

The status of women in the USA

written by Struggle - La Lucha

August 20, 2019



Lizz Toledo, with fist raised, at the WIDF/FDIM in Windhoek, Namibia.

Report by Lizz Toledo to the World Steering Committee of WIDF/FDIM (the Women's International Democratic Federation/Federación Democrática Internacional de Mujeres)

Greetings comrades and friends, I bring you solidarity and love from Mujeres en Lucha and the Socialist Unity Party in the USA.

“The status and condition of women workers in the capitalist United States continues to be highly exploitative and dismal. While 46.9 percent of the U.S. total workforce consists of women, we still remain in the lowest paid jobs such as food service, clerical, factory and health care. In 2019, women still earn 79 cents for every dollar that men make.

“Nevertheless, women workers recently led the most dynamic union struggles, including the teachers’ uprisings from West Virginia to Los Angeles. In this case, teachers, sometimes without traditional union backing, conducted strikes and refused to back down until they won.

“Fast food women workers at McDonald’s restaurant chain challenged common on-the-job sexual harassment and assault by conducting a one-day strike in ten different cities. Most of the workers are poorly paid; they are primarily Black, Latinx and immigrant workers.

“Migrant East African women played a key leadership role in the July 15 strike of Amazon warehouse workers at the Shakopee, Minn., fulfillment center. Hibaq Mohamed, who is one of the leaders of the strike that took place during Amazon’s Prime Day, was one of those women who braved bosses, police and security guards to help lead a walkout over grueling production levels. She is just 26 years old,” reports former Amazon worker Sharon.

“Many of our sisters are still facing oppression and are often ostracized by their family and communities. Depression, substance abuse and poverty are still the norm for Latinx lesbians! Latinas face racism in the U.S. and as lesbians we face multiple oppressions. We continue to fight back, defending and protecting our sisters everywhere,” reports Celenia T., a Latina lesbian activist.

"As capitalism decays, fewer good-paying jobs than ever are available to young women, especially women and queer people of color and immigrants. Extreme lack of economic opportunity has left many young women underemployed or unemployed and unable to access basic needs, including health care and education.

"The Trump administration has cut back abortion rights and access to contraceptives. Multitudes of young women and queer people find themselves going into massive debt to fund their educations, even as university degrees become more and more devalued by the day.

"There is an epidemic of sexual violence and gender-based violence against young women and queer people that continues to grow. Transgender people, Black and Brown women, migrant women, and Indigenous women are murdered and go missing every day.

"Mental illness and trauma are common, and health care is unavailable, so young women and queer people have even more difficulty being productive under capitalism. These obstacles disproportionately affect women of color, Indigenous women and girls, and LGBTQ2S young people.

"As socialists, it is our duty to fight back. We are educating the masses of young women and queer people about the root cause of their oppression, which is not working-class men, but rather the capitalist system that robs young women workers, and all workers and oppressed people, of their basic rights and opportunities. "We wish to spread a collective vision of a society where young women and girls are empowered and have the tools to achieve full liberation from patriarchy, all forms of gender and sex-based violence, and capitalist exploitation. Now is the time for young women, girls and LGBTQ2S people of the working class to unite in struggle," says Miranda from Mujeres en Lucha and Youth Against War & Racism.

The status of women in the United States continues to be one of struggle. Women

have been and continue to be in the frontlines of all people's fights for liberation. We are union workers fighting to raise the minimum wage to \$15 and fighting for equal pay. We are in the Immigrant Rights movement demanding that family separations end and to abolish the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) police.

While in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, communities buried their dead from racist mass shootings, the U.S. government arrested 800 workers at their jobs in Mississippi chicken processing factories. Their children were left without their parents on their first day of school, but the racist billionaire owners exploiting these workers were not arrested for hiring undocumented workers.

We are in the streets demanding an end to mass incarceration and to abolish the oppressive police system that only serves the rich and powerful, who continue to kill Black and Brown youth at will and with impunity.

We are among the fighters for LGBTQ2S liberation. Stonewall 50 was celebrated this past June 30 in New York City, as delegates from around the world came to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the birth of the modern-day LGBTQ2S movement.

We organize and fight to end sexual and domestic violence of any kind directed at women and young girls. We are anti-war and anti-imperialist. Even with the boot of U.S. imperialism on our necks, we continue to defend Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Iran, Syria, Iraq, Zimbabwe, Palestine, Cuba and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea against U.S. aggression. End Imperialist wars! Long live the international working class!



Behind the anti-China protests in Hong Kong

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August 20, 2019

Calm has been restored at the Hong Kong International Airport on August 15. For two days previous, a violent mob touted by the U.S. and British imperialist press as "peaceful protesters" had occupied the airport and all flights were cancelled.

During the two-day siege, they had beaten two men into unconsciousness. The first victim is a journalist for the Chinese news outlet, Global Times. His hands and feet were bound and he was tied to a luggage cart while he drifted in and out of consciousness and the 'protesters' blocked emergency medical personnel for four hours.

Another man, suspected of being a policeman from mainland China was also beaten into unconsciousness. A Hong Kong policeman was attacked, kicked and punched until he finally drew his weapon out of fear for his life. Many of the protesters flew American flags and held signs appealing to Donald Trump.

While media in the U.S. has continuously referred to the protests as “peaceful,” and to the Hong Kong authorities response as brutal, the reality is the opposite. In one of the earlier actions, a mob vandalized the Hong Kong legislature by spray painting all over the interior walls and smashing windows.

During another, a Hong Kong police station was attacked and lit on fire. Hurling bricks, gasoline bombs and defacing symbols of the Chinese revolution have been frequent. The initial reason for the protests was to demand that a proposed bill to institute an extradition treaty with the mainland, a routine law that exists in many countries, be revoked. The bill was allowed to die in the legislature, but the protests have continued, and their true anti-communist character is now much clearer.

