged situation near China and the DPRK must be seen together with other less dramatic but significant developments.

There was the quiet deployment of 400-plus Marines to Syria to strengthen forces trying to capture the Islamic State group’s capital, Raqqa. These conventional forces are added to the hundreds of Special Forces already there. The Marines are equipped with Apache helicopters and M777 howitzers capable of firing 155mm shells, among other weapons. Their deployment represents a clear escalation of the U.S. war in Syria.

The Pentagon has escalated the war in Yemen as well. Previously the war was carried out by Saudi Arabia, with logistical and material support from the Pentagon. Recently U.S. commanders in the field have been granted new authority to conduct raids on villages and drone strikes, without prior approval from the White House.

The U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Gen. John W. Nicholson Jr., recently testified to Congress that he could use “a few thousand more troops” to break the “stalemate” in the country. (New York Times, Feb. 9)

These developments represent a major step forward in the political authority of the military high command under the Trump administration.

By contrast, Rex Tillerson, the head of the Department of State, has been kept out of meetings with heads of state by Trump, Bannon and Kushner (Trump’s son-in-law). Tillerson has had no joint appearances with Trump. His requests for assistants have been turned down. No press will be allowed on his plane on an upcoming trip to Japan, south Korea and China. And the State Department budget is to be cut by 37 percent, while the Pentagon is to get a \$54 billion increase.

Just days ago Mexico’s Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray was in Washington. “The Los Angeles Times’s Tracy Wilkinson asked State spokesperson Mark Toner what the plans were for his visit. Toner, a highly regarded career foreign service officer, apparently had no idea that a key foreign dignitary was even in the city.” (Vox, March 10) The foreign minister met with Kushner.

To be sure, while the State Department wields the so-called “soft power” of U.S. imperialism, it is a vicious enemy of the world’s people. It engineers regime change, engages in every manner of subversion against progressive governments, and uses nongovernmental organizations to promote “color revolutions.”

Nevertheless, the shift toward open military power in government under Trump is a menacing move that will expand imperialist war and intervention. □

Nurses return to work, struggle continues

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

On March 10, after a two-day strike and a three-day lockout, 370 nurses and technicians returned to their jobs at Delaware County Memorial Hospital (DCMH) in Upper Darby, Pa. Hospital executives wasted \$1.5 million on scab replacements for the week instead of coming to an agreement with the workforce of mainly women, represented by the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals (PASNAP).

Bargaining began over a year ago and has been fruitless so far. Negotiations are scheduled to resume on March 14.

Struggling for their first contract, the nurses are fighting for safe staffing levels and adequate supplies and equipment for their patients as well as fair wages, health care and pension benefits for themselves and their families. The workers say they are tired of being treated with unrelenting austerity while hospital executives wallow in high salaries and millions are spent on mergers, acquisitions and related schemes.

"We used to have five patients to one nurse on the floors. Now they're giving us up to seven and eight patients. They've also cut in half the number of nurses' aides, to just one for 20 patients," said Angela Neopolitano, a 36-year veteran ICU nurse at DCMH and president of the PASNAP nursing chapter, at a rally on the first day of the strike. "This is about patient care. We will no longer stand for



To protect their own and the public's health, these nurses need a union contract.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

the antics of Prospect. Our patients come before their profits!"

Union gains

Some 1,500 nurses and allied health professionals won a 28-day strike at Temple University Hospital in 2010, despite management's use of 850 scabs. Since then, PASNAP has become the fastest-growing union for nurses and health professionals in Pennsylvania, organizing the nurses at St. Christopher's Hospital, Einstein Hospital, Hahnemann Hospital, Crozer-Chester Medical Center (CCMC) and DCMH, all in the Philadelphia area. (pennanurses.org)

As at Delaware County this week, nurses at CCMC walked picket lines during a strike and lockout in September 2014 as scabs were brought in for those five days. They finally agreed to a four-year contract after 14 months of negotiations. The long struggle for their first PASNAP con-

tract was fought against the executives of Crozer-Keystone Health System, a network of five hospitals and clinics that includes CCMC, Taylor Hospital, Springfield Hospital, Community Hospital and DCMH, all in Delaware County, bordering Philadelphia.

That health system was bought by Prospect Medical Holdings Inc. in July 2016, months after contract negotiations had already commenced at DCMH. The sale changed the not-for-profit system to a for-profit entity.

Opponent with deep pockets

Prospect owns 18 hospitals, over 3,000 licensed beds, and a network of more than 140 clinics in Southern California, Texas, Rhode Island, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

It is a subsidiary of Leonard Green & Partners (LGP), a hedge fund that currently owns 42 companies, including BJ's Wholesale Club, J. Crew, David's Bridal, Jo-Ann Stores, Lucky Brand, Mister Car Wash, Shake Shack, Signet Jewelers, Tire Rack and the Union Square Hospitality Group. Bloomberg reports that LGP "invests in a range of industries including retail, consumer products, consumer discretionary and consumer staple product, distribution, media, consumer services, business services, aerospace and defense, financial services, industrial machinery including rotomolded agricultural tanks, etc."

LGP has raised over \$15 billion of private equity capital and has invested in 65 companies with aggregate values of

\$60.5 billion. The hedge fund's primary concern is making profits, not providing health care.

The Facebook event page of PASNAP, the nurses' group, revealed that "Prospect Medical Holdings' facilities across the country have come under critical scrutiny. Some of their hospitals have the worst possible patient satisfaction scores and are among the worst ranked in the nation. The company is under investigation by the IRS and the state of California and, despite operating hospitals in Delaware County [in the state of Pennsylvania], the hedge fund is registered in the state of Delaware and does not pay Pennsylvania corporation taxes."

While DCMH may be the nurses' most formidable foe yet, their union has never been stronger. At the rally on the first day of the strike, labor supporters included members of UNITE HERE, United Steelworkers, the Teamsters, American Federation of Teachers Local 2026, the Working Educators Caucus of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers and Upper Darby Professional Firefighters Local 2493. While Democratic U.S. Rep. Bob Brady and Upper Darby Republican Mayor Tom Micozzie spoke offering their support, they both urged PASNAP to return to the bargaining table.

DCMH is located in Upper Darby, a suburb of 83,000 people, almost a fifth of them immigrants.

If contract negotiations aren't settled quickly, the Trump administration's policies on the Affordable Care Act (ACA), immigration, labor and sweeping austerity could have a damaging effect on the outcome.

The nurses' union PASNAP has participated in rallies against cuts in the ACA and against deportations, gathering community support for the right to health care, for the rights of migrant workers and their families, and for the right of all workers to adequate working conditions, wages and benefits.

Perhaps negotiations will succeed in reaching an agreement. If not, the next battle for a union contract at DCMH may require an even larger turnout of PASNAP members, community supporters and all workers. □

Striking Rockford school worker: 'They need us'

By Rockford, Ill., Workers World Bureau

After working since July without a contract, more than 900 Rockford Public School workers from American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees locals 692, 3210 and 1275 will be going on a three-day strike March 15-17. These locals represent the school paraprofessionals, nutritionists and bus drivers, respectively.

Workers World sat down with Pamela Hillyer, an AFSCME Local 692 paraprofessional worker, to hear from the rank and file about what led to the vote for a strike and what's at stake for the workers.

Workers World: What has the school district done to the workers?

Pamela Hillyer: The main issue is around rising health care premiums that the school district is forcing on us, which equates to a substantial cut in our wages. The increased premiums would mean an approximately 1,145 percent rise in health care costs over the last three years, from roughly \$43 to \$544 every month. While the school district has said that they have gone "to great lengths to make sure employees came out ahead," they have instead refused to negotiate with us and insist on the drastic attack on our health care. We are already grossly underpaid skilled workers.

WW: Why did the union decide to strike?

PH: The school district has refused to compromise or even have a genuine dialogue with the union about the proposed contract. After the last negotiation meeting, where the district put forth the same contract as their supposed "best and final offer," the union knew it was time to increase pressure on the district to come to

a fair compromise.

Here is the direct quote from AFSCME on the decision: "The elected AFSCME Bargaining Committee, from the paraprofessionals [to] bus drivers and nutritionists service workers, subsequently decided to conduct a three-day strike to send a strong message to the District that the members are frustrated with the extremely harsh proposal that the District imposed on employees in violation of the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act. AFSCME has filed an unfair labor practice with the Labor Board over this violation of law."

WW: Will you continue striking if the workers' needs aren't met?

PH: The union has said they will do rolling strikes until they win a fair contract. It's the only thing that makes sense, because why would we go on strike for three days, then give up if it doesn't work immediately? We will be stuck with this contract for the next three years and struggling to afford health care.

WW: How has the school district responded to the strike?

PH: The superintendent, Ehren Jarrett, says he respects us, while at the same time demonizing us and twisting the facts in an attempt to pit the community against the union.

WW: How is the school providing services during the strike? Are they bringing in scabs?

PH: They might have the teachers take on the paraprofessionals' positions, but if they do, the teachers' union will be filing grievances. For the nutritionists, Auburn High School's administration suggested to their gifted academy program students and parents that they volunteer to give

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MEMPHIS

Cops serve McDonald's

By Chris Fry

Police, when they arrest and even shoot people, usually say they are just "upholding law and order" or "protecting private property." Sometimes they even say they are there to "serve the people."

