

In Mexican election Masses move left

By John Catalinotto

Some 53 percent of Mexicans who went to the polls elected Andrés Manuel López Obrador, popularly known as AMLO, as the next president of this country of 123 million people, the third most populous in the Western Hemisphere.

This landslide victory of AMLO against three other candidates of more right-wing and conservative establishment parties — the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the National Action Party (PAN), which together have ruled Mexico over the last 89 years — was the most lopsided electoral victory in Mexican history. His nearest rival got less than half AMLO's votes.

López Obrador's electoral coalition is also leading in votes for the lower house of the legislature in five out of nine state governments in play. Plus an AMLO ally, Claudia Sheinbaum, became the first woman elected mayor of vast Mexico City, the capital.

When AMLO's three rivals conceded on the night of July 1, Mexicans flooded the Zocalo Square in the capital with mass demonstrations to celebrate the victory and demonstrate their great expectations that a new era had begun. They expressed hope that in this new era the Mexican regime would be more sovereign, less repressive and less under the thumb of Washington, while providing more social programs aiding the poor and being free of the corruption that aids only a handful of oligarchs; government, police and military bribe-takers; criminals; and their imperialist contacts across the border.

The election of this more leftist candidate breaks with recent trends in Latin America, which have seen rightist presidents elected in Argentina and Colombia and “judicial coups” depose center-left leaders in Uruguay and Brazil.

When evaluating how much of an “earthquake” the election of AMLO is, it's good to keep in mind a useful quote from one of the founders of Marxist political theory, Friedrich Engels. In “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State,” he wrote: “Universal suf-

frage is the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more.”

Whatever the intentions and sincerity of elected officials, and even when these elected individuals are revolutionaries, their role in government still leaves the levers of real power — the army, the police, the justice system and today the media, not to leave out the banks — in the hands of the capitalist class that owns and controls it all.

In Mexico these levers are held by the

oligarchy and directly by U.S. imperialism. The Pentagon virtually commands the Mexican army. The FBI and the Drug Enforcement Agency operate throughout Mexico, entwined with and as corrupt as the local authorities. The U.S.-directed “war on drugs” has resulted in 200,000 people killed since 2006.

Only a massive upheaval that breaks apart this state can change social relations. Even carrying out substantial reforms will require mass actions much

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FRANCE 11



Florida Fighting back against transphobia, racism

By Devin Cole
Pensacola, Fla.

Three Black trans women in Jacksonville, Fla., have been murdered since February 2018: Celine Walker, Antashâ English and Cathalina James. A fourth unnamed victim was wounded in a shooting, but has survived.

This ongoing violence in Jacksonville has sparked an understandable but nonetheless horrifying fear that the murders are connected and are the work of a serial killer or serial killers who target Black trans women.

More might be known about the situation if the city of Jacksonville and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office would handle the cases properly. But, as usual, the officers of the capitalist, racist, transphobic establishment are dedicated to shrugging their shoulders and looking the other way while violence against transgender people surges. Even after their deaths, disrespect for these Black trans women has been continuous. The JSO has consistently misgendered the victims, referring to them only by their dead-names (birth-assigned names), and as "men who identify as women," "men dressed as women" and so forth. The authorities keep repeating all the negative phrases that only serve to perpetuate violence against trans people, particularly Black trans women. To add further insult to injury, the JSO has taken no step to investigate these murders as hate crimes, signalling that they do not deem trans lives worthy of justice.

Black trans women fight to survive at a very dangerous intersection of identities and class struggle. Capitalism is responsible for hundreds of years of racist injustice and concentrated violence against Black and multinational people, as well as women and transgender people. The people in whose existence those identities meet, like the

murdered Black trans women, suffer a massive wave of oppression. The capitalist establishment then mocks, disrespects and refuses them justice, continuing to use divide-and-conquer tactics to keep this group of people oppressed and exploited, and other workers from uniting to defend them.