One protester reported to the New York Times how she was [inspired by the “anti-Russian protests in Ukraine in 2014,”](#) which led to the rise of a fascist government.

The current wave of protests have gone on since April, but grew in size and frequency in June and July. Numerous organizations with close connections to, and funding by, the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy have been happy to agitate against the ‘One country - two systems’ agreement. [The NED is a de facto arm of the CIA.](#)

But the anti-China protests are not the whole story. Western media have ignored Hong Kongers who oppose the U.S.-backed protesters. The Hong Kong Free Press reported on an August 17 of pro-Beijing rally of almost a half million in central Hong Kong.

In the working class North Point neighborhood hundreds rallied at the Hong Kong Federation of Fujian Associations on August 10 with a message that anti-China protesters are not welcome in their neighborhood.

Hong Kong was seized from China in 1842 by the British in the first of the “Opium

Wars," fought by the British empire to impose the opium trade on China. For over a century China was ravaged by drug addiction and imperialist exploitation.

In popular parlance before the revolution, the very name of China was synonymous with hunger.

Since China's 1949 revolution threw out the imperialists and began the task of building a socialist economy, drug addiction, homelessness, illiteracy, hunger and joblessness are distant memories. Some 800 million people have been lifted out of poverty in recent decades in what the UN acknowledges as a stunning achievement by any standard of social progress.

In the late 1980s, China allowed capitalist investment, in part to ameliorate the effect of U.S. sanctions. While basic industry has remained in the hands of the state, led by the Chinese Communist Party, a capitalist economy has grown rapidly alongside socialism.

While the party still exercises a great deal of control over capitalist enterprises, the existence of big capitalists as part of Chinese society is far from without risk.

After negotiations that lasted well over a decade, Hong Kong was repatriated with China in 1997 as a semi-autonomous region. By agreement, capitalism is to operate freely until 2047.

Class divisions have actually deepened much more dramatically in Hong Kong than on the mainland, where living standards continue to improve. One part of the Hong Kong population has evolved into a very rich strata of capitalists.

Hong Kong's geographic proximity to mainland China has enabled its growth as a center for finance capital and a leader in global shipping. Hong Kong has among the highest percentage of billionaires in the world.

But the working class has sunk deeper into poverty with the elderly and children enduring the worst poverty rates.

Separating Hong Kong from China has been a focus of an imperialist campaign ever since the 1997 repatriation.

Keeping Hong Kong separate has been important to the U.S. operations against



China for decades.

“Hong Kong was our listening post.”

One former CIA agent even admitted that

Not all U.S. meddling in Hong Kong has been behind the scenes. Chinese officials have expressed anger that the U.S. State Department has openly and arrogantly met with leaders of the turmoil. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo himself met with long-time anti-China activist Martin Lee in early May. On August 8, [a U.S. diplomat stationed in Hong Kong was photographed meeting with protest organizers in the lobby of a luxury hotel.](#)

China Daily made a detailed report, [“Who is behind Hong Kong protests?”](#) It gives China’s view of the events and points to the U.S. connections between NED and protest organizers. As the China Daily report shows, this connection was confirmed by former Reagan administration official and Hudson Institute senior fellow Michael Pillsbury, whom Trump refers to as the world’s leading expert on China: “We have also funded millions of dollars of programs through the National Endowment for Democracy … so in that sense the Chinese accusation is not totally false.”

[An editorial in the mainland publication People’s Daily Online](#) summed up: “The

radical protesters intend to force the central government to give up governance over Hong Kong ... and give the city back to the Western world. ...

“The Chinese government will never allow extreme opposition and the West to pull Hong Kong into the anti-China camp, nor will it allow the city to slip into long-term chaos or become a base for the West to subvert China’s political system.”



1199SEIU retiree says Cuban travel restrictions will reverse progress

written by Struggle - La Lucha

August 20, 2019

A letter to the 1199 Magazine, 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers, from an 1199 retiree. It was printed in the July/August issue, which goes out to about 400,000 members and retirees.

Working people all over the country are demanding healthcare for all. But the Trump Administration is trying to cut back health care for workers. At the same time, Trump is trying to economically strangle the people of a small country who

years ago actually achieved free, universal healthcare.

I recently had the opportunity to visit Cuba as part of a people-to-people delegation representing more than 30 countries. We learned much on the trip, including that over the years, the Cuban government has implemented very successful universal free education and healthcare programs. Cuba has also sent thousands of doctors and other health workers and educators to many poor countries to provide services for the under-served. Students from many countries, including the U.S., who want to become doctors but can't afford medical school can go to Cuba to receive a free medical education. In return, Cuba asks these new doctors to commit to providing healthcare to under-served communities in their home countries.

If a small, poor country like Cuba can do these things, why can't we do them here?

These programs are enormously popular in Cuba and among poor and working people all over the world, but not with billionaires and their allies. When we demand free universal healthcare and free universal education here they tell us these are too expensive. After seeing America's Cuba policy fail for decades, the Obama administration eased some of the worst restrictions on travel and trade. The Cuban people I met on my trip were very concerned that Trump's re-enforcement of the blockade will hurt them and their children. Yet, many people also insisted that the economic hardships imposed by the blockade will never force them to give up the healthcare, education, women's rights and ban on institutional racism that they have fought so hard to win.

Trump and his billionaire buddies are making travel harder again because they want to keep people here misinformed about life in Cuba and keep people from the U.S. from seeing what workers can really achieve. I encourage 1199ers to tell their elected representatives to restore our rights to freedom of travel. The U.S. needs to stop punishing Cuba and countries like it for defying the billionaires.