But in this age of Boss Trump, the Memphis Police Department has dispensed with any pretenses. In answer to a civil rights lawsuit filed by the local chapter of the Fight for \$15 fast food workers, the cops stated they had "authorization from the president of McDonald's to make arrests." (theguardian.com, March 1)

The Fight for \$15 group is part of the union-supported national campaign to win an increase in the minimum wage and union rights. Since a nationwide "Day of Protest" in 2014, Memphis cops have followed organizers home after meetings, banned them from City Hall and ordered workers not to sign petitions, sometimes going behind store counters to do so.

Most of the workers participating in the Memphis Fight for \$15 campaign are Black. Cops have consistently arrested

them for violating permit regulations while waiving such requirements for white demonstrations.

They have even invited McDonald's franchise owners to join them in tailing organizers.

Despite this harassment, Memphis fast food workers are staying strong and united. Ashley Carter, a Fight for \$15 national organizing committee member and a Church's Chicken worker, told a reporter: "They're trying to stop us from speaking out, but even though it's riskier, we know we have a right to protest and we're not going to be intimidated. ... Our Fight for \$15 is changing the country and it's the Memphis Police Department that's going to have to change along with it." (theguardian.com, March 1)

Unionists know cops are not on their side. Picket lines are attacked, but scabs are protected. Union leaders are often arrested on trumped-up charges. Black and Latinx activists and progressives generally have long known that cops are the frontline in protecting big corporations' oppression and exploitation. Now the cops are admitting it. □

As prison profits soar ICE terrorizes migrants

Continued from page 1

Group, operate for-profit prisons and immigration detention centers in many states and for the federal government.

Between October 2015 and September 2016, more than 350,000 undocumented immigrants were detained — a number that will dramatically rise under Trump's crackdown.

As the Times writes, "The worse the news for immigrants and their lawyers, the better it has been for the two companies. When a member of the Trump administration issues a memo or executive order, gives a speech or tweets about the crackdown on immigrants, shares of the two companies rise: Since the election, CoreCivic's stock price has climbed 120 percent, and Geo's has gained 80 percent."

Under the Barack Obama administration, the massive deportations carried out were handled differently than under Trump. President Obama stated on Aug. 18, 2016, that his administration would be phasing out for-profit prisons in the federal Bureau of Prisons. The companies' stock shares plummeted.

The Obama administration ordered Immigration and Customs Enforcement to carry out a "catch and release" policy. Undocumented workers caught were to be released if they were awaiting deportation status and were not so-called "hardened criminals."

Trump, through the actions of white supremacist Attorney General Jeff Sessions, has changed that policy. Now no matter their status in the system, all undocumented workers will be held. These workers need a place to be held before deportation, hence the recent boom in the prison-industrial complex.

NBC News reports, "The Federal Bureau of Prisons' ... relationship with privately run lockups hinges on the housing of immigrants. Almost all of the 21,405 people currently serving time ... have been designated as 'criminal aliens' — non-citizens who will likely be deported after they serve their sentences, according to bureau statistics." (March 5)

For several years now, article after article and advocate after advocate have all documented the horrid conditions of these prisons. Children are held with their parents. The prisons can be ice cold and the food is often rancid. Many a heroic prisoner has gone on a hunger strike to protest these conditions.

All these conditions will intensify under the Trump administration. It is no wonder, therefore, that one sector of migrants is fleeing the U.S. in record numbers.

Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly had to admit that Trump's policies were creating such a fearful climate that more Muslims in the U.S. were seeking refuge in Canada than ever before. Video has been released in which migrants are trekking to small wooded areas in upstate New York to cross over into Canada "illegally."

According to various news sources, Canadian law cites that people who try to make a refugee claim are turned away in Canada if they enter the country "legally." However, if a migrant enters "illegally" — or better said, irregularly — Canadian law allows people to claim refugee status. More than 2,000 people have done that since the Trump election, many of them with legal status in the U.S. This demonstrates the fear, even with documents.

Conditions for migrants to worsen

The bourgeois, pro-business entity, global risk analyst Verisk Maplecroft recently released a report titled "Human Rights Outlook 2017." (The Guardian, March 10) The report declares that Trump's hardening immigration policy will increase the risk of modern slavery and labor abuses. It will force "criminal networks to use more costly and potentially more dangerous trafficking routes by air and sea."

The Guardian wrote: "Saket Soni, executive director of ... National Guest-workers Alliance, said the Trump administration's new regulations will only exacerbate existing problems and proves that the U.S. government is 'part of the problem.'"

"Trump's policies are a gift to human traffickers," said Soni. "We know firsthand what Verisk Maplecroft's report confirms: criminalising immigrants makes them more vulnerable to forced labour, human trafficking, and modern-day slavery. Trump's mass criminalisation will drive immigrants further into the shadows, where increasing numbers of them will face forced labour conditions."

Every day the issue of migration across the world becomes more and more a major humanitarian crisis.

Despite the Trump/Bannon/ICE terror policies, this will not stop forced migration. Until the foreign and economic policies of U.S. imperialism are overturned, workers will be forced to leave their homelands in order to survive, in order to live.

The Los Angeles Times reported on March 9 that in 2016 "border agents saw an unprecedented spike in long-distance migrants making the journey from countries as far as Haiti, India, Bangladesh and parts of Africa. About 15,000 migrants from outside Latin America crossed through Baja California last year, nearly five times as many as in 2015."

The working-class and revolutionary movements in the U.S. and around the world must take up the issue of forced migration in a major way. Now is the time to come to the defense of migrants. □



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

Hundreds of supporters accompanied immigrant activist Ravi Ragbir to New York ICE office on March 9, preventing him from being deported.

Protest demands freedom for farmworker

By Gene Clancy
Rochester, N.Y.

On March 9, nearly 200 people braved the aftermath of a violent windstorm to demand freedom and justice for José Coyote Pérez, an immigrant farmworker in the Rochester area. The rally was supported by a number of community groups, including Workers World Party.

Two weeks ago Pérez — a dairy worker, community leader and father of four — was detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, despite his case being closed in September of last year.

Pérez has advocated for immigrant rights and has also been active in the Fight for \$15 movement and numerous other issues. Shortly before his arrest, he courageously spoke out at City Hall demanding that the city of Rochester strengthen its status as a sanctuary city.

Pérez spoke to the demonstrators via a telephone hook-up with the ICE detention center in Batavia, N.Y. He related how immigration officials treacherously asked him to come and consult with his caseworker, and then arrested him with no warning.

His spouse Dolores, a community leader in her own right, also spoke to the gathering, which received many honks of support from passing cars. She is scheduled for a hearing at the detention center in Batavia on March 15, and she and her supporters are fearful that ICE could seize this occasion to arrest her as well.



WW PHOTO: LYDIA BAYONETA

WW reporter Gene Clancy at rally supporting José Pérez.

Support rallies are planned at the detention center to defend her and all the unjustly detained immigrants.

Ever since the inauguration of Donald Trump, ICE has behaved in an especially sweeping and brutal manner. This has been true in the upstate New York region, which strongly depends on migrant labor for its vast dairy farms, fruit orchards and vineyards.

The rally in Rochester concluded with a militant march from the site of the demonstration to a nearby office of the U.S. Border Patrol. □

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Stop oppressing women and LGBTQ people

Fight Washington not Russia



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WOMEN WORKERS RISING



WW PHOTO: JILL WHITE

Rally in solidarity with global women's struggles at Chicago Teachers Union.

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Calls for a Women's Strike ignited International Women's Day in the U.S. on March 8. Organizers were following up on the massive Jan. 21 women's protests, held on all seven continents, against the inauguration of the extreme-far-right Donald Trump administration.

According to womenstrikeus.org, 50 U.S. actions on March 8 were part of a "new international feminist movement" to specifically defend "women who have been marginalized and silenced by decades of neoliberalism directed towards working women, women of color, Native women, disabled women, immigrant women, Muslim women, lesbian, queer and trans women." They condemned not only the Trump administration's woman-hating policies but also the U.S. "decades-long economic inequality, racial and sexual violence, and imperial wars abroad."

Also organizing for March 8 were U.S. sponsors of the Jan. 21 Women's March on Washington, mobilized as "A Day Without a Woman," to recognize "the enormous value that women of all backgrounds add to our socio-economic system — while receiving lower wages and experiencing greater inequities, vulnerability to discrimination, sexual harassment, and job insecurity." (womensmarch.com/womensday)

One Billion Rising, a campaign to end the exploitation of women, joined with labor organizations in a strong show of force at a demonstration at the Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., under the banner "Women Workers Rising." The protest was announced in solidarity with women marching around the world. Highlighted was the fight to end sexual harassment and violence against women workers "every day at workplaces across the country,

in every occupation and industry." (womenworkersrising on Facebook)

The One Billion coalition included the African American Policy Forum, the American Federation of Teachers, Family Values @ Work, International Labor Rights Forum, Jobs with Justice, National Domestic Workers Alliance, National Nurses United, National Organization for Women and the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United. Also present were OUR Walmart members from Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, North Carolina, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Colorado and California.