In Pensacola, Fla., a transgender advocacy organization, Strive (Social Trans Initiative), serves as a trans advocacy organization that meets trans people's material needs. On June 30, Strive declared its first-ever Transgender State of Emergency, declaring Jacksonville an unsafe place for transgender people. While acknowledging that nowhere is safe for trans people, Strive urged that all should be on high alert in and around the Jacksonville area.

Strive also issued a continuous call to action in the form of phone-ins and email-ins to the Jacksonville city and sheriff, and to the state attorney, demanding these cases be investigated as hate crimes. A further demand was that all media personnel and the JSO acknowledge and apologize for misgendering and disrespecting the victims.

Though a core belief of Strive is its anti-cop stance, since these cases are now in the hands of the police, Strive is putting pressure on every available avenue to solve these murders and bring a killer, or killers, to light.

On July 5, in a second Trans State of Emergency declaration, Strive included a call for trans self-defense, saying: "Understand that self-defense is not the same as oppressive violence. It is not wrong to defend ourselves from reactionary attacks. This can be done however you feel comfortable: martial arts, firearm training, etc. Please seek some self-defense training."

Strive is asking for national solidarity, and for other organizations to join in the phone-ins and email-ins. We must put all available pressure on the city of Jacksonville and force them to meet demands.

For more information, go to Strive: facebook.com/socialtransinitiative/ □



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Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the never-ending quest for ever-greater profits. Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, joblessness and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it.

Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black and Brown youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you're interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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Climate change heat covers Northern Hemisphere

By G. Dunkel

From southern California to Scotland, to the misty British Isles and the Arctic coastline of Siberia, temperatures were way higher than ever recorded the last week of June and the first week of July. When temperatures in Siberia hit 90 degrees Fahrenheit, 50 degrees higher than normal, and the land breeze drove the ice pack out of sight — whether or not there's an official declaration of a Siberian heat wave is not really relevant — it's hot.

More than 113 million people in the United States were under heat warnings or advisories stretching from the Mississippi Valley, up to Chicago and over to Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Boston, according to the Weather Prediction Center of the National Weather Service.

Denver, Mount Washington, N.H., Burlington, Vt., and Montreal and Ottawa in Canada all set records for the heat index that combines heat and humidity.

In Europe, multiple heat index records were set in Scotland, the north of Ireland and Ireland. France set high temperature warnings in 21 departments, out of 94 administrative regions.

In Eurasia, records were set in Tbilisi, Georgia, and Yerevan, Armenia, as well as in southern Russia.

In South Asia, Pakistan, a very poor country with a large population, is normally very hot in summer. Temperatures of 105F are common, but when temperatures don't fall much at night, the humidity

remains high and daytime temperatures go above 110 and even to 122, it's unbearable. Workers who can't afford electricity for fans, much less fans, and millions of subsistence farmers, who do hard work in the heat of the day, face heat exhaustion.

According to the Dawn, a local English-language Pakistani website, more than 1,000 Pakistanis have already died in Karachi — the largest city in the country — and many more uncounted have died in rural areas and smaller cities. (dawn.com)

It's not just in poor countries where heat causes deaths. In Montreal, when the temperatures hit the high 90sF, poor people, many elderly, who live in basement apartments below ground level, suffered disproportionately. They can't use fans, and air conditioning is rare in Montreal. Hundreds were taken to the hospital by emergency services and 35 to 40 people died.

Did global warming create heat waves?

If global climate is getting warmer, heat waves will become more frequent and more intense. Compare global warming, which every reputable scientist considers is caused by human activity, to cigarette smoking. It is hard to "prove" that an individual with lung cancer got it because they smoked.

Scientists examined the physical stresses caused by smoking and their relationship to lung cancer. They also recorded the incidence of lung cancer among smokers versus its incidence among non-smokers. The combination of the stress as cause and statistics convinced them

smoking provoked lung cancer.