Hillel Cohen
1199 Retiree, NYC



What can stop the racist massacres?

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August 20, 2019



Millions of people have been horrified by the racist massacres in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio. The El Paso shooter's hate manifesto echoed Trump's anti-immigrant rants and those of Tucker Carlson at Fox News.

What can stop U.S. Nazis from shooting Latinx people in El Paso, Black people in Dayton or Jewish people in a Pittsburgh synagogue? LGBTQ2S people were massacred in Orlando, Fla., and Sikh people were killed at their Oak Creek, Wis., temple. Muslims have been targeted across the United States.

At least 11 people have been killed in attacks on abortion clinics.

U.S. history is a record of racist violence. Nearly 20 Chinese people were lynched in Los Angeles in 1871 and another 28 were murdered in Rock Springs, Wyo., in 1885. The 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee of at least 250 Lakota Sioux children and adults by the U.S. Army was a mass shooting too.

The [Texas Rangers killed 300 Mexican Americans](#) just in 1915 and 1916. In Louisiana, 150 Black people were massacred in Colfax in 1873, and another fifty were killed in 1887 in Thibodaux during a strike.

An estimated 125 Black people were killed in East St. Louis, Ill., in 1917, which was a prelude to the Red Summer of 1919, when scores of African Americans were slain across the country. In 1923, as many as 150 Black people were killed in Rosewood, Fla., as dramatically shown in John Singleton's movie "Rosewood."

The capitalist government, which regularly commits atrocities, will not save us. As terrible as the recent massacres have been, many more people have been killed by racist police.

Last year, 1,164 people in the U.S. were killed by the cops. [The police have slain more than 5,000 people since Michael Brown was killed in Ferguson, Mo., five years ago.](#)

Black people are three times as likely to be killed by police as whites. Less than one percent of these killer cops are ever convicted.

While the Nazis in Hitler's Germany wore brown uniforms, in the United States of Trump they wear blue uniforms with badges. The virulently racist Facebook posts by Philadelphia cops show that police departments serve as a recruiting pool for the Ku Klux Klan and other hate groups.

That's another reason to abolish them.

This isn't disrespecting those security guards and other armed individuals who have stopped massacres. Black security guard Stephen Johns was killed in 2009 preventing Hitler worshipper James von Brunn from killing dozens of people at the Jewish and Roma Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.

Von Brunn had been a best buddy of ex-Rear Adm. John Crommelin, who belonged to the super racist National States Rights Party. This terrorist organization was linked to the deaths of the four little girls in Birmingham, Ala., at the 16th Street Baptist Church in 1963.

Their gun control and ours

Real gun control begins with taking the guns away from killer cops and abolishing the police. Real community control means being able to protect your neighborhood.

Capitalist gun control has almost always targeted the working class. In the 19th century, armed militias belonging to workers' organizations were banned by the Illinois state Legislature. The Pinkertons and the other gunmen belonging to detective agencies that regularly killed workers during strikes were untouched.

New York City's century-old Sullivan law banning most firearms served as an excuse for the racist Stop-and-Frisk program. Hundreds of thousands of Asian, Black and Latinx people, largely youth, had their Fourth Amendment right against illegal search and seizure violated by the cops.

Congress didn't outlaw tommy guns after the 1929 St. Valentine's Day massacre in Chicago's Clark Street Garage. They were banned by the feds only after their effective, nonlethal use in the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters' strike.

In 1967, Ronald Reagan and the California Legislature prohibited people from carrying unloaded shotguns, a measure that was aimed at the newly formed Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.

Pouring in guns and drugs

But what about the murder rate in cities like Baltimore or Chicago? Guns—like drugs—are poured into Black, Indigenous and Latinx communities.

Millions of people know that crack was funneled into Los Angeles and then the rest of the U.S. by the CIA to pay for their contra terrorists attacking Nicaragua. [The journalist Gary Webb was driven to his death for exposing this real conspiracy.](#)

The drug trade also means massive profits for the banks that launder the money. Wachovia Bank, which was gobbled up by Wells Fargo, was fined \$160 million for laundering. Barclays and at least eight other banks were also fined for laundering drug money.

The capitalist state knew that crack cocaine and increased drug pushing would cause murders to skyrocket. They spent 20 years trying to drive Black and Latinx residents out of New York City as part of “planned shrinkage.”

Upon orders from Wall Street bondholders, Mayor Abe Beame fired 50,000 municipal workers in 1975. The Bronx was allowed to burn as the fire department suffered budget cuts.

In 1990, 2,245 people were murdered in New York City. Nobody should believe that it was the New York Police Department’s Compstat statistics program that reduced killings.

The city’s massive gentrification required that the murder rate go down. In the meantime, the surge of murders and drugs served as an excuse to jail hundreds of thousands of more people.

Organize, organize, organize!

What will stop the violence is people organizing themselves and demanding jobs for young people and a \$20 minimum wage. There are no mass shootings in socialist Cuba because the Cuban people are organized into unions, womens', youth and community organizations, as well as in the Communist Party.

In the U.S., groups like Copwatch monitor the police and have inhibited some of their violence. People in Nashville formed a human chain to stop U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement from kidnapping their neighbor.

That's like what the people of Boston did in the 1850s to stop the slave catchers after the Fugitive Slave Law was enacted.

Community patrols against police brutality and deportations need to be expanded with the support of a rising labor movement. Stopping police violence and deportations go hand-in-hand with organizing unions at Amazon and Walmart.