Schools in both Alexandria, Va., and Chapel Hill-Carrboro, N.C., were closed on March 8 because of expected large staff absences due to the strike. In Ithaca, N.Y., organizers from the Women Strike and Decarcerate Tompkins County came together in a March for Incarcerated Women and Their Families. Under the slogan #SayHerName, they reached out to supporters: "We ask you to bring your body for the women who cannot; to remember our sisters who are behind bars."

This March 8 was not a day of polite lip-service and compliments to women. Instead it was "feminism of the 99%" with walk-outs and stay-homes from workplaces; rallies, protests and marches; workshops on how to organize at work, the history of women's labor, how to leaflet your neighborhood; dance, music and theater performances; and a cry of "Resist, resist, resist!" ringing throughout the day.

But most significant was the call for women to strike, issued at a mass level of organizing and appeal. This class-conscious rallying cry connected women's struggle for liberation with workers' power to withhold labor as a weapon against capitalism. The call "Women Strike!" re-



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Philly IWD march advances in solidarity.

connected International Women's Day to its revolutionary socialist origins and promoted the hope that a new movement for women's liberation is emerging, rooted in class struggle. Plans are already underway for participation in the May 1 Global Strike.

In **New York City**, the International Working Women's Day Coalition held an intergenerational, multiracial "Women Rise and Organize!" roundtable discussion on March 11. The meeting was dedicated to the fighting spirit of people's lawyer Lynne Stewart, who died on March 7. In keeping with the coalition's perspective that "every issue is a woman's issue," panelists from various groups discussed a wide array of struggles, including reproductive justice and health care; immigrant rights; public education; students with disabilities and the right to accessible, public transportation; affordable housing; war and occupation; Indigenous sovereignty; political prisoners; violence against women; Haiti; the right to organize; Black and trans lives matter; and more.

Each issue was discussed within the framework of organizing goals and of challenges faced and lessons learned from organizing experiences. When the coalition meets again in early April, among various activities to be discussed will be support for the Global May Day Strike.

— **Monica Moorehead**

Hundreds of protesters gathered in early evening on March 8 at Logan Square in **Philadelphia**, then took to Center City streets to protest economic and political inequality as part of the global call for a "Day Without a Woman." Earlier that day, city teachers had picketed before classes, with about 930 of them staying out of work and using the day to lobby the City Council on educational issues. Many joined the evening protest.

As the march advanced, often against city traffic, signs and chants called for

the inclusion of Black, Brown, immigrant, LGBTQ+ and Muslim concerns. Speakers demanded solidarity with sex workers as well as low-wage workers fighting for the right to unionize. Others voiced outrage over the recent increased murders of women of color and transgender people. The march ended at Thomas Paine Plaza with an outdoor speak-out.

— **Betsey Piette**

Close to 400 people took to the streets in Baltimore to protest on International Women's Day. Called by the newly formed Women's Fightback Network, the march attracted a diverse crowd of mostly young Black, Latinx and white women, though older activists also joined. The 77-year-old Rev. Annie Chambers, a veteran housing organizer, boldly led from her electric wheelchair despite continuous harassment from police, who threatened to arrest protesters en masse at several points.

Stopping at the women's jail, protesters demanded an end to mass incarceration, and then marched to the Douglass Homes public housing development for a speak-out on how women are exploited in public housing. Then the Women's Fightback Network marched to the police station, past City Hall, and ended their event at McKeldin Square.

Along with major issues facing women, including trans women, LGBTQ+ and gender-nonconforming women, the event addressed Immigration and Customs Enforcement violence against immigrant communities. Many chants and speeches were called out in Spanish.

The WFN asked marchers to pledge support for anyone targeted by their boss, ICE or cops for participating in protests and strikes. The group's next step is to organize for the Global May Day Strike.

— **Sharon Black**

Along with several marches throughout **Chicago** on March 8, more than 300 women and supporters rallied at the offic-



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Socialists in Houston, including Sabrina Smith and Nikki Luellen, FRSO members.

Some participants in New York IWD discussion, March 11.



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Ida B. Wells ANTI-LYNCHING CRUSADER

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The many references by African-American women intellectuals and activists to educational achievement, economic self-reliance, sobriety and religious adherence suggest that Western bourgeois values influenced their thinking and organizational approaches. However, the social conditions created by Reconstruction's failure must be considered.

The profit-driven system of institutional racism and national oppression required super-exploitation of African people. They were systematically denied access to education, adequate wages, quality housing and job opportunities. The criminalization of their communities by law enforcement represented key aspects of the repressive mechanism which served capitalism.

Knowing that the federal government and corporations would likely not provide assistance to alleviate workers' and farmers' social conditions, African Americans were compelled to create their own institutions to foster social reproduction and ensure survival. Consequently, during this period, there was strong emphasis on self-improvement through education, personal discipline and the adoption of perceived societal norms.

Ida B. Wells was born in Holly Springs, Miss., in 1862 as an enslaved African child. Her parents instilled in her a sense of pride and yearning for education. They died in the late 1870s during a yellow fever epidemic. Wells then moved to Memphis to live with relatives and became a teacher in the Shelby County school system.

After being physically ejected from a segregated train in Woodstock, Tenn., because she refused to move out of her seat, Wells filed a lawsuit in 1884 against the Chesapeake, Ohio Railroad Co. for discrimination. She won a judgment in the lower courts, but the company appealed to the Tennessee Supreme Court, which overturned her winning settlement.

Wells became well-known as a teacher and newspaper editor. She was eventually fired by school system officials after she criticized the inferior education provided to African-American students.

Wells protested the racist lynching of three African-American men, her friends, Thomas Moss, Will Stewart and Calvin McDowell, in Memphis on March 9, 1892. They were only guilty of defending themselves against a lawless, white racist mob which attacked them in their grocery store. She wrote a series of editorials in her newspaper, Free Speech and Headlight, denouncing racist lynchings.

Subsequently, there was a boycott of street car services and white-owned businesses, followed by a mass exodus of Black people from Memphis to Oklahoma.

Writings by Wells exposed the fallacy of the racist myths that Black men were a threat to white women. When one of her newspaper's editorials noted that some white women sought social relations with African-American men, racists threatened Wells, destroyed her Memphis office and drove her out of the city.

After moving to Chicago, Wells opposed the terms under which the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, also known as the Chicago World's Fair, was being held to celebrate the 400 years since colonizer Christopher Columbus arrived on this continent. African-American organizations, churches and newspapers called for a boycott of the fair. The community demanded positions on the whites-only board of directors and planning committees that designed the project and space for exhibits. Ruling-class forces rejected these legitimate requests. Eventually, some concessions were made, although many African Americans remained dissatisfied and refused to attend.

'The Reason Why'

Prior to the exposition's opening, Wells initiated, contributed to, edited and published a pamphlet attacking the event; it contained sections written by Frederick Douglass, Ferdinand L. Barnett and I. Garland Penn. It was entitled "The Reason Why the 'Colored' American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition — the Afro-American's Contribution to Columbian Literature."

Wells noted, "The 'colored' people of this great Republic number eight millions — more than one-tenth the whole population of the United States. They [landed] ... at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619 in a slave ship, before the Puritans, who landed at Plymouth in 1620. They have contributed a large share to American prosperity and civilization. The labor of one-half of this country has always been, and is still being, done through them. The first credit this country had in its trade with foreign nations was created by productions resulting from their labor. The wealth created by their industry has made it possible for them to make the most of their progress in education, art, science, industry and invention."



Women's
History
Month



Wells added, "Those visiting the World's Columbian Exposition who know these facts ... will ask: Why are not the 'colored' people, who constitute so large an element of the American population, and who have contributed so much to American greatness, more visibly present and better represented in this World's Exposition?"

The pamphlet documented proof of the exclusion, exploitation and repression of African-American people. Wells did not speak at the World's Fair; however, her voice was heard loudly and clearly through the document.

Highlighting the dangerous situation facing African-American people, Wells recounted extrajudicial mob killings. Chapter 4 entitled "Lynch Law" reported, "A lynching equally as cold-blooded took place in Memphis, Tennessee, March, 1892. Three young 'colored' men in an altercation at their place of business fired on white men in self-defense. They were imprisoned for three days, then taken out by the mob and horribly shot to death. Thomas Moss, Will Stewart and Calvin McDowell were energetic businessmen. ... Their [grocery] business had prospered and that of a rival white grocer named Barrett had declined."

Wells recounted, "Barrett led the attack on their grocery which resulted in the wounding of three white men. For this cause were three innocent men barbarously lynched, and their families left without protectors. ... They were the officers of the company which conducted the grocery. ... [A]ll three were men of splendid reputation for honesty, integrity and sobriety. But their murderers, though well-known, have never been counted, were not even troubled with a preliminary examination."

Although he submitted an article to "The Reason Why," Douglass attended the exposition and delivered an address. Concerning the Exposition's aspects which focused on African people's affairs, some administrative control was relinquished. Douglass, the formerly enslaved, self-emancipated African turned abolitionist and propagandist, was named administrator for "Colored" American Day.

Christopher Robert Reed, of Roosevelt University, wrote in 1999, "Ida B. Wells stayed away from the celebration but retroactively reversed her assessment ... and [sought] out Douglass at the Haitian Pavilion." There, they handed out copies of "The Reason Why."

