



## Eviction Emergency in New Orleans

- 1 in every 19 renter households in New Orleans faced a court-ordered eviction in 2017
- 1 in 4 Black renter households faced a court-ordered eviction between 2015 and 2017
- the overall eviction rate in New Orleans is nearly double the rate of evictions nationally

Source: Study by Loyola law professor Davida Finger and the Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative



# We Need a Tenants Movement for Rent Control, Tenants' Rights

## *Inclusionary Zoning speeds gentrification, raises rents, destroys neighborhoods*

By Gavrielle Gemma

Working class New Orleanians, especially in the Black community, know that rents are too high and wages too low, and that we have no security in our homes. We are being driven out of many neighborhoods like Tremé, the Marigny, the Bywater, Mid-city and more. Black homeownership

is way down and the price of buying a house in Gentilly is out of reach. Long time home owners are being forced out by higher taxes in gentrified areas or by newly discovered code violation fines. We travel longer distances to jobs where there is no parking and we suffer with an underfunded bus system. There is no question that city policies favoring developers and landlords have fostered this gentrification.

An independent movement of working-class renters needs to fight for rent control, against exemptions for developers, against evictions and

finances and the racist policies these all entail. Long time home owners in Black communities should pay pre-Katrina taxes, not gentrification taxes which push them from their homes. We are told that the state controls tenant issues. Yet a militant movement could win change. In the 1930's, workers blocked evictions and moved people back into their homes.

Politicians and even some housing nonprofits favor the supposed remedy known as "inclusionary zoning" which gives developers "incentives"

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## Hospitality Workers Shut Down Decatur Street



By Sally Jane Black

In commemoration of International Working Women's Day, over 150 workers and supporters sat down in the middle of crowded Decatur St. in the French Quarter. For half an hour, the

workers showed the city their power, shutting down the street in solidarity with the hospitality workers who are forced to work for almost no wages, without healthcare, sick leave, or reliable public transportation. Other workers nearby cheered them on, including bus drivers and delivery drivers who paused in their routes. Many hospitality workers came out of their workplaces raising their fists in solidarity.

The New Orleans Hospitality Workers Alliance and the New Orleans Peoples' Assembly led a coalition of working women to demand the city and the Tourism Board return \$180 million in taxes that currently line the pockets of the rich ruling class instead of serving the people. Hospitality and workers from other industries de-

manded childcare, maternity leave, sick pay, better schedules, pensions, an end to racist and sexual harassment, and healthcare. All these programs could be funded by the tax money currently hoarded by the city's greedy capitalists. Speakers included leaders from the New Orleans Hospitality Workers Alliance, Women With a Vision, the New Orleans Abortion Fund, the Amalgamated Transit Union (Bus Drivers) Local 1560, Erase the Board Coalition, New Orleans Workers Group, and others. The rally was conducted in English and Spanish.

As the workers marched out of the French Quarter, they chanted "We'll be back," promising to continue the fight.

## THE NEW ORLEANS WORKERS GROUP

**WE ARE WORKERS, employed and unemployed, youth, students, and seniors. We are multi-racial and multi-national and organize for the unity of the working class. We are funded by and for workers, for the liberation of all workers and oppressed people.**

**We organize for jobs and higher wages, against racism, women's, and LGBTQ oppression, and for solidarity with immigrants. We organize for community schools, lower rents, and food on our tables. We organize for workers' power so that everything will one day be removed from the capitalists' private ownership.**

**We oppose the Pentagon, which is looting our tax dollars and handing them over to war-profiteering private companies, while social programs are gutted. We oppose war for empire which is pursued only to lower our wages and plunder the world's resources while destroying the environment. We reject the monopoly media who feed us lie after lie.**

**The labor of workers produces enormous wealth here in Louisiana, the U.S. and the world—so much wealth that everyone could have housing, meaningful jobs, education, healthcare, and genuine equality. But this wealth is stolen and privately owned by the capitalist class for their greed and profit. We believe that we, the workers of the world, can unite in revolution to overcome capitalism and build a better world.**

## CITY SPENDS MILLIONS ON MARDI GRAS, BUT TOURISM TAXES DON'T GO TO CITY

By LaVonna Varnado-Brown

In a March 8, 2019 press release, two days after Fat Tuesday, Mayor Cantrell described how the city spent millions to mobilize the Police Department, Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services, Department of Health, Department of Public Works, Department of Sanitation, Department of Property Management, Parking Enforcement, Parks and Parkways, Orleans Parish Communication District, and the New Orleans Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

Aside from whatever enjoyment the people get out of Mardi Gras, its purpose is to bring in millions in profit for the tourist industry, which pays for none of these services. The press release magnifies the fact that the city is subsidizing multiple private industries without concern for the needs of the working class residents of New Orleans. I recognize that the mobilization of these resources is needed to ensure safety for the influx of tourists and New Orleans residents. But the contradiction is that many of these resources are denied to the residents who live and work here every day. In the case

of hospitality workers and service industry employees, our work generates the bulk of the revenue that they, in private board rooms, allocate as they see fit—usually away from black, brown, and low income spaces.

\$180 million in hotel taxes go to private non-elected commissions to boost the profits of private companies. It does not go into the budget. Meanwhile we have no money for infrastructure and early childhood education. This \$180 million dollars worth of stolen taxes could be allocated for childcare for service industry workers during Mardi Gras while schools are closed. This money could be used to provide healthcare, maternity leave, and pensions to service industry and hospitality workers. This is not money that we need to letter write and ask for politely. This money belongs to the working class and has been stolen. We Demand that it be returned and used to elevate the humanity of workers locally. Doing so can only further illuminate and strengthen the city. The time is now to educate ourselves on the things we want to see changed. Agitate others to view the contradictions that exist. Then organize for revolution. The time for change is now and can begin with you, now.