Similarly, it is hard to prove that a particular heat wave was caused by global warming. But when almost all of this planet's Northern Hemisphere is filled with 20-to-40 heat waves and thousands of people — mainly workers and farmers — are dying and crops needed to feed billions of people are withering in the fields, the assertion that global warming is causing these heat waves becomes much stronger.

In a press call covered by CNN on July 3, 2017, Texas Tech University climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe said, "With every heat wave, probably the number one question is, is it climate change, or is it not? Well, the answer is, it's both. We get heat waves naturally, but climate change is amping them up, it's giving them that extra energy, to make them even more serious, and have even greater impacts."

Even under Trump, the U.S. National Climate Assessment found that U.S. heat waves have already "become more frequent and intense," and the U.S. is shattering high temperature records far more frequently than it is shattering low temperature records. This assessment is generally applicable to the whole Northern Hemisphere.

Major population centers in Southern Asia, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka have their own particular concerns.

The Paris Accord set as a goal to keep global warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, a difficult goal now that Trump has with-

drawn the U.S. from the agreement. A June 25 article in Nature Geoscience theorizes that future global warming may actually be twice as warm as now projected by climate models.

"Observations of past warming periods suggest that a number of amplifying mechanisms, which are poorly represented in climate models, increase long-term warming beyond climate model projections," said lead author Prof. Hubertus Fischer of the University of Bern in a press briefing.

Current models don't take feedback loops into consideration. Take the heat wave on the Siberian coastline as an example. Land breezes drive the ice off shore, opening up more dark water to be heated by the sun and not reflected by the ice. This melts marine permafrost, which releases more heat-trapping methane gas, leading to more warming.

Heat kills more people in the U.S. than floods, lightning, tornadoes and hurricanes combined, according to National Weather Service statistical data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. If capitalism continues to ravage the globe, it is possible that the maintenance of human life, not to mention entire ecological systems, will be nearly impossible in large parts of the world.

We need a system change that will upend this impending catastrophe. We need a path to socialism that rejects "profit first" and acts for people's needs — and the planet's survival. □

Bryant Arroyo: On the inside, speaking out 'The world's first jailhouse environmentalist'

Part 3

Final part of three parts of the story of Bryant Arroyo, a prisoner and political activist in SCI Frackville, where Kelly conducted this interview.

By Ted Kelly
SCI Frackville, Pa.

In the 1990s, when Bryant Arroyo led an unprecedented kind of prison uprising, it was his friend and mentor Mumia Abu-Jamal who dubbed him "the world's first jailhouse environmentalist."

Writing in 2013, Mumia explained the background. "In 1998, a former Pennsylvania governor, Tom Ridge, invited an area businessman to join him on a trek to South Africa. He, John W. Rich Jr., was a power plant operator and a major landowner in the Mahanoy [Schuylkill] County area, a distressed, impoverished region where coal mines closed down decades ago. Rich met and made deals with the South African Sasol energy and chemical company, and before long, he announced plans for a major coal-to-liquid-gas project, literally right next door to the state prison in Mahanoy."

An official notice from the Environmental Protection Agency caught Bryant's eye among what he calls a "maelstrom" of other notices, regulations and advertisements tacked up on the bulletin board at Mahanoy. He pulled it down and told one of the bemused superintendents that he wanted to see the environmental impact statement for this coal gasification plant that was slated to be built 300 feet from the prison he was confined to. The results were clear — this plant was going to poison everyone in the facility.

So Bryant went up against SESOL, Bechtel, Chevron, Shell, Jack Rich, Tom

Ridge and Ed Rendell. He called it real "shoe-leather" organizing, walking the block and getting other prisoners to join him in stopping the construction of the plant. He managed to get the most precariously positioned inmates, LGBTQ folks, rival gangs and both Black and racist factions to cooperate with each other.

While circulating petitions among prisoners is expressly illegal, Bryant couldn't find any reason that he couldn't organize prisoners to send in their own letters. He changed the language in the text from "We," "Us" and "Our" to "I," "Me" and "Mine." The censors could only shrug their shoulders. Ironically, individualism provided the loophole for revolutionary collective action.