Wells traveled around the U.S. and abroad as a leader of the anti-lynching crusade. She continued to write, speak out and organize against racism and injustice for the rest of her life. Also a fighter for women's rights, Wells established an African-American women's suffrage organization.

Ida B. Wells Barnett married Ferdinand Barnett in 1895, and they had four children. This internationally renowned "crusader for justice" died in 1931. □



WW PHOTO: DAMON MITCHELL

Housing activist Annie Chambers leads Baltimore march from her wheelchair.

es of the Chicago Teachers Union. Led by a coalition of union, community and political activists, the speakers were predominantly women of color. The program was chaired by Christel Williams, of the CTU, representing the movement to create true sanctuary in Chicago Public Schools, protecting all children and families from ICE deportations and from the school-to-prison pipeline.

Williams is one of hundreds of clerks threatened with layoff from their important service to parents, children and staff. The clerks are predominantly single women of color from the communities; they are also graduates of CPS schools and parents of children attending CPS schools. Other union struggles addressed were those of day care and transit workers and of recently organized charter school teachers, who are preparing to strike in the coming week.

Co-chairing the meeting was Adriana Alvarez, a McDonald's worker from Fight for \$15. A woman from Black Youth Project 100 highlighted the struggles of Black, queer, trans and gender-nonconforming people against recent violence and murder. There were performances by several groups, including a spoken-word piece titled "Pussy Grabs Back."

International connections were made by Rasmea Odeh, the Palestinian leader of Arab American Action Network, who spoke on the U.S. government's case against her as an example of political repression. Nerissa Allegretti, from GABRIELA USA, talked of the growing movement for solidarity and justice for women around the world.

— **Jill White**

In **Houston** the IWD celebration, organized by Freedom Road Socialist Organization, educated and motivated activists and students as well as some new to the

Continued on page 8

From a Prison Radio broadcast of March 9.

Lynne Stewart PEOPLE'S LAWYER, FREEDOM FIGHTER. ¡PRESENTE!

By **Mumia Abu-Jamal**

Lynne Stewart, after 78 winters in America, has died after battling for years against breast cancer.

But that was just some of her battles, and like most of us, she won some and lost some. But she never stopped fighting!

For decades, she and her husband Ralph fought for New York's political activists and revolutionaries, like the Black Panthers and the Young Lords, a Puerto Rican socialist collective. But mostly, they fought for the freedom of the poor and dispossessed of New York's Black and Brown ghettos.

She — they — fought often and fought

well in the city's courts.

Her husband Ralph was a stalwart of the Black Panther Party and her most committed defender.

When Lynne was targeted by the U.S. Justice Department, and she was tried and convicted for putting out a press release for her client, the blind Egyptian Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, Ralph stood in the hot Washington, D.C., sun, with a sign in front of the White House, demanding his wife's release.

Her defense of her client was in the best tradition of criminal defense lawyers, and she received significant support from a broad swath of the bar — from lawyers, yes; judges, no.



Initially sentenced to 28 months, the Second Circuit sent her case back for resentencing — and she got 10 years!

Her support only grew.

The late activist lawyer Bill Kunstler once opined that defense lawyers should be officers of their clients, instead of officers of the court.

Lynne Stewart was an officer of her clients; a People's Lawyer, beloved and respected.

May she ever be so. □

Behind the murder of Berta Cáceres

By Chris Fry

Honduran Indigenous leader and environmental activist Berta Cáceres was shot to death a year ago at her home in a gated community, supposedly under Honduran government protection.

An investigation by the British newspaper The Guardian revealed Feb. 28 that the death of Cáceres, winner of the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize in 2015, was “an extrajudicial killing planned by military intelligence specialists linked to the country’s U.S.-trained special forces.”

Cáceres’ murder caused such an outcry within Honduras and internationally that the Honduran government was forced to put eight men on trial for her murder. The Guardian’s investigation revealed that among the accused were:

Major Mariano Díaz, chief of Honduran army intelligence at the time of the murder, on track to be promoted to lieutenant colonel. He attended cadet leadership courses at Ft. Benning, Ga., in 1997, and a counterterrorism course at the Inter-American Air Forces Academy at Lackland AFB, Texas, in 2005.

Sgt. Henry Javier Hernández, a former



Honduran military special forces sniper.

Sergio Rodríguez, a manager for the internationally funded Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam, which Cáceres had opposed. This dam project is funded by Desarrollos Energéticos SA (Desa), a corporation headed by Roberto David Castillo Mejía, a former military intelligence officer.

Retired Lt. Douglas Giovanni Bustillo, who joined the military on the same day as Díaz and had been in constant contact with him. Bustillo attended logistics and artillery courses at the School of the Americas at Ft. Benning, which trained hundreds of Latin American officers

who later committed human rights abuses. Bustillo was also head of Desa corporate security between 2013 and 2015.

Berta Cáceres had reported 33 death threats linked to her campaign against the Desa dam, including many from Desa management. A former Honduran

soldier reported that Cáceres was on a hit list that was passed on to U.S.-trained military units.

Because of these threats, the Honduran government set up a guard station at the gate of Cáceres’ home, but it was left empty on the night of the murder.

A legal source told the Guardian reporter: “The murder of Berta Cáceres has all the characteristics of a well-planned operation designed by military intelligence, where it is absolutely normal to contract civilians as assassins. It is inconceivable that someone with her high profile, whose campaign had made her a problem for the state, could be murdered



PHOTO: SOA WATCH

Washington, D.C., March 14, 2016

without at least implicit authorization of military high command.”

In 2009, the Honduran military overthrew the elected government in Honduras, with Washington’s tacit support. The U.S. State Department, at the time headed by Hillary Clinton, violated Organization of American States rules by doing nothing to oppose the military junta.

Since then, military death squads have roamed the country, murdering tens of thousands, particularly Indigenous people, at the behest of mining companies who need dams to power their operations. The U.S. government has proclaimed its opposition to these murders, but has not stopped sending funds to the Honduran military, amounting to \$18 million a year.

The Trump regime has made its position quite clear. Homeland Security Chief John Kelly has proposed tearing Honduran and other Central American refugee children from their mother’s arms if they somehow manage to reach the U.S. border, fleeing death squads. (washingtonpost.com, March 7) □

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY WOMEN WORKERS RISING

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struggle. Kinsey Tamsin, a trans woman and FRSO activist, spoke about daily obstacles trans people face. She praised socialist Cuba for the tremendous progress made through CENESEX, the Cuban National Center for Sex Education, on LGBTQ+ rights, including free sex-affirmation operations for trans people. Tamsin also praised Workers World Party member Leslie Feinberg as a trailblazer for trans liberation.

Nikki Luellen, who works against police brutality, spoke eloquently about the horror that continues after people are murdered by the police. She cited the struggle of the spouse of Alva Braziel, who was shot and killed by Houston cops in the summer of 2016. Not a single cop has been charged, and the family is still fighting for justice. Luellen, a FRSO member

and Texas Southern University student, works with Black Movement Media.

Speaking about several revolutionary women, Sabrina Smith, also with FRSO, focused on Yuri Kochiyama, a U.S. citizen who survived the U.S. internment of Japanese people in camps during World War II. Kochiyama became a strong advocate for Black, Latinx, Native American and Asian-American liberation. Her friend, Malcolm X, died in her arms at the Audubon Ballroom in 1965.

Gloria Rubac, speaking for Workers World Party, gave a history of International Women’s Day and its socialist origins. She explained that the material basis for women’s oppression was the beginning of class society, and how that oppression will only end when the capitalist ruling class is replaced by a socialist revolution.

Rubac’s talk focused on five women. Emma Tenayuca, a San Antonio labor union organizer, was also a Communist Party member in the 1930s and 1940s. Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, an African-American trans woman and a Latinx trans woman, respectively, fought



PHOTO: PANOS PHOTOGRAPHY

San Francisco says “Gender Strike!”

back against New York City cops in the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion. Assata Shakur, a Black Liberation Army member, was framed on murder charges, imprisoned and escaped to liberation in Cuba. Leslie Feinberg, a friend and comrade of Rubac, wrote the first Marxist analysis of trans liberation. Feinberg’s writings, read worldwide, include “Rainbow Solidarity with Cuba,” “Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to RuPaul” and “Stone Butch Blues.”

FRSO leader Fabien Sneevliet updated the struggle of Rasmia Odeh, the Palestinian activist and former political prisoner in Israel facing a new U.S. trial for “immigration irregularities.” Odeh’s sentence was vacated, and experts will be

allowed to testify on the role of torture in relation to her conviction.

During the discussion, Janie Torres spoke about her brother, Jose Campos Torres, who was murdered by Houston cops 40 years ago. She and her family are organizing the Second Annual Joe Campos Torres Solidarity Walk for Future Generations on the anniversary of his death in May. Torres invited Braziel’s spouse and her family to participate.

— Joanne Gavin

Several thousand women and supporters rallied and marched in San Francisco and Oakland, Calif., on International Women’s Day. The demonstration, titled “Gender Strike, Bay Area,” started at Chelsea Manning Plaza with a rally and then marched to the ICE Detention Center in downtown San Francisco. A strong chant was “No borders, no nations, no deportations.”