## Gordon Plaza Residents Confront Mayor's Office

By Star

On March 7 at 9 am, the Residents of Gordon Plaza went to City Hall to meet with Mayor LaToya Cantrell. For seven months, residents have attempted to meet with Cantrell following a decades-long struggle to be relocated off toxic soil. They hoped she would honor her campaign promise to use city resources to ensure that residents have a safe and healthy environment to call home. Before going to City Hall, residents tried many times to get a meeting and were rebuffed. Despite the mayor never listening to the residents, she approved a statement from her office indicating that “due to pending litigation, the Mayor's office is unable to make specific comment at this time. Mayor Cantrell has heard from the residents and will fully explore the possibilities in working toward a

positive resolution.”

After that statement was issued, Cantrell texted the residents' representative to say that if she needed anything, to call her office or e-mail to set up a meeting. As the mayor requested, the residents sent an e-mail in advance of their arrival. At the mayor's office, they were met with her communication director who made it clear that the mayor was not going to meet with the residents of Gordon Plaza.

Since being in office, white supremacists continually state that Cantrell meets with them to discuss elevating monuments of white supremacy, and Cantrell never denies it. It is not acceptable that the mayor refuses to meet with the residents of Gordon Plaza while she listens to the cries of white supremacists as they mourn the loss of their monuments to oppression.



Shannon Rainey, president of Gordon Plaza Residents committee, confronts Beau Tidwell, Cantrell's PR mouthpiece.

The fully funded relocation of the residents of Gordon Plaza is long overdue and is the only acceptable resolution. Residents will continue to organize until this is achieved.

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# “From Confederate Park to Jackson Square, Fight White Supremacy Everywhere!”

By Tina Orlandini

This past weekend, March 22–24, a delegation of Take ‘Em Down NOLA comrades traveled to Jacksonville, Florida for the second annual Take ‘Em Down Everywhere international conference. This global grassroots movement is “a black-led, multiracial, international, intergenerational, inclusive coalition of organizers committed to the removal of ALL symbols of white supremacy from the public landscape as a part of the greater push for racial and economic justice and structural equity” (TakeEmDownEverywhere.org). Take ‘Em Down Everywhere was inaugurated last year in New Orleans, bringing together organizers from Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Trinidad & Tobago.

This year in Jacksonville—described by locals as “the city that time forgot”—organizers and allies spent the weekend sharing local history, exchanging organizing strategies, and hitting the streets. On Saturday, March 23, local historian Rodney Hurst led a bus tour of Jacksonville, visiting the birth place of James Weldon Johnson, author of “Lift Every Voice and Sing” (also referred to as the Black National Anthem); Hemming Plaza where the monument of the Confederate soldier stands (for now), along with a historical marker commemorating Youth Council sit-ins at W.T. Grant Department Store

and Woolworth’s Five and Ten Cent Store in 1960. Though this was not the beginning of the Civil Rights movement in Jacksonville, it signaled a turning point in local consciousness and was succeeded by further agitation that forced the integration of lunch counters, schools, parks, restrooms and other public facilities within the decade.

Later that day, Take ‘Em Down Jax, the Northside Coalition, and the Jacksonville Progressive Coalition organized a rally, beginning with a press conference at Confederate Park in front of the Women of the Confederacy monument, where they proposed an economic boycott of Jacksonville. Ben Frazier of Take ‘Em Down Jax and the Northside Coalition said to a cheering crowd, “it’s time for us to start telling people not to come to Jacksonville, Florida. Don’t come to Jacksonville because Jacksonville is a racist city which refuses to deal with these Confederate monuments.” The crowd of about 140 marched in Take ‘Em Down NOLA style formation to the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Union Hall for a panel discussion featuring Take ‘Em Down NOLA’s very own co-founder, Michael “Quess” Moore. Other panelists included Reverend Ron Rawls, Pastor of St. Augustine Church in Saint Augustine, a city 40 miles south of Jacksonville described by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1964 as the most racist city in the United



Jacksonville, Florida, March 23.

States. Maya Little of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s “Move Silent Sam” movement skyped into the panel and shared her account of the recent removal of the Silent Sam Confederate Soldier monument, current attempts to bring it back to campus, and ongoing intimidation she’s experiencing from local white supremacists and the police.

Following the panel, Take ‘Em Down organizers broke bread and continued to build at the Yellow House Art Gallery, described by director and Take ‘Em Down Jax member Hope McMath as a space where art and activism meet to create change.

On the final day of the conference, organizers from New Orleans and Jacksonville discussed specific

successes and strategies to move forward the work of dismantling white supremacy, rooted in the South with eyes on the more than 1,500 white supremacist symbols littering the United States, and even more internationally. By the end of the conference, Take ‘Em Down Everywhere announced that next year’s convening will take place in Montgomery, Alabama.

The Take ‘Em Down NOLA delegation left Jacksonville with gratitude for Take ‘Em Down Jax and energized by this growing movement of working class organizers, teachers, historians, artists, faith based leaders and elders unified in the revolutionary struggle to end white supremacy everywhere.

## EVICTION

*Continued from Page One*

(millions of dollars in tax exemptions) to build if they set aside a few so-called moderate-income apartments. This scheme only furthers gentrification. Once the new development is built, all the rents in the neighborhood go up and people lose more housing than was gained. The racial composition and cultural character of the neighborhood changes as well. This scheme provides a cover for politicians to seem like they are doing something about the housing crisis while still allowing gentrification to continue unchecked.

The example of the American Can apartments shows how “inclusionary zone” fails lower income renters and the broader community. This former factory was renovated with tax exemptions on the condi-

tion that the developers set aside a few affordable apartments. The city agreed that the developer could end this arrangement at a later date, so the owner proceeded to evict these tenants immediately on that date. Meanwhile this sped up gentrification, displacing many other tenants and homeowners from the neighborhood.

While former mayor Mitch Landrieu was traveling the country preaching civil rights, he boasted in 2017 in a speech to business owners that the real estate market was booming, and that New Orleans was “becoming the city he always wanted.” He bragged about the influx of new professionals moving into the city. Wages stayed low and racist income disparity grew. These new, mostly white professionals basically treat Black workers as if they exist to serve them while they party.