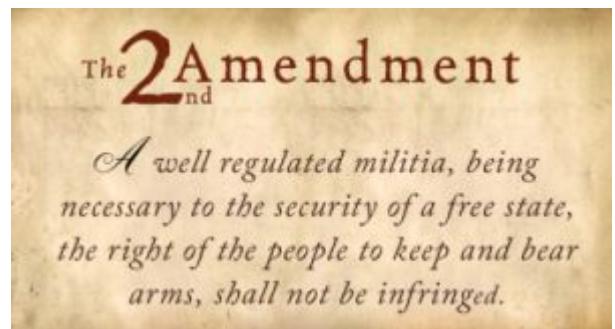
A mass movement is needed to bring millions of prisoners home to their families and to good paying union jobs.

The growing struggles sure to break out in the U.S. will lead to millions of people waking up and ultimately taking control of their communities. An organized people will stop the racist terrorists and get rid of all the Trumps.



The Second Amendment isn't for everybody

written by Struggle - La Lucha
August 20, 2019



There was no Second Amendment right to bear arms for Philando Castile. In 2016, the Black school cafeteria worker and Teamster member was killed inside his car by a Minnesota cop. Castile told the cop that he had a permitted gun in his glove compartment but was shot seven times when he reached for his registration.

The Second Amendment didn't apply to John Crawford III either, even in an "open

carry" state. The African American man was killed in 2014 by a policeman in a Beavercreek, Ohio, Walmart. Crawford was holding a BB gun that he was purchasing.

That year, African American, 12-year-old Tamir Rice was killed by Cleveland police for having a toy gun. Thirteen-year-old Black honor student Nicholas Heyward Jr. was killed by a Brooklyn housing cop in 1994 for the same reason.

Jemel Roberson was a Black security guard who in 2018 subdued a gunman who had shot and wounded four people in a Robbins, Ill., bar. When a policeman arrived, he shot and killed Roberson.

The basis of the right to bear arms is the right of people to possess weapons for their own self-defense. But ever since most human societies were divided into rich and poor, the right of self-defense has never been granted to the enslaved and oppressed.

On the Sunday morning of Aug. 17, 1941, the Black sharecropper Sammie Osborne had to make a split-second decision in Barnwell County, S.C. The day before, his white landlord, William Walker, had forced him to work at gunpoint despite Osborne having an injured foot.

Now, the drunken Walker barged into the shack where Osborne had been sleeping, beating the 18-year-old sharecropper with a stick that he held in one hand while holding a .32 caliber pistol in the other. Seeing that his life was in mortal danger, Osborne grabbed a shotgun and killed Walker.

There was no right to self-defense for Sammie Osborne. According to the 1940 census, Barnwell County had a 64 percent Black majority population. But a jury of 12 white men found Osborne guilty.

Sammie Osborne was sentenced to death by the evil Strom Thurmond, who later

became South Carolina's governor and ran as the presidential candidate of a segregationist party in 1948. Thurmond spent 48 years in the U.S. Senate as its most notorious racist. His friend, Joe Biden, spoke at his memorial service.

After being resentenced to death by another judge, the now 20-year-old Sammie Osborne was strapped in South Carolina's electric chair on Nov. 19, 1943. As the electrodes were placed on his head, [Osborne's last words were, "I'm ready to go because I know that I am not guilty."](#)

The next year, 14-year-old [George Stinney](#) was burned to death in the same electric chair.



El Paso, white supremacist terror and fascism

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August 20, 2019



We should remind ourselves that white supremacist terror is not new to U.S. soil. Historically, it has been intertwined with the development of capitalism. First with the theft of Indigenous lands and later with the institution of chattel slavery.

The stolen land of Indigenous people and the unpaid labor of enslaved Africans provided the basis for the expansion of capitalism on this continent, and, along with the Northern troops, it was the General Strike of Black labor, both enslaved and free, that played a pivotal role in bringing down the slavocracy in the Civil War (1861-1865).

What was immediately ushered in after the defeat of the slavocracy was one of the most thoroughly democratic periods in U.S. history — Reconstruction. Reconstruction not only brought change and power to Black workers, it also ushered in progress for landless poor whites.

All of this is brilliantly documented in W.E.B. Du Bois' seminal book, [Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880.](#)

It took the extralegal power of the murderous Ku Klux Klan to bury this revolution in

blood through lynchings, torture, mutilations and terror. The Klan was a continuation of the pre-war slave patrols but on a much larger scale. In both cases, the purpose was essentially the same: protecting the slave owner class.

The betrayal and defeat of Reconstruction was fueled by the fears of Wall Street and the Northern finance capitalists. The idea of dividing up the slave owners' plantations was considered far too radical for the Northern bourgeoisie.

In the final analysis, it was the violence and terror of the Klan, which was led by former Confederate officers and plantation owners, that crushed this brief period of "people's democracy."

The legacy of the defeat of Reconstruction continues today. In the end, the vast tracts of land were back in the hands of wealthy landowners and the promise of "40 acres and a mule" was never fulfilled.

Galveston, Texas

There is nothing that illustrates this more graphically than the recent actions of the two Galveston, Texas, police on horseback leading a handcuffed Black man by a rope through the street.

This disgusting image is painfully reminiscent of the slave hunters of the past, who tied up captured slaves and paraded them publicly to discourage escape. This fact could not be lost on the present-day descendants of enslaved people.

Is gun control the answer?

It is critical that revolutionaries and socialists understand and distinguish the pain of those who have suffered horrific losses in mass shootings and those who have had their communities decimated by gun violence, from the cynical manipulations of politicians and their pundits.

In these former cases, it's understandable that people who feel powerless and in pain turn to the demand for gun control, especially since it's what receives the most attention in the bourgeois media.

The problem is that politicians promoting gun control from both big business parties, Democrats and Republicans, have done more to cloud the issue than to lend clarity or address the root causes of violence.