Later that night, another large rally gathered at Oscar Grant Plaza in Oakland. Organized by the Oakland Women’s Strike Organizing Collective, protesters marched to Sheriff Gregory Ahern’s office to denounce him. Ahern has announced he will continue to cooperate with ICE.

On March 11, a multinational rally and march of hundreds in San Francisco was led by GABRIELA SF, with the theme “Rise Against Fear, Resist Attacks on Our Communities and Unite for Self-Determination.”

— Terri Kay



Buffalo, N.Y.

WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE



San Francisco



PHOTOS: SUNSHINE VELASCO IMAGES

U.S. escalates aggression in Syria

By Ava Lipatti

The Syrian “civil war” has entered its seventh year. While the Syrian Arab Army and its allies have successfully retaken the cities of Aleppo and Palmyra from the Islamic State (IS) group, the proxy groups that have backing from U.S., NATO and Gulf Cooperation Council forces continue their bloody offensive against the Syrian government.

“Rebel” groups continue to rebrand and regroup into various coalitions. All these groups aim to destroy Syria, which is why the U.S. and NATO powers as well as their allies Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Qatar and Israel have at times armed or financed them or given them other aid.

The Syrian Army, with the support of Hezbollah, Iran, Iraq and Russia, leads the charge against these forces.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), including the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and their fighting arm, the People’s Protection Units (YPG), have carved out an autonomous region in northeast Syria. The YPG’s primary fight is against IS, especially in the city of Raqqa. They have coordinated at times with the Syrian Army in this effort, but they also have had a working relation with U.S. forces, which have contradictory interests opposed to the Syrian Army.

U.S. war crimes uncovered

Meanwhile, U.S. war crimes in Syria have recently surfaced. The U.S. government has admitted to using depleted uranium (DU) weapons in Syria in November 2015, despite promising in March 2015 that they would not use DU in Iraq or Syria. As Foreign Policy magazine reported: “U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) spokesman Maj. Josh Jacques told Airwars and Foreign Policy that 5,265 armor-piercing 30 mm rounds containing depleted uranium (DU) were shot from Air Force A-10 fixed-wing aircraft on Nov. 16 and Nov. 22, 2015, destroying about 350 vehicles in the country’s eastern desert.”

The U.S. used large amounts of DU weapons in Iraq in 1991, in Yugoslavia in 1999 and again in Iraq in 2003, mainly against tanks, as DU shells penetrate armor. Iraqi scientists found an increased incidence of cancer, birth defects and other health problems in regions where there had been heavy use of DU weapons.

Desperate, U.S. escalates conflict

As the Syrian Army continues its offensive against reactionary sectarian forces, some U.S.-backed, the U.S. deployed an estimated 400 Marines and Rangers to Manbij, Syria. (Reuters, March 9) A U.S. Air Force official stated that the purpose of the deployment is to aid the Kurd-

ish-led SDF in the fight to retake Raqqa from IS.

The next day, 2,500 U.S. paratroopers were to be deployed to Kuwait to prepare for missions in Mosul, Iraq, in addition to Raqqa. (Army Times, March 9)

While the stated reason for this increased military presence is to fight IS, the U.S.’s track record of focusing its efforts against the Syrian government indicates that this is unlikely. In reality, the U.S. has already begun to build military bases in Kurdish-held northeast Syria. Washington’s temporary support for Syrian Kurds gives the U.S. an opportunity to gain a foothold in northern Syria.

However, this strategy may prove dangerous. Ethnic Kurds, who primarily inhabit Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran, are an oppressed nationality in Turkey. Turkey’s Erdogan regime, which has been a military ally of the U.S. and NATO, opposes any independent role for Kurds, in Syria as well as in Turkey, and has denounced the YPG as a terrorist organization. Thus, U.S. support for Kurdish forces in Syria may undermine its relationship with an Erdogan-led Turkey.

Given its need to reduce antagonism with the Turkish regime, it remains unclear the extent to which Washington will temporarily support the Kurdish SDF in order to gain a foothold in the north of Syria.

Hands off Syria!

As history has proven time and time again, U.S. boots on the ground bring about nothing but death and destruction. Only the Syrian Army and their allies are capable of driving out the IS and other sectarian reactionary forces.

The Trump administration, rather than being “isolationist,” has pushed the war on Syria even further and has announced it will give the U.S. generals the authority to take military measures in Syria without needing affirmation from the president.

Ultimately, the only path to peace for countries like Syria is to drive out the imperialist powers and their proxy forces. It is the job for revolutionary socialists in the United States to oppose our own ruling class at home and demand, “Hands off Syria!”

For more information on DU, see the video by Sue Harris, “Poison DUst,” at tinyurl.com/zo2yfvk.



New York gov to import Israeli repression

By Joe Catron

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo made a 15-hour visit to Israel on March 5-6, pledging to forge stronger ties between Tel Aviv and his government.

Before this trip, Cuomo tried to justify the flight as responding to a wave of anti-Semitism within the United States, but he reportedly told Israeli officials that he also hoped to bolster the flagging support for their occupying state within his Democratic Party.

After Cuomo’s return, Dani Dayan, Israel’s consul general in New York and a former West Bank settler leader who had accompanied the governor, told WNYC’s Brian Lehrer Show that Cuomo “said that the Democratic Party was traditionally the most pro-Israeli of the two [U.S.] American parties and he doesn’t understand why in the fringes of the Democratic Party there is a different attitude towards Israel.”

Dayan added, “You cannot unfortunately miss the fact that in the fringe left of the Democratic Party there are some elements that are blatantly anti-Israel, some even support BDS [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions].” (mondoweiss.net)

The party establishment, which mobilized behind Hillary Clinton’s disastrous campaign last year and shows early signs of favoring Cuomo as a presidential contender in 2020, has typically competed with Republican leaders to express the most enthusiasm for Israel’s massacres, displacement and other crimes against Palestinians.

Before her defeat, Clinton promised the American Israel Public Affairs Committee “to take the U.S./Israel alliance to the next level.” (time.com)

But public opinion polls show that Democratic voters’ disgust with their party’s unwavering support for Israeli atrocities is rapidly entering its mainstream.

One poll released by the Brookings Institute in December found 60 percent favoring economic sanctions and other se-

rious responses to Israel’s construction of settlements in the West Bank, a figure that had grown by 11 percent in a year.

The sentiment at his party’s grass-roots may have pushed then President Barack Obama to abstain from, rather than veto, a Dec. 23 U.N. Security Council resolution condemning Israel’s illegal colonization.

Fatigue with establishment Democrats’ bloodlust almost certainly ranked among the factors that led millions of their voters to avoid the polls on Nov. 8, propelling Republican nominee Donald Trump to a shocking victory.

‘Best practices’

Cuomo also used his trip to announce the launch of a 22-member New York-Israel Commission “to strengthen economic and cultural ties” with Israel.

The body, chaired by New York Daily News and U.S. News & World Report owner Mort Zuckerman, includes a raft of Zionist leaders and business figures, as well as two union presidents: Stuart Appelbaum of the Department Store Union and Randi Weingarten of the American Federation of Teachers. Among other tasks, the commission will “connect New York and Israeli law enforcement to share best practices for counterterrorism operations.” (governor.ny.gov)

With increased attention to racist killings and other police abuses, Cuomo and the Democratic establishment may find the importation of Israel’s methods of repression no more popular among their party’s voters than their lockstep support for its crimes.

In one notorious instance of sharing “best practices,” Israeli intelligence operations in the West Bank inspired the New York Police Department’s Demographics Unit, a far-reaching effort to surveil 28 overwhelmingly Muslim “ancestries of interest.”

Facing public outrage and two lawsuits, the NYPD dissolved the unit in 2014, but its “rakers” had already infiltrated mosques, student groups, book-

stores and cafes, as well as political organizations like Al-Awda: The Palestine Right to Return Coalition.

Even after the unit’s dissolution, Mayor Bill de Blasio continued to defend its explicit targeting of ethnic and religious minorities against legal challenges.

“It really is a full-throated defense by the de Blasio administration of the same practices that his predecessor put in place,” Omar Farah, a Center for Constitutional Rights attorney, said before the two cases were finally settled last year. (theintercept.com)

Israel trains U.S. cops

Israeli occupation forces have also trained over 10,000 U.S. police officers and federal agents since 2002 on trips funded by Zionist groups like the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League and the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs.

Many come from departments, like

those in St. Louis County, Mo., and Baltimore, whose killings of Black people have sparked mass uprisings, as well as from notoriously racist agencies like Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The NYPD even has an office inside the Sharon District Police Headquarters in Kfar Saba, its expenses paid by the New York City Police Foundation.

Ultimately, only popular movements, not electoral politics, can end both domestic repression and U.S. support for atrocities committed overseas.

But the growth of these movements in the Trump era may make it harder for de Blasio, Cuomo and the rest of the Democratic establishment to find traction for their racist policies, even within the narrow confines of Democratic politics.

Catron is a member of Al-Awda New York: The Palestine Right to Return Coalition and an organizer with Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network.

Striking Rockford worker: ‘They need us’

Continued from page 4

out meals for supposed college credit. They won’t be able to provide transportation to the students, so they are putting it on the parents to get their children to and from school every day.