We know landlords and developers are greedy. But it is the complicity

of city and state officials—who are lavished with campaign contributions—that enables them to run amok with their greed. These real estate developers donated not only to the campaigns for Landrieu but also to Mayor Cantrell and the council members (as the State Ethics Commission reports). The policies that these campaign donations buy include favored zoning changes, tax exemptions, special loans and a pledge of silence regarding the racist impacts that these policies encourage. They are aided by the non-elected Planning Commission, which is appointed by the mayor and city council, and currently made up of a majority of rich white real estate developers.

Across the country, tenants’ movements are fighting back. A united fight for rent control, anti-eviction laws and safeguards for working class homeowners is needed now.

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# International News

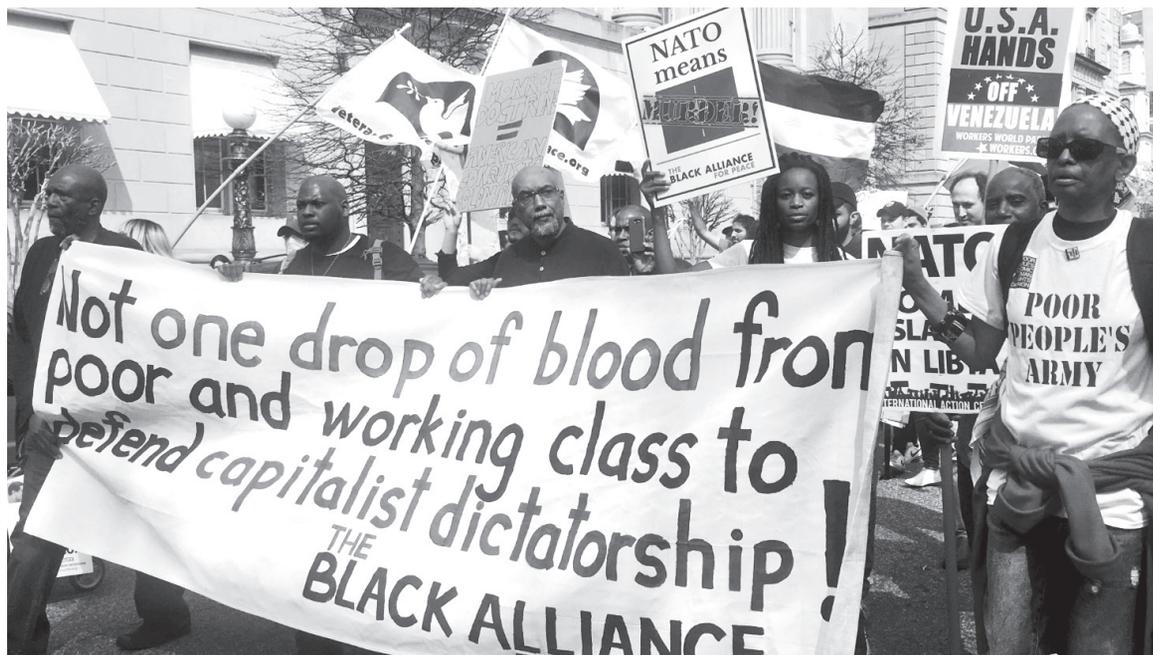
## Floods Devastate Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Malawi

Since March 15, the disastrous effects of Cyclone Idai have been mounting for the people of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi. At least 750 have died because of the floods, and at least 600,000 people have been displaced. The U.N. has stated that Cyclone Idai “may be the worst ever disaster to strike the southern hemisphere.”

Covering an area the size of New York City, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Boston combined, the extent of the flooding is unprecedented in southern Africa and is another example of a disaster made worse by the capitalist-caused climate change.

Each of these countries would be better able to organize themselves to withstand major weather events if only they weren't still struggling to overcome the crippling effects of centuries of colonialism. Zimbabwe struggles doubly because of U.S./E.U.-imposed economic sanctions which have cost its people over \$50 billion since 2001. These sanctions remain in place despite the present humanitarian crisis. The International Monetary Fund will likely provide “financial assistance” to Mozambique, but it will come as a predatory loan.

Acts of international solidarity show the way forward. The government of Cuba has responded by sending a field hospital with full staff and equipment to Mozambique. They will join the 372 Cuban doctors already providing services for the people of Mozambique.



## PROTESTERS GATHER IN WASHINGTON, D.C. TO OPPOSE NATO, RACISM, AND WAR

Anti-war activists marched in the U.S. capital to oppose NATO's drive towards more imperialist war and to speak out against U.S. threats to Venezuela. The day of the protest, March 30, marked the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an alliance that imperialist governments formed to safeguard capitalist exploitation around the world. The crowd chanted, “1, 2, 3, 4, We won't fight a rich man's war!” and “Hands off Venezuela!”

## 40,000 Palestinians Honor Anniversary of the Great March of Return



On March 30, thousands of Palestinians demonstrate at the Israel-Gaza border.

40,000 Palestinians gathered on March 30 to commemorate the one year anniversary of the “Great March of Return” demonstrations at the Israel-Gaza border. The demonstrations commemorate Land Day, which marks 43 years since six Palestinians were killed by Israeli police as they protested the Israeli state's seizure of their land. Since the beginning of the demonstrations last year, the Israeli military has killed more than 200 demonstrators and injured thousands more. Despite this, the Palestinian people remain steadfast in their fight for their homeland which was stolen from them and from which they were forcibly expelled.

The Palestinian people stand tall in the

face of increased attacks by the fascist Zionist government of Israel and its military supplier the U.S. Israel has declared permanent annexation of the Golan Heights which is part of Syria. The Golan Heights has oil, water and access to the sea. Israel is also talking about annexing the illegally occupied West Bank. At the same time, they are raining down bombs on Gaza—all while depriving its residents of water, electricity and medical supplies. This shows that Israeli Zionism is nothing more than a Nazi-like racist ideology with imperialist designs. Every worker needs to stand with and show solidarity with the beleaguered Palestinian people.



## Millions of Yemenis Celebrate National Day of Steadfastness—They Will Not Be Defeated!

Despite the bombings, starvation, and the blockade of medical supplies, millions of Yemenis marched across the country on the fourth anniversary of the Yemeni resistance against U.S.-Saudi aggression.