We need to understand what class forces are involved, that is, who has power and who doesn't, and what is propelling political and social developments. First, guns and all kinds of weapons are already in the hands of extralegal white supremacists and fascist groups.

It is important to point out two things about the state, with all of its police agencies, whether they are local police and sheriff's departments, or national entities like the Customs and Border Patrol or the FBI. First, the state is not neutral. And it is certainly not on the side of the poor, the oppressed or the working class in general. Second, the state and its police agencies are all armed.

The repressive apparatus of the state has grown ever larger.

It has been thoroughly documented that members of white supremacist groups and individuals who have similar ideas, including virulently misogynist and Islamophobic ideologies, work inside police departments, in jails and prisons, serving as guards, as secret service agents, in sheriff's departments and as border patrol agents.

The ProPublica group recently revealed that close to 10,000 Customs and Border Patrol agents, present and former, were part of a secret Facebook group that posted violent and racist material mocking migrant deaths and posting a rape meme of Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who had visited and spoken out against the horrific conditions at the border camps.

Police killings of innocent Black and Brown people have been so frequent that they have been referred to as “modern day lynchings.” On Aug. 8, 2019, a study published by the National Academy of Sciences says that the sixth leading cause of death for youth is police violence. The study found that Black men and women, Indigenous men and women, and Latinx men have a higher lifetime risk of being killed by police than white civilians.

Are we to believe that these same agencies of the state, whether it’s the police or the Customs and Border Patrol, will disarm and disband the neo-Nazi, white supremacist movement? It is a lot like “asking the fox to guard the henhouse.”

If there is any sincerity in those who advance gun control, then the demand must be made to disarm the police, the sheriff’s departments, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and all the racist state institutions that are armed. It means that we must also assert the right of the oppressed to self-defense and community control.

Matsemela-Ali Odom exposes the proliferation of guns in the community and the connection to colonial war in his article [“Militarism leads to gun violence and the teachings of the late Michael Zinzun.”](#)

To build solidarity with people around the world who are suffering from war, or indirectly from sanctions, it is critical to call for disarming and disbanding the CIA and the Pentagon, both of which act as global police.

Rooted in the failure of capitalism

The screed written by the racist El Paso killer, who stated that he was targeting Mexican people, while rambling, is a classic fascist document.

Whether the recent mass shootings are the acts of individuals or not, there is no doubt that they are all influenced by a fascist movement that is global in scope: from the U.S. and Europe to Brazil and the streets of Venezuela, where “guarimbas”

target and burn to death Afro-Venezuelans for allegedly being Chavistas.

These forces have one major thing in common, they are used directly to turn back the gains of the working class and to crush any incipient struggle for liberation.

This is not accidental. It is a result of capitalism, which is now an interconnected global system that is in decay. It has forced workers to compete globally with each other in a never ending spiral that produces poverty and alienation.

Neoliberalism has failed, as attested by the “Yellow Vest” protest movement in France. Not only has the gap between rich and poor widened, but the next generation faces the possibility of planetary failure from unbridled climate change.

It is not necessary for the different white supremacist, xenophobic and misogynist killers in El Paso, Texas, or Dayton, Ohio, or Gilroy, Calif., to have known each other. Their actions flow organically from the present social, political and economic conditions. This is, of course, not to assert that there are not organized groups who do conspire.

One of the hallmarks of capitalism is that production is not planned but is instead determined by the anarchy of the market and by what is profitable. Despite the fact that members of the ruling class conspire to keep themselves wealthy and in power, the system itself operates beyond their mere will. This is equally reflected in social conditions.

Trump is very much a part of this fascist movement

When Trump calls out to his supporters, “Who’s going to stop the invasion?” referring to immigrants and refugees, whether they are Latinx, Caribbean, African, Indian, Filipino or Chinese; when he tells women-of-color representatives, “Go back where you came from,” he is loading the gun. It doesn’t matter whether he fired it or not. The orders are clear.

One would ask how is it possible that Donald Trump is tolerated by even his own wealthy class or certainly by those in the political establishment who might have preferred to have all of this hidden and sugar-coated regardless of party affiliation. Which sections of the ruling class, of the banks and big businesses, does he most serve? What does this mean for the possibility of imperialist war? Both are important questions.

But the immediate answer is rather straightforward. The very rich are making money, or more precisely, profit! And a lot of it!

This is made possible by the unfettered exploitation of the world's working class and by the capitalist system's introduction of technology on a level previously unheard of in history. In the hands of private ownership, it makes work a nightmare. Ask the Amazon workers.

The subject of Trump may occupy the minds of everyday people. But the question that surely haunts the more conscious members of the class of bankers and billionaires is power, that is, how they can keep it, and what if their modern slaves rebel.

"What happens if the system falters and collapses?" Some of their economic thinkers are predicting another possible economic collapse similar to the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy in 2008, which became a worldwide crisis.

Vince Copeland, in the ["Unfinished Revolution,"](#) explained it best when he described how the slave owners were more conscious of and frightened by a slave rebellion than even by the enslaved peoples themselves or the abolitionists. They understood their own crimes better than anyone and lived in fear. They remembered Nat Turner.

What a fascist movement does regardless of rhetoric is preserve the power of the big

banks and billionaires. In many cases, it paves the way to imperialist war.

Vice President Mike Pence's words on Aug. 11, 2019, at a campaign rally in Atlanta, just five miles from where the Democratic Socialists of America were conducting a conference, shouldn't be lost on anyone. He said, "The moment America becomes a socialist country is the moment America ceases to be America."

For the capitalist class, it doesn't really matter what kind of socialism is envisioned (at least at this moment), whether it's a revolutionary version or simply a reform that will cut into their profit margin. This attitude would change immediately, of course, if they were confronted with either revolution or reform.