WW: What has been the community’s response, and are there any other groups supporting you?

PH: Many parents are confused and upset. Thousands of students will be without transportation and won’t receive the amount of care they need. A lot of confusion comes from the misleading information sent out by the school district, painting us as greedy. But we’ve also gotten help from youth activists, who are planning a solidarity march on March 14. They will gather at 201 7th Street at 5:15 p.m., then march to join a rally outside of the school administration building at 501 7th Street.

WW: How will the union win?

PH: The district is going to realize that they need us. The schools can’t properly function without us — whether we’re driving the buses, serving the food or taking care of students with special needs. They can try to continue to refuse any discussion, but eventually they are going to be pressured into a compromise, because we’re necessary to ensure a safe, positive learning environment.

The following schools, and possibly more, will have picket lines: Auburn High School, East High School, Guilford High School, Jefferson High School, West Middle School, Nashold Elementary, Rolling Green Elementary, Fairview Early Childhood Center and Summerdale Early Childhood Center. We urge all our Rockford readers to get out and show solidarity with RPS workers.

WORKERS WORLD editorial

May Day: Struggle for a mass strike!

More than a dozen calls have been issued for a general strike in the U.S. on May 1, International Workers Day. These have come from a wide range of organizations of migrant workers, women, prisoners, socialist revolutionaries and others.

Big media is sending up flares of alarm by covering May 1 as a “story.” Big business itself is starting to worry, while broadcasting strategies on how to “neutralize” a rising of workers and oppressed power on May Day.

Since Trump’s inauguration, there have been two national strike days involving thousands. There was the Day Without an Immigrant on Feb. 16 and the Day Without a Woman on March 8. Other local strike actions are multiplying, like the New York Taxi Workers Alliance’s refusal to pick up airport passengers in a show of solidarity with protests of the anti-Muslim travel ban.

There has been some support in labor unions for workers “shutting it down.” For instance, SEIU United Service Workers West, representing over 40,000 California workers, said in a statement: “It’s time to stand up as a people against fascism and autocratic leadership.”

A general strike, as traditionally called by organized labor unions, is a flexing of working-class power against capital and the bosses. Such a strike demonstrates powerful class consciousness that there is an “all of us” stretching far beyond a local.

Working and oppressed people right now know that Trump & Company are trying to smash the working class into pieces, to wreck our solidarity, to split us along lines of oppression. The ruling class is trying to make us fight each other instead of capitalism and imperialism.

A mass May Day strike could be not just unionized workers, but all of us being targeted — people of color, migrants and immigrants, temp and low-wage workers, unemployed and underemployed, LGBTQ+ people, prisoners, women working inside and outside the home, young people and students, people with

disabilities who are working or want to and are denied that chance, people who are losing health care, environmental protection and so much more.

A mass strike of all workers and oppressed people would militantly and directly counter the capitalist war being waged against us through racist, anti-worker, woman-hating nationalism and imperialism.

A call by the unions for a mass or general strike would assert solidarity of organized labor with the entirety of working-class and oppressed people. Such a call should include protection for those who risk themselves and their jobs by participating in May Day actions.

On March 13, the San Francisco Labor Council “enthusiastically endorsed worker solidarity actions planned for May 1, International Workers Day ... to protest the recent attacks on immigrants, health care, and the right to a voice at work.” The resolution called for “NO RETALIATION against any worker — union or non-union” who participates in that day.

We need more of this unity as a stepping-stone to turning May 1 into a mass strike against an ever more repressive state that showers money on the super-rich while targeting workers and the oppressed. And as a stepping-stone toward socialism and workers’ power!

And we need a global mass strike, because capitalism in its highly globalized form cannot be successfully fought city-by-city or region-by-region or country-by-country.

Can there be such a strike? As the great communist revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg wrote about the mass strike: “The rigid, mechanical-bureaucratic conception cannot conceive of the struggle save as the product of organization at a certain stage of its strength. On the contrary, the living, dialectical explanation makes the organization arise as a product of the struggle.” (tinyurl.com/hw4wlg1)

Let us struggle, and in that struggle let us build what we need to win.

Onward to the May Day strike! □

‘No to DAPL, yes to sovereignty!’

Thousands of Indigenous people and their supporters marched in Washington, D.C., on March 10, taking a stand for Native sovereignty and in defense of water and land. This march was called after the Trump administration ordered resumption of the illegal construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline on Dakota Sioux treaty land in Standing Rock, N.D., after a U.S. judge refused to impose an injunction to stop the multibillion-dollar underground project. The oil pipeline poses a threat to the water supply of 18 million people in four states.

The march began at the headquarters of the Army Corps of Engineers, which granted final easements so that Energy Transfer Partners, the company behind

the Dakota Access Pipeline, could begin drilling under the Missouri River to finalize the project. It then moved to the Trump International Hotel, where a tipi was erected, to other federal buildings and ended in front of the White House.

Those at the march demanded that Trump meet with tribal leaders, that federal and state governments respect Native sovereignty, and that no pipeline or other projects affecting Indigenous Nations should be approved without full consent. Satellite rallies and marches took place in many other cities, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Seattle. For more online coverage, see workers.org.

— **Report by Mahtowin Munro and Monica Moorehead**

After fracking-caused earthquakes Pawnee Nation courts to try energy companies

By Betsey Piette

For nearly three decades prior to 2008, Oklahoma averaged only two earthquakes a year of magnitude 2.7 or higher. Then the state experienced a boom in hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. By 2014 the annual number of reported earthquakes had spiked to around 2,500.

In 2015 earthquakes in Oklahoma nearly doubled to 4,000, including 857 with a magnitude 3.0 or higher — amounting to more than in the rest of the lower 48 states combined. The quakes, more than three a day, were linked to the underground disposal of wastewater, a byproduct of fracking for oil and gas.

After Oklahoma restricted the number and volume of wastewater injection wells, the number of earthquakes dropped to 2,500 in 2016. However, in September 2016 a 5.8-magnitude earthquake struck nine miles from the center of the Pawnee Nation in north-central Oklahoma. It caused extensive damage to buildings in the town of Pawnee, which has about 2,200 residents.

The Oklahoma Corporation Commission responded by shutting down 37 injection wells within a 725-square-mile radius of the epicenter. The Pawnee Nation responded March 4 by filing a lawsuit accusing 27 oil and gas companies with causing the earthquakes.

The Indigenous tribe is seeking compensation for damage to hundreds of homes and public property, including the former Pawnee Nation Indian School, a nearly 100-year-old building listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The lawsuit is also seeking punitive damages.

First earthquake case filed in tribal court

While other lawsuits have been filed against the gas and oil industry for earthquake-related damage in Oklahoma, what makes this case unique is that it will be heard in the tribe’s district court. The jury will be selected from 3,200 members of the Pawnee Nation.

If the oil and gas company defendants appeal the jury’s decision, a five-member tribal Supreme Court gets to hear the case, and their decision will be final. The tribal court’s judgment will then go to a state district court for enforcement.

There is no appeal of a tribal supreme court ruling. In 2016 the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the authority of Native American courts to judge complaints against nontribal entities.

Pawnee Nation Executive Director Andrew Knife Chief said, “We are a sovereign nation and we have the rule of law here. We are using our tribal laws, our tribal processes to hold these guys accountable.” (nytimes.com, March 4)

Knife Chief noted that the quake left extensive cracks, bowed ceilings and sagging roofs in all of the impacted historic buildings. The tribe wants the oil and gas companies to be held accountable for the damage caused by their operations. Cummings Oil Company of Oklahoma City and Eagle Road Oil of Tulsa are among the companies cited. Both were operating wastewater injection wells less than 10 miles from the epicenter of the September quake.

Millions at risk from ‘induced earthquakes’

In 1957 the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers established a link between in-

creased seismic activity and injection wells after a Colorado 5.5-magnitude earthquake was attributed to the U.S. Army’s disposal of toxic fluids into a 12,000-foot well.

Yet 60 years later, the wastewater from fracking continues to be pumped into salty aquifers, deemed unsuitable sources of drinking water. The fluid pressure from pumping massive volumes of wastewater into these aquifers gets transmitted into underground rock formations, where it acts to lubricate ancient faults, causing them to shift over time. (arstechnica.com, Dec. 20)

As of 2011, there were over 800,000 underground injection wells across the U.S., with over 30,000 strictly authorized for disposing of wastewater from oil and gas operations. With the rapid expansion of drilling in Pennsylvania, Ohio and other states, these numbers are no doubt higher today, involving billions of gallons of highly salty and toxic wastewater.

In March 2016 a U.S. Geological Survey concluded that “induced earthquakes” from human activity like fracking put around 8 million people in Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas and Arkansas at “the same risk of earthquakes as people in quake-prone California.” However, unlike California, buildings in these states were not designed with seismic activity in mind. (ibtimes.com, Dec. 20)

Because of increased earthquake activity, officials in Oklahoma finally established “guidelines” on fracking and the use of injection wells in 2015, temporarily closing several in areas with the most earthquake activity. However, the state took no legal action to hold the oil and gas companies responsible for damage from the quakes.

Trump’s pick Pruitt protected fracking companies

Not only do the Pawnee have tribal laws on their side, they have science as well. However, the oil and gas companies have climate-change denier Scott Pruitt on theirs.