Sultan Al-Samei, a leader of the Houthi resistance, delivered a speech stating that “we are launching today the epic of legendary steadfastness, full of unity and cohesion of the internal front against enemies.” He also denounced the U.S. decision to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights, and pledged to stand by Syria to liberate its territory, and to stand with the Palestinian people in their resistance to the fascist Israeli government.



Banner with the names and photos of the 30,000 detained and disappeared.  
Photo: Emergentes

## **ARGENTINA: OVER A MILLION MARCH IN HONOR OF VICTIMS OF U.S.-BACKED MILITARY DICTATORSHIP**

43 years after a U.S. orchestrated military coup was carried out in Argentina, over a million people marched throughout the country to remember the 30,000 murdered and the thousands more who went missing during the horrible military dictatorship that followed. This is what Trump & Co. want for Venezuela. March 24 marked the Day of Remembrance for Truth and Justice.

The marches also protest the current right-wing government of Mauricio Macri which is trying to impose drastic hardships on the people. Macri is a close ally of Trump and the fascist Bolsanaro in Brazil.

## **DESPITE REPRESSION, FRENCH WORKERS CONTINUE REBELLION AGAINST GOVERNMENT OF THE RICH**

The Yellow Vests, a group of French workers from all walks of life, have been taking to the streets every Saturday for months. These actions have taken place in cities, towns, and villages across France. They are protesting all the capitalist austerity measures that profit the rich and have disastrous consequences for the poor.

The police have used flash grenades, water cannons, riot guns, tear gas, and billy clubs to brutally repress protesters. More than 144 protesters and journalists have been severely injured by riot police. The name of Geneviève Legay, a 73-year-old activist whose skull was fractured by riot police on March 23, has now become a rallying cry against the brutality of French President Emmanuel Macron

who put out a statement bad-mouthing Legay for her “irresponsibility” and for being in a “prohibited area.” Some protesters have responded to this repression by destroying the private property of the super-rich or by torching cop cars.

Macron has declared that he would call upon the French army to prevent further protests. It is no surprise that Macron favors the protection of private property rights over human rights: he has spent most of his career working for ultra-rich bankers. Presidents like Macron ignore the fact that 80% of French people support the Yellow Vests, that 10,000 people die from unemployment every year. Rich capitalists like him see working-class people as expendable in the face of profit.

# **Finally Some Truth About U.S. Attempts to Colonize Venezuela**

## **U.S. Imperialists Want Disastrous War— Workers Say No!**

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Energy Secretary Rick Perry spoke to a conference of U.S. Big Oil companies asking them to get directly involved in the failing attempt to take over Venezuela.

Perry was asked if the overthrow of Maduro would lead to the reassertion of control over Venezuela’s oil reserves—the largest on the planet—by US-based energy giants. “Absolutely, I think that is the real message, that the national companies want to see this regime out so that we can return,” he replied.

Exxon used to control Venezuela’s oil until it was nationalized. The Bolivarian revolution used oil revenue to build houses, free education, free medical care and many other programs we don’t have here in the U.S. Of course we could if our national budget was not looted by the profiteering war industries.

In his speech, Pompeo stated that the goal of U.S. foreign policy was to dominate the world politically and

economically by controlling global oil stocks. He then went on to lay claim to energy reserves in the South China seas. China responded angrily by saying the U.S should stay out of the region. U.S warplanes capable of carrying nuclear bombs were subsequently deployed in this area.

Pompeo, Trump, Bolton, and the majority of Democrats who vote for militarism are on a crazed mission to dominate the world, threatening us all with major wars for their own profit.

After the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, the U.S installed a UNOCAL (an American oil company) employee as president. And prior to invading Iraq, V.P. and former Halliburton CEO Dick Cheney personally brought together a consortium of U.S. oil companies where they drew maps parceling out Iraq’s oil for themselves.

This shows the true motives of U.S. imperialism which at the same time seeks to destroy any popular movement that might bring true democracy and real gains for the people.



73-year-old activist Geneviève Legay is attacked by riot police. She is in serious condition with a fractured skull. Her case shows the brutality of the French Police in their repression of the Yellow Vests.

## Labor Briefs

### MINNESOTA: SOMALI AMAZON WAREHOUSE WORKERS STOP WORK, DEMAND RESPECT FOR IMMIGRANT WORKERS

30 Workers at an Amazon fulfillment center in Shakopee, Minnesota, carried out a three-hour work stoppage on March 8 during the night shift. Most are Somali immigrants who face especially high levels of mistreatment because of their religious and immigrant status.

In December, 100 Somali-American workers and supporters marched on the Shakopee fulfillment center. Employee Khadra Hassan, said, "The head of Amazon [Jeff Bezos] doesn't know who his workers are or what they're faced with. We are not getting what we need from Amazon." Hassan nearly miscarried her baby when she passed out while lifting heavy boxes in the extreme heat. She says that she was denied services when she reported to Amazon's health office, because her benefits had not kicked in yet.

During the work stoppage on March 8, a photo uploaded to Facebook went viral. It showed the workers holding up a sign reading, "We

are humans, not robots." The post also listed their complaints against Amazon, including racist promotion practices, outrageous work intensity, lack of language translation services, lack of health benefits, the need for more bathroom visits, and prayer breaks.

Amazon fulfillment center workers in Poland uploaded a video to the internet expressing solidarity, showing the international scope of the workers' struggle. Last year on "Black Friday", an estimated 2,400 Amazon workers went on strike across Europe, in Spain, Italy, Germany, and France.

As workers become increasingly linked up through global markets and digital communications systems, the possibilities of international worker coordination become more and more feasible.

Amazon CEO, Jeff Bezos, is the richest person in the world, worth an estimated \$138 billion. The company's profits nearly doubled



Amazon workers in Shakopee, Minnesota stop work on March 8. Sign reads: "We are humans, not robots!"

between 2017 and 2018, yet Amazon paid no federal income taxes. All that wealth should go to the working people who actually produce it, and

to the betterment of society. There is no reason that one man should hoard \$138 billion dollars, or even a million dollars.