Solidarity is our immediate and urgent task

Our most immediate and urgent task is to fight to stop the war on migrants and refugees and to actively fight white supremacy. This includes shutting down the camps, literally if possible, and making sure that every effort is undertaken to organize defense of all who are under attack. It is through struggle that workers learn not only solidarity, but also who is the enemy and who are our friends.

Socialism is the answer

There is no returning to a so-called better period of capitalism. It didn't exist then, and it doesn't exist now. The only answer is to move forward in getting rid of capitalism and building socialism, a system based on human needs, which includes cooperation and planning, a system that will allow us to begin to challenge the longstanding ideologies of white supremacy, sexism and misogyny, anti-LGBTQ2S bigotry and much more, so that all human beings can develop to their fullest capacity.



ICE raids are union busting

written by Struggle - La Lucha
August 20, 2019

Workers' rights under attack

The writer is a former UFCW food processing plant worker.

Aug. 8 — While the El Paso, Texas, community was still in mourning, deeply shaken and suffering from the racist mass murder, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) launched the largest single-state raid in U.S. history in Mississippi on seven poultry processing plants. Six hundred and eighty workers were rounded up and arrested.

This raid was timed to come on the first day of the school year, so that many children had to walk home, only to find their loved ones, their mothers and fathers, missing. If anyone has any question of whether or not this is an act of war and terror, listen to the [CNN news video](#) or [the aftermath](#).

What is key for all workers to understand is that this raid was calculated payback for

workers organizing, and it was aimed at the heart of the movement to unionize the South, which has historically been a cheap source of labor.

Two of the chicken processing plants operated by Koch Foods are organized by United Food and Commercial Workers Union. This same company recently paid out a \$3.75 million settlement as a result of a class action suit that charged Koch Foods with sexual harassment, discrimination based on national origin and race, and retaliation against Latinx workers.

The lawsuit, filed by workers at the Morton plant, said that supervisors touched and/or made sexually suggestive comments to Latinx women workers, hit workers and charged money for normal everyday work activities.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration charged Koch Foods \$88,000 in penalties for safety violations that resulted in severe injuries at the Mississippi plant.

Koch Foods also exploited Black farmers in Mississippi. See the ProPublica article: [The shadow of slavery, sharecropping and Jim Crow has left black farmers in an especially precarious position.](#)

Peco Foods is another company that runs five Mississippi plants. Three — in Canton, Bay Springs and Sebastopol — were targeted by ICE agents.

Workers at the Peco Foods Sebastopol and Canton plants had filed safety complaints, which resulted in OSHA penalties. Peco settled a \$9,550 penalty in 2015 and then was investigated five more times. Workers suffered amputations and fractures.

Peco was also charged with violating the Fair Labor Standards Act by requiring workers to perform “off the clock” work and denying overtime.

It took unbelievable courage for workers to stand up to these brutal conditions and

the ICE raid was aimed at breaking their will and determination.

UFCW spokesperson Abraham White said: "Workers across this country are too scared to stand up for their rights and to report wage theft, dangerous work conditions, and other workplace issues. We must act now to end this dangerous climate of fear."

Meatpacking still remains one of the most dangerous jobs, which has gotten worse with speedups introduced through increased automation. It's hard to describe the work environment to anyone who has never worked inside a food processing plant. Temperatures are cold or freezing depending on what is being produced; water and animal fat frequently make floors slippery and dangerous. Workers risk amputations and machine related injuries that leave lifetime scars.

Koch Foods hires about 13,000 workers in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Ohio and Tennessee. The company headquarters is in Park Ridge, Ill. It supplies chicken to Walmart, Burger King, Kroger and Aldi markets.

[According to the Jackson, Miss., Free Press](#): "Executives at PECO Foods and Koch Foods have donated at least \$170,000 to the National Chicken Council Political Action Committee, or NCCC, which in turn gives money mostly to Republican politicians. In 2018, the NCCC gave \$190,000 to U.S. House Republicans, and just \$23,000 to House Democrats."

To date, there have been no reports of penalties against these companies. Forbes lists the owner of Koch Foods, Joseph C. Grendy, as being worth \$3.3 billion.



Palestinian professor hits back at Israel lobby attacks

written by Struggle - La Lucha

August 20, 2019

Aiming to expose and loosen the influence of the Israel lobby on U.S. campuses, Palestinian-born professor Dr. Rabab Abdulhadi has sued San Francisco State University (SFSU) in federal court for illegal retaliation for her political speech, and in state court for breach of contract and employment discrimination. Her supporters have issued a call for donations to a fund to cover necessary expenses of the litigation.

Speaking to supporters on a conference call, Behnam (Ben) Gharagozli, one of Abdulhadi's lawyers, said the case "will send a positive message to everyone engaged in campus activism and in researching, teaching and speaking up for justice in/for Palestine. It will change the dynamics at universities across America where people will no longer have to be afraid of criticizing Israel."

Gharagozli's co-counsel Mark Kleiman explained, "We will expose how the Israel

lobby operates. Controlling campus debate is important to them. That is why the lobby pays for university presidents to take trips to Israel. This case will reveal their excess influence, which is part of the general trend of powerful interests taking over U.S. academia.”

SFSU hired Abdulhadi, an outspoken advocate for Palestine and a distinguished professor at University of Michigan-Dearborn, in 2007 to establish a program called Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas (AMED) studies. According to Gharagozli, her hiring memorandum of understanding (MOU) specified that AMED would be given two additional full professorships and adequate support staff. These people were never hired, and the funding lines have disappeared from SFSU budgets, though a recent [audit revealed](#) that the Cal State system has hidden \$1.5 billion in surplus funds.