Pruitt, Donald Trump’s choice to head the Environmental Protection Agency, recently caused an uproar when he denied that human activity was a major contributor to climate change, openly contradicting scientific consensus on the issue.

As Oklahoma’s former attorney general, Pruitt was responsible for protecting the people of that state. It was during Pruitt’s tenure that Oklahoma developed the human-made earthquake epidemic.

Even after the U.S. Geological Survey established the link between injection wells and earthquakes averaging three a day, Pruitt’s response to the crisis was to dismantle the environmental protection unit. Pruitt was very proactive on lawsuits favoring the oil and gas industry, while ignoring the industry-induced earthquakes and their impact on Oklahoma communities.

Harold Hamm, head of Pruitt’s reelection campaign in 2014, argued that wastewater injections did not cause the earthquakes. An oil billionaire, Hamm made his fortune from fracking shale deposits in North Dakota. He served as energy advisor to Trump during his elec-

Continued on next page

Upcoming European elections reveal deep divisions

By G. Dunkel

March 13 — After the Brexit vote and the U.S. presidential election, nobody is discounting the chances of far-right parties in three national elections coming up in Europe: Netherlands, March 15; France's presidential vote the end of April, with a likely second round in early May; Germany on Sept. 24.

Economic conditions in these three countries are better than those in much of the European Union, especially those in the south. But unemployment is still high, social and health services are being cut, and inflation is eroding workers' wages.

Ultra-right and centrist parties are campaigning against immigration and refugees, and blaming Islam for "terrorism," much as in the U.S.

The Netherlands

Geert Wilders, who heads the far-right and misnamed Party for Freedom (PVV), has been convicted of inciting discrimination against Muslims. Wilders has

called for removing Muslims from the Netherlands, taxing head scarves, banning the Koran and rejecting all refugees from Muslim countries. He also wants to leave the European Union.

U.S. reactionaries like David Horowitz have contributed about \$150,000 to Wilders over the past two years. (New York Times, March 7) Wilders also openly supports Donald Trump and his policies.

The PVV is projected to come in first or second in the parliamentary election, but not win a majority. Since none of the other parties will — as of now — work with this ultra-rightist party, it is highly unlikely the PVV will become part of the government.

France

Two leading candidates for the French presidency, Emmanuel Macron, who heads the En Marche! (On the Move) organization, and Marine Le Pen, who heads the racist, anti-Muslim National Front party, have taken anti-Muslim positions.

En Marche! is slightly less than a year

old and claims that it is neither left nor right. Macron is a former Rothschild investment banker and was minister of the economy under François Holland. Many politicians from the Socialist Party's right wing have endorsed him. Macron's results in polls put him neck to neck with Marine Le Pen, who had been leading in the polls up to now.

The National Front, under Jean-Marie Le Pen, Marine's father, was an openly fascist party — both anti-Semitic and racist against Arabs. She took over in 2011 and moved the FN in a more "respectable" direction. However, after she ousted Jean-Marie in 2015, she didn't seriously change the party's basic reactionary policies, including its opposition to Islam, the EU, NATO, the euro and labor unions.

Marine Le Pen has made a big point of corruption, particularly the corruption among the center-right Republicans, whose candidate François Fillon has been accused of getting the French government to pay his wife and children nearly a million euros, around \$900,000,

for work they didn't do. Similar charges, for smaller amounts, have been made against the National Front.

Germany

Germany's election is not until the fall, so polling is still tentative. But it appears that the gap between German Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union and her Social Democratic Party (SPD) rivals is narrow. There is significant support for the SPD candidate Martin Schulz, who was formerly head of the European Parliament. Other more progressive German parties like the Left Party are also doing better in early polling.

Germany's economy is perhaps the strongest in Europe among the big powers, but the class struggle is active there because workers have had wage cuts forced on them over the past decade. Now they are demanding raises. Berlin's two airports were shut down for three days beginning March 13 by 2,000 baggage handlers and passenger service employees who want a dollar-an-hour raise. □

Guatemalans protest girls' deaths

By Teresa Gutierrez

The deaths of over 40 young women in Guatemala City, Guatemala, on March 8 — International Women's Day, no less — demonstrate how imperialism and all its byproducts continue to grossly fail the world's youth.

Over 40 young women were burned to death as a fire swept a Guatemalan children's shelter. Nineteen died at the scene and the rest in hospitals.

Early reports said the fire started when the young women, angered by deplorable conditions, set a mattress on fire to get the officials' attention. But as more information is discovered, reports point to the fact that the children died because they were intentionally locked in the building and could not get out when the fire got out of control.

The shelter, overcrowded and neglected by the state, held poor children, some of whom were orphans. Many were victims of child abuse. Reports indicate that the girls had run away from the shelter because of the terrible conditions, were recaptured, and then the administration punished them by locking them in. It reportedly took almost an hour for fire officials to arrive.

The shelter was built to house 500 people but was actually housing 750 children at the time of the fire. Reports

are still coming in about conditions, but there had been reports of trouble at the shelter for several years. (New York Times, March 9) In fact, a prosecutor had already recommended shutting it down.

Family members of the young girls have joined other Guatemalans in protest and thousands have taken to the streets. The movement is declaring "Fue el estado" (It was the state) that was responsible. Hundreds of women are organizing against this attack, the latest on the lives of women and youth, and adding to the charge that the state was responsible for the lives of the 40 young women.

Independent journalists are pulling together facts that indicate the state is completely responsible. Witnesses told the Guatemalan publication *Nomada* that other youth had been trying to help the young girls days before the fire. (March 13) The girls were trying to get help, witnesses report, because of sexual abuse and other vile misconduct by the staff. These protests had been ignored by the state, leading to the youth running away, their recapture and then the ghastly fire.

Guatemalans in New York took to the streets and held a protest in front of the



WW PHOTO BRENDA RYAN

Meches Rosales-Maupin reported on the protest at the Guatemalan Consulate to the International Working Women's Day Roundtable on March 11.

Guatemalan Consulate on March 11. Another protest is planned there on Saturday, March 25, at 3 p.m.

One of the Guatemalan activists in New York told WW, "We are organizing in support of our sisters in Guatemala

and declaring no more femicide in all of Latin America. Please join us in front of the consulate at 276 Park Avenue at 23rd Street."

For more information, visit iacenter.org. □

tion campaign and is firmly committed to doing away with any regulation of the oil and gas industry.

Now his protégée Scott Pruitt is busy filling high-level EPA positions with fossil fuel industry lobbyists. The Trump administration and the EPA are talking about eliminating the EPA's Office of Environmental Justice, which was established to protect communities of color, Indigenous lands and poor communities in general from the impact of environmental racism.

In this context, the Pawnee Nation's lawsuit against the energy industry, to be tried in their own sovereign courts, holds out promise to all people in Oklahoma and beyond who are fighting for environmental justice. □

Midwest Regional
Fightback Conference
Resistance Against
Racism and Capitalism:
the Struggle for Socialism

Detroit
March 25/26

Detroit Workers World Party is co-hosting a Midwest Fightback Conference on March 25-26 with the Wayne State University branch of Students for a Democratic Society. WWP members from across the ravaged rustbelt will come together to put forward an analysis, forged in struggle, of the austerity, economic crises and national oppression that have come to characterize the region.

Guest speakers include the Venezuelan Consul General in Chicago and representatives of the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, United Steelworkers Local 8751.

For details, view the Facebook event page at tinyurl.com/zpnhrej; complete online registration at tinyurl.com/hqpc2h.

Detrás de las nuevas mentiras sobre Corea

Por Deirdre Griswold

Los medios de comunicación del establecimiento están sugiriendo que los tuits de Donald Trump acusando a Barack Obama de infiltrar sus llamadas telefónicas son sólo una distracción para evitar que los medios se concentren en por qué el procurador general Jeff Sessions tuvo que recusarse de una investigación federal sobre las conexiones de la campaña de Trump con Rusia.

Es una suposición probable. Trump tiene una historia de inundar los medios de comunicación con acusaciones locas.

Pero aquí está la pregunta: ¿Por qué los medios de comunicación no están igualmente escépticos sobre la historia - aún más melodramática - del grupo gobernante de Corea del Sur que acusa al gobierno de Corea del Norte - la República Popular Democrática de Corea - de asesinar al medio hermano del líder de ese país en un aeropuerto de Malasia? ¿Por qué informan

con cara seria esta extraña acusación?

En ambos casos, existen razones convincentes para sospechar que las historias dadas son falsas y auto convenientes. En el caso coreano, desvía la atención de un escándalo mucho más grande que involucra a las autoridades gobernantes de Corea del Sur.

Sin embargo, en todos los informes de los medios de comunicación de EUA sobre las acusaciones del régimen de Seúl, no hay ni una palabra sobre la enorme crisis política que enfrenta ahora el grupo gobernante en Corea del Sur y los multimillonarios que están envueltos en él.

El jefe de Samsung, la corporación más grande del país, fue arrestado el 17 de febrero y acusado de sobornar con 38 millones de dólares a la presidente surcoreana, Park Geun-hye, quien había indultado al jefe de Samsung por cargos criminales anteriores.

Durante casi un año, millones de surcoreanos/os han salido a las calles exigiendo la renuncia de la presidente Park.