### Mexican Walmart Workers Threaten Strike, Win 5% Pay Raise

Walmart México has agreed to give workers a 5.5% annual pay increase and a productivity bonus linked to sales after 8,500 workers threatened to go on strike.

Earlier in March, the Revolutionary Confederation of Laborers and Farmworkers (CROC) had announced the strike, which was set to begin on March 21 and was to cover ten states.

Significantly, this announcement came on the heels of another strike wave that began in northern Mexico in January. That strike wave began in the auto plants, then spread to a Coca-Cola bottling plant and Walmart stores in Matamoros and several other northern cities. The result of those actions is that thousands of factory workers won 20% pay increases and annual bonuses of 32,000 pesos (US \$1,650)—that is, after the work stoppages cost the bosses an estimated \$50 million a day!

As for the Walmart workers, the pay increase and bonus arrangement are big wins, as this section of workers is highly exploited. The primarily women cashiers and other low-ranking employees currently earn, on average, between 140 and 150 pesos (US \$7 to \$7.50) per day. They are also not enrolled in medical insurance or retirement schemes. According to the National Association of Shop and Private Office Workers, Walmart discriminates against pregnant women, doesn't abide by the right to an eight-hour working day, breaks the law by not paying overtime, and dismisses workers unfairly.

The workers have achieved gains simply by threatening to strike, demonstrating their collective power, which is potentially massive. René Sasores Barea, the union's secretary general, said, "The winds of change are blowing and...employers must understand that."

### Pass the Gender Equality Act!

Right now, employers in 29 states can legally fire LGBTQ workers just because of their gender identity or sexual orientation. There are no federal protections preventing this kind of discrimination. That could change, however, if Congress passes the Equality Act introduced by Rep. David Cicilline and Sen. Jeff Merkley.

LGBTQ activists have fought for this type of legislation for decades, but such protections would be a win for all workers. The capitalist class relies on keeping working people divided. There are more workers than there are bosses. But if the bosses can pit white workers against black workers, immigrant workers against non-immigrant workers, LGBTQ workers against non-LGBTQ workers, then it is the bosses who win.

We should remain hopeful and keep organizing, because many already see through the divide-and-conquer strategy. In 2016, the Public Region Research Institute conducted 42,000 interviews in all 50 states, and 70 percent of those interviewed said that they would support a bill like the Equality Act. Working class unity is possible and necessary.

**THIS PAPER IS WRITTEN**

**BY AND FOR**

**NEW ORLEANS WORKERS**

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# UBER AND LYFT DRIVERS STRIKE IN LOS ANGELES

## New Orleans Drivers Need to Organize!



Drivers for Uber and Lyft picketing at Uber's Los Angeles headquarters.

On March 27, hundreds of Uber and Lyft drivers staged a one-day strike to protest cuts that Uber recently made to drivers' pay rates. As the company goes on a spending spree buying up

its competitors around the world (Uber just shelled out \$3.1 billion to buy out a competitor company based in Dubai), struggling drivers in Los Angeles and part of nearby Orange County are having their per-mile compensation cut by 25 percent. There are an estimated 30,000 full-time app-based drivers in Los Angeles alone. The strike was organized by LA Rideshare Drivers United, an organization with a membership of nearly 3,000 drivers in Los Angeles. They are demanding a \$27.86 minimum (pre-expenses) hourly rate and a 10 percent cap on the commission that the companies take for each fare. This

follows the recent success of organized workers in New York City who won a \$17.22/hr wage (after expenses), the first minimum pay rate for app-based drivers in the country. The Independent Drivers Guild, which represents about 70,000 app-based drivers in New York City, expects its full time drivers to get an extra \$9,600 a year from the pay raise.

Because Uber and Lyft have gotten away with classifying workers as independent contractors, the companies haven't had to pay minimum wages to their employees or provide them with overtime, workers' comp, family leave or sick pay. In fact, the majority of app-based drivers make less than the minimum wage in their state. But the drivers won't stand for it much longer; they have shown that when they get organized for a fight, they can win.

# International Working Women's Day

Strikes, mass marches commemorate March 8, International Working Women's Day.



Spain: Women march with banner reading "Without Us, the World Stops."



Women in Bangladesh hold banner: "Ensure Health Protection of Women Workers."



Hundreds of women in Gaza celebrated International Working Women's Day.



Malaya Movement, International Women's Alliance, Bayan USA, and IWWD Coalition mobilized people for International Working Women's Day demonstrations in New York City.

## Erase the Board Coalition



Armtrice Cowart of the Erase The Board Coalition speaks at the New Orleans International Women's Day March, March 16.

## OIL COMPANIES SHOULD PAY THEIR TAXES; WE MUST END THE INDUSTRIAL TAX EXEMPTION PROGRAM

By Peyton Gill

ITEP is the industrial tax exemption program put into Louisiana state legislation in 1974, and for the past 45 years, it has been the most notorious property tax abatement program in the United States. It's sold as a way to bring jobs to the state by luring corporations and large businesses with rebates on their taxes or by totally exempting these companies from paying their property taxes. In fact, over the last twenty years, Louisiana-based companies have dodged \$23 billion in taxes through this program while cutting net employment by more than 26,000 jobs.

The state is generous with tax abatements, offering corporations 10-year 100% tax exemptions. The tax dollars these corporations are not paying could be used to provide us workers with better living and working conditions. These tax dollars should be going to state and local government and streamed into schools, infrastructure, public transportation, etc. Responding to public outrage over this theft of public money, in 2016 Gov. Edwards announced changes in ITEP through an executive order, allowing for local governing bodies (like school boards) to weigh in on the decision-making when corporations submit ITEP applications for property tax exemptions.

Less than 6 months ago, members of two teachers' unions in East Baton Rouge unanimously voted to hold a 1-day strike when they found out ExxonMobil would be submitting their routine request for a \$6.5 million-dollar property exemption. Shortly after the teachers and school employees declared their threat, ExxonMobil withdrew its request for tax abatement. Power to the people! Go Louisiana Association of Educators and East Baton Rouge Federation of Teachers!