The program rapidly became popular among students and with the Arab community but came under intense fire from pro-Israel groups on and off campus. Attacks have ranged from [hate posters](#) pasted on campus by the David Horowitz Freedom Center, online vilification of Abdulhadi and AMED students by Canary Mission and Campus Watch, and charges [of antisemitism](#) from Hillel, the AMCHA Initiative, and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), among others. In 2017 three individual students, encouraged and represented by the Lawfare Project, the self-described “legal arm of the pro-Israel community,” sued SFSU and Abdulhadi for allegedly “maintaining a threatening environment for Jewish students.”

Lawfare brought the case three times, but Kleiman and Gharagozli argued that the claims were baseless, and in October 2018, Judge William Orrick of the U.S. District Court agreed, dismissing Lawfare’s case. Lawfare also filed a similar case against SFSU in state court without naming Abdulhadi as a defendant. Without her team on the case, the University rapidly reached a settlement, trumpeted by Israel supporters as admitting to an [antisemitic environment](#).

Since the settlement, Administration has made life progressively more difficult for Abdulhadi, challenging routine expenses, refusing to build the AMED program as contractually agreed, canceling a summer program in Palestine that was already fully subscribed, and denying her needed disability accommodations and preferred class schedules.

At every step, AMED and SFSU's administration have been under pressure from Israel-aligned organizations. The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) took then newly installed President Leslie Wong on a tour of Israel in 2013. J Weekly, Northern California's largest Jewish newspaper ran [a long series](#) of articles alleging that antisemitism was rampant on campus. JCRC, ADL and others are often invited to meet with SFSU administration, while Arab and Muslim groups and Palestinian rights supporters such as Jewish Voice for Peace say they have been unable to get meetings.

Israel's Academic Army

Suppression of Palestinian voices is the norm on American campuses; the SFSU case stands out only because of Abdulhadi's effectiveness in holding on to her job and expanding the AMED program. A dozen Israel-aligned groups monitor pro-Palestinian academics and have gotten many fired, including Normal Finkelstein at De Paul University, Steven Salaita at the University of Illinois and many less well-known cases. According to Palestine Legal attorney Liz Jackson, her agency responded to [289 incidents of suppression](#) of U.S.-based Palestine advocacy in 2018, on top of 308 incidents in 2017.

Most of these pro-Israel groups are small but well-connected and well-funded. In 2016, Israel's then-Education Minister Naftali Bennet launched a \$66 million campaign called Mosaic United to "combat critical discourse around Israel on American campuses." Hillel International has [collaborated](#) closely with and taken millions of dollars from Mosaic.

The Lobby groups' tactics include media smears on Israel's critics, labeling them as antisemites, efforts to rewrite university policies or [state laws](#) to penalize criticism of Israel, and pressure on donors and administrators. If Abdulhadi's team can bring this information to light, it will strengthen Palestinian academics against the Israel lobby and empower all academics against bullying by corporate power and special interest groups. "This case is ideal," says Kleiman, "because it deals with what's happening in the U.S.: discrimination against minorities, women and immigrants. We will use this case to demonstrate how white nationalism, not just the Israel Lobby is moving things to the right. This is a rare opportunity to bring these issues out."

Pursuing justice is expensive

"We are confident in the strength of the two lawsuits," Gharagozli says, "but we cannot win them without presenting the necessary evidence. We must demand that SFSU produce documents and answer written questions. We will subpoena administrators and their outside allies such as JCRC and Hillel and compel them to testify under oath on video in front of a court reporter. Without this discovery, we stand little chance of actually winning the lawsuit."

The discovery process is expensive — depositions alone cost \$1,500 to \$2,500 a day without attorney fees - and Abdulhadi's team is seeking help to fund them.

"I did not intend to take on the whole Israel Lobby," said Abdulhadi. "I wanted to get back to my scholarship and teaching. But even though we keep winning, they never stop attacking, tying up our time, energy and resources. So now we have gone on the offensive."

To find out more or support Dr. Abdulhadi, visit launchgood.com/supportRabab and sign a petition in her support [here](#).

Republished from mondoweiss.net



San Diego commemorates Black August 2019

written by Struggle - La Lucha

August 20, 2019

The Black August Organizing Committee has sponsored a Black August program for the last three years at San Diego's Malcolm X Library and Performing Arts Center. This year is of particular significance because this is the 400th year anniversary since the arrival of the first captive, enslaved, African laborers to the English colony of Jamestown, Va. Jamestown is where "a society with slaves was transformed into a slave society," as stated in an article in Struggle-La Lucha newspaper written by professor Matsemela Odom of the San Diego Community College District, Black Studies Department. Our theme for Black August 2019 was "Honoring our Ancestors Sustaining Resistance from 1619 to the Present."

After welcoming everyone to the Malcolm X Library, the present reporter began the program with a slide presentation that chronicles the history of oppression, struggle and resistance for African Americans, highlighting events in August beginning with the assassination of George L. Jackson. Black August is directly linked to the

memory of George Jackson and his teenaged brother, Jonathan Jackson. We emphasized that Black August was created by incarcerated Black people in order to commemorate the lives lost in the struggle for Black liberation.

The Performance Annex was decorated with posters honoring Black freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for freedom and justice for future generations: George Jackson, political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, exiled political prisoner Assata Shakur, and photos of people killed by the police in San Diego. And books about Black liberation movements were also on display. Our intent was to spark the interest of all who came to the library and encourage people to read more to learn more about the history of our ongoing struggle, especially in this current racist climate.