El parlamento votó el 9 de diciembre para acusarla de corrupción. Ella se ha negado a dimitir, y la dinastía Park (su padre se convirtió en presidente en 1961 a través de un golpe militar) está colgando de un hilo.

EUA usa Corea del Sur como base militar

La RPDC en el norte ha permanecido independiente de la dominación extranjera desde su revolución socialista en los años cuarenta.

Una lucha guerrillera había liberado al pueblo del norte del dominio colonial japonés, y el líder de esa lucha, Kim Il Sung, se convirtió en el primer presidente del norte.

El sur, por otra parte, ha estado bajo el control de Washington y Wall Street desde que las tropas estadounidenses aterrizaron allí al final de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. El primer presidente instalado en el sur, Syngman Rhee, pasó la guerra en Nueva Jersey y fue transportado a Corea en un avión militar estadounidense en 1945.

Ahora, el ejército estadounidense ha comenzado sus mayores "juegos" de guerra, llamados Foal Eagle y Key Resolve, en Corea del Sur. Con duración hasta abril, éstos implican fuerzas aéreas y marítimas equipadas con armas nucleares que simulan una invasión de Corea del Norte. En los ejercicios del año pasado, participaron 300.000 soldados, incluidos personal de Corea del Sur y Japón.

El Pentágono también está preparándose para instalar su sistema de misiles THAAD en Corea del Sur, que está dirigido tanto a China y Rusia, como a la RPDC. China y Rusia han denunciado esta escalada de amenazas militares en la región como un peligro de guerra nuclear.

No hay que ser sabio para ver que la clase dominante de EUA - incluyendo tanto el campo de Trump como quienes están en su contra - tiene mucho en juego en desviar la atención del levantamiento masivo que amenaza con derrocar al corrupto régimen de Park en Corea del Sur. □

Discurso de Trump ¿'su mejor momento'? Los burócratas sindicales traicionan a la clase obrera

Por Martha Grevatt

El Presidente ultraderechista de los EUA pronunció su primer discurso ante el Congreso el 28 de febrero. En sus primeras palabras, empleó clichés liberales sobre "condenar el odio y el mal en todas sus formas". Luego expuso un programa de regalos fiscales y desregulación para los capitalistas, un sistema antisindical de vales escolares, un congelamiento de empleos de trabajadoras/es federales (culpando a las/os inmigrantes del desempleo y bajos salarios) y "uno de los mayores aumentos en el gasto de defensa nacional en la historia de Estados Unidos".

Trump no dijo el hecho obvio de que la clase trabajadora, especialmente las/os más pobres y oprimidos, pagarán por este masivo regalo a los militares y corporaciones. Todo está potencialmente en su tabla de picar - desde cupones de alimentos, Medicare y Medicaid, hasta la Agencia de Protección Ambiental y la Administración de Seguridad y Salud Ocupacional.

Una/o esperaría que incluso los líderes laborales más moderados de este país emitieran una rápida condena. El presidente de la AFL-CIO, Richard Trumka, o el presidente del Change to Win, James Hoffa Jr., quien también es presidente de Teamsters, podrían haber deshecho la ridícula afirmación de que "las compañías estadounidenses están gravadas en una de las tasas más altas en el mundo". De hecho, la General Motors, General Electric, Pfizer, Citibank y otras, han logrado escudar de los impuestos, miles de millones en ganancias e incluso obtener créditos fiscales.

'Tradición colaboracionista de clase'

Sin embargo, el día después del discurso, Trumka entró a los estudios de Fox Business News y calificó el discurso como "uno de los mejores momentos [de Trump]". Le dio crédito al presidente por la desaparición del Tratado Transpacífico

(TPP), sabiendo muy bien que el tratado anti obrero ya estaba muerto antes de que Trump asumiera el cargo.

¡Y peor aún, Trumka estuvo de acuerdo con la mentira racista de que la inmigración reduce los salarios!

Trumka no está solo en su traicionero posicionamiento. En enero, días después de la inauguración, Hoffa hizo declaraciones elogiando a Trump por haber "dado el primer paso arreglando 30 años de malas políticas comerciales" y por "las órdenes ejecutivas de hoy que avanzarán la construcción del oleoducto Keystone XL y el Dakota Access Pipeline, creando miles de buenos empleos sindicales". Incluso antes de que el presidente asumiera el cargo, los líderes de los sindicatos de construcción, los trabajadores del automóvil y los sindicatos del metalúrgico expresaron su voluntad de "darle a Trump una oportunidad".

Este acomodamiento es un retroceso al sindicalismo racista de Samuel Gompers, que fundó la Federación Americana del Trabajo (AFL) en 1884. Excepto por un breve intervalo de un año, Gompers fue presidente vitalicio hasta su muerte en 1924. Aunque nació en Breñaña, Gompers apoyó la legislación contra inmigrantes y abogó por su estricta aplicación, desde la Ley de Exclusión de chinas/os de 1882 hasta la Ley de Inmigración de 1924.

En lugar de unificar a toda la clase obrera, la AFL fomentó la división; muchos sindicatos de AFL negaron la membresía a trabajadores de color y a mujeres. La AFL evitó organizar la vasta mano de obra industrial, organizando principalmente a trabajadores de oficios especializados. Gompers apoyó la máquina de guerra imperialista en la Primera Guerra Mundial.

Después de la muerte de Gompers, William Green mantuvo la orientación divisiva. Green denunció las huelgas heroicas de los años treinta y atacó el Congreso de Organizaciones Industriales (CIO), que organizó a los desorganizados después de separarse de la AFL en 1935. Green también sirvió como presidente vitalicio hasta

su muerte en 1952.

Fueron los United Mineworkers de Trumka, bajo el liderazgo anterior de John L. Lewis, quien lideró la escisión de la AFL. Pero ahora, Trumka simboliza esa tradición conservadora de colaboración de clases. Los colaboracionistas se comportan como si llevarse bien con el enemigo - a través de la "cooperación sindical-patronal" - pueden negociar algunas migajas para su membresía.

Esta corriente ha dominado el movimiento sindical estadounidense desde la purga de los sindicatos y líderes izquierdistas durante la era de McCarthy. Poco tiempo después de las purgas, la AFL y el CIO se reunieron bajo el tercer presidente perpetuo, George ("nunca caminé en una línea de piquete") Meany.

En los años ochenta, dar concesiones en las negociaciones se convirtió en la norma del movimiento sindical. La clase capitalista usó el proceso de negociación para intimidar a los sindicatos a que renunciaran lo que habían ganado por luchas en el pasado. Los dirigentes sindicales convencían a sus miembros de que devolvieran beneficios para que las empresas estadounidenses fueran rentables o "competitivas". Los trabajadores fueron llevados a creer que podrían perder sus puestos si luchaban.

Ahora Trumka, Hoffa y sus colegas han llevado la colaboración de clases a su manifestación extrema. Yendo más allá de la asociación con compañías individuales, Trumka usó la palabra "socio" para describir su trabajo sobre asuntos comerciales con el administrador fascista del estado capitalista.

Muchas/os miembros de base están disgustados. Si los falsarios "líderes" del movimiento sindical continúan en este desastroso curso suicida pueden encontrarse que tienen que cruzar una línea de piquete en camino a sus lujosas oficinas.

¡Hablemos de huelga!

Aún cuando la hiper-especulación empuja el mercado de valores a nuevas altur-

as, los salarios están cayendo, la inflación está matando los presupuestos de las/os trabajadoras/os, y millones están todavía desempleadas/os y subempleadas/os. El sindicalismo organizado debería estar entre quienes quieren paralizarlo todo. El plan de Trump para recortar empleos federales debe ser respondido con exigir una semana de trabajo más corta - sin recortar la paga - para extender los trabajos a más personas.

Aunque hay sólo alrededor de 10 por ciento de la clase trabajadora estadounidense en sindicatos, representan a millones de trabajadoras/es estratégicamente posicionados para detener la economía. ¡Qué crisis fue para Wall Street la última huelga de tránsito en la Ciudad de Nueva York!

Si el movimiento sindical apoyara un llamado a una huelga general, no sólo para sus propias/os miembros, sino para toda la clase obrera, proporcionaría una red de seguridad para todas/os los trabajadores que salieran. Diría a las/os inmigrantes y a las/os trabajadoras/os de bajos salarios: si ustedes son lo suficientemente valientes como para arriesgar sus empleos en una huelga el 1 de mayo, los sindicatos les protegerán.

Hay voces que apoyan esta orientación. SEIU United Service Workers West, que representa a más de 40.000 trabajadoras/es del servicio de propiedad de California, emitió una declaración que dice en parte: "Es hora de levantarse como pueblo contra el fascismo y el liderazgo autocrático".

"Es hora de RESISTIR. Es hora de defender a todas las personas, incluyendo a las/os trabajadoras/os, inmigrantes, musulmanes, mujeres, y personas LGBTQ. Es hora de defender nuestro clima, nuestras escuelas y nuestros sindicatos".

"Este es un llamado a todas/os los trabajadores, a todas las comunidades: únense a nosotros en las calles en una huelga general el 1 de mayo de 2017!"

¡Ha llegado el momento de paralizarlo todo! □