As a result of the school board having a seat at the Board of Commerce and Industry meetings, and voicing their objections to these thieving corporations, now two LA state legislators are proposing legislation for the upcoming session that would limit local involvement in ITEP. This was announced in January 2019. So—news flash—it is 100% obvious where our state legislators stand: with the million- and billion-dollar corporations, not with the people.

Both Democrat and Republican politicians are making their objective apparent: to keep their campaign donations flowing, while teachers are underpaid, schools do not have resources to provide the necessary attention and education to our children, our roads have sinkholes, healthcare/sick pay/vacation pay are considered "benefits" and people are struggling. We are smart though! When workers get together to study, discuss, and strategize (like the teachers' unions did), we can overpower the corruption! Local involvement is necessary to ensure we workers are taken care of, because the business government ain't doin' it!

To the Orleans Parish School Board,

We have made our demands plain on several occasions, and here they are again.

First, we would like to acknowledge the attempt to implement two of our demands, which was the School Improvement Plan as well as the issue of TRAUMA—although they were not done as we originally stated. A part of the reason these demands were not implemented correctly is the same reason we are in this position in terms of education in the city of New Orleans. Your work is being done without including several other very important stakeholders such as parents, community members and local experts.

Erase The Board Coalition, as a group, has no interest in meeting with any entity in private. However, if there is a genuine interest in publicly going on record that this disastrous experiment has been a complete failure and you display a vested interest in course correcting, we are ready and willing to roll up our sleeves and work shoulder to shoulder with you to secure a truly equitable public school system for Orleans Parish students and families.

In closing, we would again like to show our demands:

- Implement an immediate moratorium on charter school expansion
- No more school closures. Orleans Parish School Board must permanently take over every failing school and implement school improvement plans using the sustainable community school model (e.g. Louisiana Legislature SR 133)
- Conduct a series of accountability audits administered by the Erase The Board Coalition in schools that have a C score or lower
- For the five schools set to close, Orleans Parish School Board needs to take over each school for it to remain open, and pay for private tutoring for all students impacted by the potential school closures and the instability at those campuses during the 2018-2019 school year
- Abolish the One App and develop a more equitable centralized enrollment system that prioritizes access to neighborhood schools

We love our children and sincerely believe that these demands are not luxuries and should be the standard. We are diligent in our work and unwavering in our belief that this is both necessary and attainable. If these simple demands are not met, we have no choice but to continue to pull apart the fabric of this very unstable system and the people who have helped create and maintain it.

Sincerely,

Eraser The Board Coalition

*About Erase The Board Coalition: The Erase The Board Coalition is a grassroots-led effort composed of community leaders, parents, and grassroots education justice groups such as FFLIC and Step Up Louisiana, as well as Peoples' Assembly and Take Em Down NOLA, established to remove the current Orleans Parish School Board members off of our board and to replace them with leaders who will actually listen to the demands of their community and run our schools as sustainable community schools! #EraseTheBoard #CharterExperimentNOLA #LetKidsBeKids #WeChoose #ReclaimOurSchools #SchoolChoiceScam #FollowTheMoney #NOLACharterCorruption #SchoolToPrisonPipeline #WhatsTheNameOfOurSchoolNOLA*

# Indian Child Welfare Act Under Attack

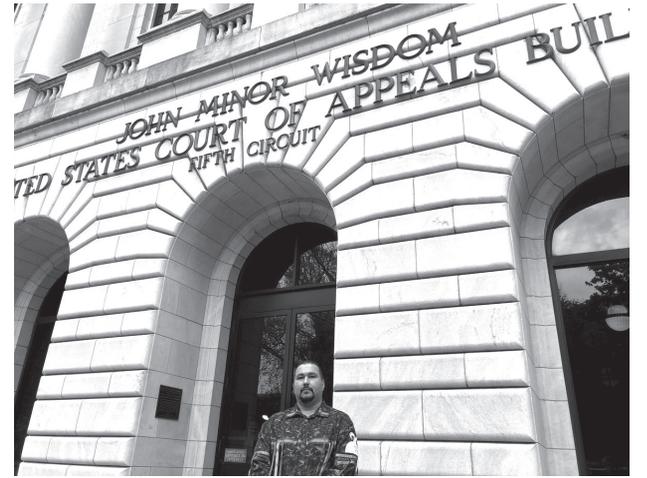
By Sasha Irby

On March 14 a delegation of leaders from a coalition of 325 tribal Nations came to New Orleans' Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals to defend the Indian Child Welfare Act against a legal challenge from the Goldwater Institute, a right-wing legal organization that works for ultra rich capitalists like the Koch brothers and the DeVos family. The Goldwater Institute supports lowering workers' wages, privatizing schools, denying workers healthcare, and opposing any regulation of greenhouse gas emissions. Now they have the audacity to claim to be champion of civil rights. They allege that ICWA is a form of 'race' based discrimination because the federal law privileges the rights of Native people to adopt their own children over the adoption rights of non-Native families. This "civil rights" challenge is a cynical smoke-screen: by attempting to reduce the people of the many Indigenous Nations to a mere race, they aim to diminish Native people's sovereign claims to their own children, their own governments, and their own land. The capitalists who are heading up the challenge to ICWA are eager to get their hands on the land and resources currently under the political control of Indigenous Nations.

The idea that right-wing advocacy groups are

fighting against ICWA because they feel that it is ethically unjust is an insult to those who know the painful history that necessitated the law's creation. ICWA was passed in 1978 to help stop the widespread kidnapping of Native children from their families by state and federal agencies. These children were then "adopted" into non-Indigenous households. For over a century the United States government operated according to the genocidal philosophy of "Kill the Indian, Save the Man." Governmental policies sought to assimilate Native children into white society by removing them from their families, elders, and communities and placing them with white families or forcibly sending them to boarding schools to be stripped of their language, culture, spiritual practices, and identity. Even after the boarding school era, Native children were torn from their families at an alarming rate. Before the passing of ICWA, up to 1 in 3 Indigenous children were "adopted" into non-Native households.