The first presenter was Dr. Adisa A. Alkebulan of San Diego State University's Department of African Studies. He spoke on 400 plus years of struggle from the first African to arrive in the Americas to the present. He began his talk asserting, "[The beginning] is not about 1619 or the Jamestown Colony." Dr. Adisa asked if anyone had visited Ft. Mose, Fla. He explained that the first free African settlement to legally exist was at Ft. Mose. He pointed out that the first Africans who came to the New World did not come as slaves, as in Jamestown in 1619, but on ships with Spanish conquistadors and adelantados [governors] in the mid 1500s. Dr. Adisa had this to say about the first Africans to arrive in Jamestown: "The first Africans in Jamestown arrived as captives and later became indentured servants."

After a powerful poem presented by Sylvia Telafaro entitled "Reparations," the next speaker was Dr. Mychal Odom, who spoke about honoring our ancestors' sustaining struggle. Dr. Odom explained that many Africans gained freedom, land and status in the early years of the Virginia Colony. One prime example that has been cited by historians is the story of Anthony Johnson, a native of Angola, who had likely been previously enslaved in the Caribbean. His story exposed the contradictions of early colonial society. Johnson was eventually manumitted, and he then acquired land,

wealth and owned an indentured labor force of his own. Johnson struggled against white power, including efforts by a white neighbor to use the courts to steal his property. By the end of his years, Johnson and his family had their “relative equality” revoked. Deemed foreigners and not citizens in Virginia, they were exiled to Maryland.

After Dr Odom’s presentation, there was a short break to allow for everyone to help themselves to a spread of homemade food donated by community members who support the programs at the Malcolm X Library as we transitioned to the subject of political prisoners and our next group of speakers from the many grassroots. First, there was a video clip of former political prisoner Sekou Odinga, who came to the Malcolm X Library in February of 2016 with a message: “Support political prisoners and free them all.” Next was a slide presentation on political prisoners, encouraging everyone to see the faces and names of those prisoners who have been in prison for 30, 40 or 50 years. The reader of this report can find out more about them by visiting thejerichomovement.com/prisoners.

The next set of presenters, all of whom work in local organizing, spoke on issues affecting our communities now. Laila Aziz, a community activist, spoke about “participatory defense,” prison advocacy and the amazing work her group is doing, supporting and advocating for families in crisis in San Diego. Aziz made references to many of the political prisoners in the slide presentation - echoing Odinga by saying we need to support political prisoners, many of them in solitary confinement. She spoke of the struggle of Ruchell Magee, co-defendant of Angela Davis, who has been in prison for 56 years.

Carl Muhammad of the Committee Against Police Brutality spoke about the Erasing Police Violence Forum that CAPB is organizing and the importance of establishing a community-elected police review board. Author and community activist Curtis Howard spoke about life after incarceration and about breaking the myths

associated with prison life.

The last speaker, not listed on the program, was Tasha Williamson, candidate for mayor of San Diego. Williamson took the floor to remind people that they have a choice. She is calling for police accountability. Williamson said that one of the first things she will do when elected mayor is to fire the current police chief. Williamson is a people's candidate who promises to open up this government and make sure everybody counts.

The program was lengthy and, unfortunately, there was no time left for questions, comments or discussion. But each attendee received a pamphlet containing several articles reprinted from an international socialist publication, Struggle-La Lucha, whose website can be found online. There was no charge for the pamphlet, only a request that people use it to help raise the political consciousness of family, friends and neighbors.

Black August 2019 was co-sponsored by The Black August Organizing Committee and the Committee Against Police Brutality. This program was supported by the Friends of the Malcolm X Library, who contributed to the delicious food and the Black August books, quotes and images in the display at the library's entrance.



Women's International meets in Namibia, prepares for upcoming congress

written by Struggle - La Lucha

August 20, 2019

Windhoek, Namibia

August 2019

NA MI BIA

WOMEN'S
INTERNATIONAL
DEMOCRATIC
FEDERATION

“Gender Equality,
World Peace
and
Social Justice
for all.”

WORLD COMMITTEE
9 - 12 AUGUST

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19

Leaving Namibia felt humbling and exciting, Namibia being a shining example of what revolutionaries can accomplish. The friendship and love shown between comrades Sam Nujoma and Fidel Castro continues in the solidarity between the Cuban and the Namibian peoples. Their revolutionary energy is intoxicating. On this sacred ground, the World Steering Committee of the Women's International Democratic Federation/Federación Democrática Internacional de Mujeres (WIDF/FDIM) met in Windhoek, Namibia, from Aug. 9 to Aug. 12, to draft resolutions for our upcoming congress to ratify and spread worldwide.

Representatives from Asia, Africa, the Arab world, Europe, the Americas and the

Caribbean presented their resolutions from their respective regions. This is the first of a series of articles to follow.

Cuba demanded an end to the U.S. blockade and for U.S. imperialism to stop pressuring Cuba to withdraw their support for Venezuela in exchange for the lifting of sanctions against Cuba. As Alicia Campos, representing the Federation of Cuban Women, put it, "We will never sacrifice our principles."

Christina, representing the Organization of Argentinian Women, shared her joy as news that the Front for Victory, which is an alliance of several progressive groups in Argentina, had won their primary election, which preceded the national election in November. This was a great blow to the right-leaning opposition. Besides this, Argentina, as well as many other countries, demanded an end to U.S. sanctions on Venezuela and recognition of the duly elected government led by President Nicolás Maduro.

The European countries united around the demand to end imperialism in all its forms, from the U.S. and NATO as well as the European Union.

The Arab countries demanded a free Palestine and a solution which will include land and reparations to the Palestinian people.

A strong denunciation of U.S. imperialism was felt throughout the many resolutions, including from the Americas and the Caribbean, bringing attention to the colonial status of Puerto Rico and demanding independence and reparations from the U.S.

The Turkish delegation joined a demand from Cyprus to end Turkish occupation of that island nation as well as an end to all imperialist wars.