ICWA is vital for the future of Indigenous Nations, and attempting to dismantle the law is a direct attack on the sovereignty of our peoples. Children remaining in families of their own tribal membership allow them access to their culture, their lifeways, and—key for maintaining



Chairman Tehassi Hill of the Oneida Nation, outside of the Federal Courthouse in New Orleans.

tribal sovereignty—their tribal citizenship. The destruction of Indigenous sovereignty has always been the goal of the imperial project of the colonizers. By leaving children vulnerable to forced removal from their Nations, you strip that child of access to their identity and their part in their Nation's future. By stealing the children, you drain the lifeblood of our Nations. Our tribal cohesion crumbles and eventually our numbers dwindle and we die out. Without our children, our future is written in sand.

# New Zealanders March Against Attacks on Muslims Hundreds of Thousands Show Solidarity

By Joseph Rosen

On March 15, a white supremacist Trump supporter carried out a brutal massacre of 50 Muslims in Christchurch, New Zealand. These fascists think their actions will get popular support, but tens of thousands of New Zealanders, white and not, Muslim and non-Muslim prove them wrong. Along with thousands more across the world, they poured into the streets to show solidarity with the families of the attacked. Like the recent Pittsburgh synagogue massacre and the deadly 2015 attack on the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, this was an assault on families gathered in worship. In Christchurch, the terrorist also specifically targeted immigrants. Among the dead and injured were families who had fled to New Zealand seeking refuge from the devastation of the Western imperialist wars on Palestine, Syria, Somalia, Pakistan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

The mass murderer cited Trump as "a symbol of renewed white identity and common purpose." The Trump administration's racist and anti-immigrant program has included a "Muslim ban" on travel and an expansion in concentration camps for undocumented men, women, and children whom Trump regularly dehumanizes as "criminal." In the wake of the attack, Trump has downplayed the threat of white nationalism. In contrast, the New Zealand prime minister Jacinda Hearn stated that "as a nation, [we need] to confront racism, violence and extremism." While this statement is a welcome rebuke of Trump, her hypocrisy needs to



Christchurch, New Zealand, March 23.

be challenged. Like Democrats in the U.S. who condemn Trump's racist rhetoric but happily support and fund genocidal wars against Arab countries, Hearn's own party is in a governing coalition with the right-wing "New Zealand First" party whose leaders echo the anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant tirades of Trump and who, together with the Hearn's Labour Party, support the U.S.-led wars and military occupations in the Muslim-majority countries of Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Horrific as these individual fascists' attacks are, U.S. wars for oil and profit on the Muslim-majority countries of the Middle East have cost the lives of millions more. The most obvious difference between the terrorist attack in New Zealand and George W. Bush's self-described "crusade" against the people of Iraq and Afghanistan is that

Bush is responsible for the death and displacement of millions. Another difference is that Bush's wars garnered profits for his capitalist friends. Dick Cheney's former company Halliburton alone gained \$17.2 billion in Iraq war-related revenue from 2003-2006. But rather than admit that these wars are fought for private profit, the capitalist-owned media promote the white supremacist idea that the "civilized" West is at war with its "uncivilized" other.

The capitalists can only carry out their wars for profit if they succeed in dividing the working class against itself. Their media outlets gave the New Zealand fascist the publicity that he sought.

To win over a section of the workers to support, promote, fight and die in their wars, they will deploy the most hideous racism and lies. In countries such as the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, and Israel—all founded on the right of white settlers to the "spoils" of their government's colonial plunder—white workers have been repeatedly duped by the racist myths and lies of their bosses. Yet their allegiance to this hateful ideology hasn't done anything to reverse the general decline in their living standards which continue to worsen under capitalism.

Workers cannot play into the hand of these would-be Nazis. We must organize ourselves through international solidarity and solidarity at home. This means opposing imperialist wars for profit and rejecting white supremacy.

# Alianza de Trabajadores de Mariscos y Pescado

## Una conversación con Chayito

Por C.D.

La Alianza de Trabajadorxs de Mariscos y Pescado (ATMP) es un grupo de trabajadorxs de la industria de mariscos y pescado en Louisiana, quienes se están organizando en las áreas rurales del estado para enfrentar a las injusticias en la industria como el trabajo forzado, salarios injustos, y el tema de la seguridad en el lugar del trabajo. Ellxs son lxs trabajadorxs que producen y procesan los mariscos y pescados famosos de Louisiana, y están invitando a lxs aliadxs y a otrxs trabajadorxs a unirse a la lucha. Lo que sigue son partes de una conversación con la vicepresidenta de la Alianza, Chayito.

*¿De dónde viene usted y cuánto tiempo ha estado trabajando en los Estados Unidos?*

Vengo de Sinaloa, México. Yo vine a los Estados Unidos invitada por una amiga que me contó sobre un trabajo en una planta de crawfish en Baton Rouge. He estado trabajando aquí por 11 años como trabajadora huésped.

*¿Cómo empezó a organizar?*

Hace once años conocí a la Alianza de Trabajadores. Tuve un problema en el trabajo donde los trabajadores querían ser pagados más. Querían 25 o 50 centavos más a la hora. Conocí a dos organizadores de la Alianza de Trabajadores que

estaban ayudando a los trabajadores en su lucha. El jefe se molestó mucho, le faltó el respeto a los organizadores. El señor cortó la luz, se puso grosero, y mando por un camión y corrió a los trabajadores de regreso a México. Yo decidí quedarme con una compañera porque tenía un niño internado en el hospital, yo tenía que trabajar para pagar los gastos de la clínica. Empecé a trabajar en una taquería y hacia tamales unos días, aquí me quedé completamente perdida, no podíamos hablar el idioma, fue difícil pero aguante y salí antes de que se me termino la visa.

Después de estar en México un rato, quería venir a trabajar de nuevo. Pero cuando fui a entregar las copias de mi pasaporte para otra compañía, una conocida de mi hermana me dijo "fíjate que no te puedo traer porque la compañía no quiere los que han estado organizando." Empecé a tener problemas de nuevo, conocí otra muchacha que me ofreció otra visa en Lafayette. La encargada de esa planta no le gusto mi trabajo. Me faltó el respeto. Como nosotros estamos organizados, [los jefes de las plantas] también están organizados. Ellos todos se conocen.

Me regrese a Baton Rouge y trabajé por otra compañía. Durante mi tiempo ahí estuve viviendo en una casa con compañeros de trabajo. Era una casa de la compañía y teníamos que pagar renta a la compañía. La casa estaba muy sucia, con ratas y cucarachas. Eramos 23 per-

sonas viviendo ahí con solo tres baños y una mini cocina.

Cuando empecé no estuve muy involucrada con el movimiento. Ahora estoy más involucrada porque empecé a conocer de otros casos, los trabajadores empezamos a platicar entre nosotros y darnos cuenta de lo que estaba pasando y organizarnos para defendernos. Quiero evitar estas cosas que me han pasado a mi y a mis compañeras y compañeros. La Alianza de Trabajadores de Mariscos Y Pescado se formó oficialmente hace dos años y yo sirvo como vice-presidenta de la Alianza.

*¿Como son las condiciones para las mujeres en la industria?*

La paga no es la misma, a los hombres les pagan más. Claro que hay acoso sexual. Tenemos una tarea este año de buscar la manera de cómo concientizar a la gente que denuncien y no se queden calladas sobre esto. Hay muchas mujeres organizando.

*¿Que le inspira de este trabajo?*

Me inspira que más gente se están acercando a nosotros, hemos logrado que lleguen personas a apoyarnos, se nos han abierto las puertas para que la gente escuchen, que sepan como es el trabajo de los trabajadores huéspedes, y

muy inspirada porque hay mucho apoyo entre nosotros. Sabemos que no es fácil pero tenemos que salir adelante

*¿Tiene algún mensaje a personas que están intentando organizarse?*

No se queden callados, siempre va haber una puerta que se va abrir. Se tiene que perder el miedo. Todos los seres humanos tienen derechos no importa raza, color, gordo o flaca, todos tenemos derecho a trabajar. No somos objetos, tenemos sueños y nadie los deben de romper.

Queremos inspirar a personas aliadas a unirse a la causa, inspirar a personas que sean de aquí, que tengan las ganas de apoyar y el corazón para apoyar. Todos podemos apoyar, pero he visto que la gente ignora. Yo quiere que las personas en poder puedan ver como se trata la gente en las áreas rurales donde se procesa la comida que se come. Donde vive la gente que procesa lo que se pone en la boca. La comida ahora esta hecha con lágrimas, con malas condiciones de trabajo, no tenemos ninguna protección. Queremos inspirar a las personas que nos apoyen para que la industria cambie. Porque cuando se hace algo con amor va ser sano.



# Seafood Workers Alliance

## A conversation with Chayito

By C.D.

The Seafood Workers Alliance is a group made up of seafood industry workers in Louisiana who are organizing across the rural areas of the state to address the many injustices they face in the industry, such as forced labor, unfair wages, and workplace safety issues. These are the workers who produce and process the seafood that makes Louisiana famous, and they are making a call to allies and fellow workers to join them in this fight. Below are excerpts from a conversation with the vice-president of the Alliance, who goes by Chayito.

*Where are you from and how long have you been working in the United States?*

I'm from Sinaloa, Mexico. I came to the United States, invited by a friend who told me about a job at a crawfish plant in Baton Rouge. I have been working here for 11 years as a guest worker.

*How did you get to know the Seafood Workers' Alliance?*

Eleven years ago I met organizers from the Guest Worker Alliance. I had a problem at the crawfish plant I was working at, where the workers wanted to be paid more. They wanted 25 or 50

cents more per hour. I met two organizers who were helping the workers in their struggle. The boss was very upset, he disrespected the organizers. The boss got so angry he cut off the electricity, disrespected the workers, and sent for a truck to return all of the workers to Mexico. I decided to stay with a friend because I had a child in the hospital, and I had to work to pay for the clinic expenses. I started working in a taqueria and made tamales a few days a week. Here I was completely lost. We could not speak the language. It was difficult, but I endured, and I left before the visa expired.

After being in Mexico for a while, I wanted to come to work again. But when I went to hand over the copies of my passport to another company, a friend of my sister told me, "I can't bring you because the company does not want those who have been involved with in organizing." I started having problems again. I met another person who offered me another visa in Lafayette. The manager of that plant had problems with me, and he insulted me. As we are organized, [the bosses] are also organized. They all know each other.

I returned to Baton Rouge and worked for another company. During my

time there I was living in a house with co-workers. It was a company house, and we had to pay rent to the company. The house was very dirty, with rats and cockroaches. We were 23 people living there with only three bathrooms and a kitchenette.

When I started I was not very involved with the movement. Now I am more involved because I started to know about other cases. The workers began to talk among ourselves and realize what was happening, and we began to organize to defend ourselves. I want to avoid these things that have happened to me and my coworkers. The Seafood Workers' Alliance was formed two years ago, and I serve as vice president of the Alliance.

*What are the conditions like for women in the industry?*

The pay is not the same. Men are paid more. Of course there is sexual harassment. We have a task this year to find a way to raise awareness among people to make reports and not to remain silent about this issue. There are many women organizing.

*What inspires you in this work?*

It inspires me that more people are approaching us. We have managed to get people to support us. We have opened

the doors for people to listen, to learn about the experiences of guest workers, and I'm very inspired because there is a lot of support amongst ourselves. We know it's not easy, but we have to keep going.

*What is a message you have for people who are trying to get organized in their industry?*

Do not stay silent. There will always be a door that will open. You have to lose your fear. All human beings have rights no matter race, color, fat or skinny. We all have the right to work. We are not objects. We have dreams, and no one has the right to take them away.

We want to inspire allies to join the cause, inspire people who are from here, who have the will to support and the heart to support. We can all support, but I have seen that people like to ignore these issues. I want the people in power to be able to see how people are treated in the rural areas where the food that is eaten is processed. Where the people who process what they put in their mouths live. This food is made with tears, with bad working conditions. We have no protection. We want to inspire the people who support us to change the industry. Because when something is made with love, it will be healthy.