When the local paper ran a front-page story about the prisoner-led campaign to fight the chemical plant, Jack Rich and his cronies were apoplectic. Later that same week, inmates at Mahanoy could hear deafening construction noises from just beyond the walls. At certain vantage points in the yard, it was clear that Rich was clearing the area for construction, leveling the earth and cutting down trees.

So Bryant responded by getting another 500 prisoners to send letters. All told there were 902 letters, sent from a prison population of 2,300. To visualize what an astonishing accomplishment this is, imagine walking a prison cell block, knowing every third cell was occupied by a prisoner who risked severe retaliation for writing a letter signing on to this movement.

The class contradictions were so stark

that even some corrections officers in the prison quietly applauded his efforts, making small gestures of support from guard to inmate that are normally unheard of. Bryant says he learned "to judge a person by the content of their character, not the color of their uniform." After all, he says, "We're all locked in here together." The prison guards' union joined the opposition to the project.

In the end, the project was scrapped. Bryant Arroyo fought the corporate swindlers — and won.

One home, for all of us

Back at Frackville, Bryant is telling us about an interview he read with an astronaut who was on the International Space Station. He explains eloquently and in detail what living in zero gravity conditions does to the body, how the spinal column expands and how the astronauts are actually an inch or two taller when they return. Bryant was struck by the astronaut's description of the transcendent and mind-altering experience of seeing Earth from outside the Earth and how the petty barriers — walls, borders, white picket fences — distract us from the fact that we all have a single thing in common.

Bryant, despite himself, pauses for quite some time. He cannot proceed until collecting himself. "We all have one home. And no matter where you're headed, you're always trying to go from point A to point B. We're all trying to make our way home."

Bryant Arroyo has the compassionate heart of an environmentalist. Always when discussing the toxic effects of the

coal plant he helped block, he is adamant that this was about protecting prisoners, the guards, the community at large, but specifically about our "progeny" and the generations yet to come. Bryant, a father himself, is deeply concerned with safeguarding the health of children, who are so vulnerable to pollution and toxic waste. It is only appropriate that the educational program that enabled Bryant to get his GED diploma is named after Daniel Pennock, a 17-year-old boy who died in 1995 after toxic sludge was dumped by his home near Reading, Pa.

"When a child dies," Mumia wrote after the murder of Tamir Rice, "the natural order is torn, the stars weep and the earth quakes."

Whether they poison the child with sludge or lead or chemical dust, or they shoot him without 2 seconds' consideration, corporate moguls are inhuman in their disregard for children's lives. Bryant is stalwart in fighting against just this kind of inhumanity.

As we drove away from Frackville, I hastily scribbled notes on a legal pad I'd brought for the interview. Despite multiple assurances by prison staff leading up to the visit, Joe and I were denied clearance to bring in a pen and paper. Our reporters' clearance was mysteriously, conspicuously struck from the record. As I wrote down as much as I could remember from our conversation with this extraordinary individual, that unfathomable figure came back to me: there are 2.2 million others in U.S. prisons.

This was just one story. One story among millions. □



Protesters demand children be reunited

Rochester, N.Y.

WW PHOTO: LYDIA BAYONETA



More than 200 protesters gathered at Washington Square Park in blistering heat in Rochester, N.Y., on June 30 to protest the actions of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the federal government. With signs and songs they demanded that immigrant children forcibly separated from their parents be immediately reunited with them. The rally was supported by more than 10 local groups, including the International Action Center, whose banner attracted much favorable attention.

— Report by Gene Clancy

Houston

No children's 'slave quarters'!

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Houston's Free Los Niños Coalition held a militant demonstration on July 6 outside of a Southwest Key building being remodeled into a prison for unaccompanied minors crossing the Mexico/Texas border without an adult. Almost all speakers condemned not only the Donald Trump administration, but also both the Democrats and Republicans for their anti-immigrant policies and practices. Revolutionary militancy was in the air as speaker after speaker said they would not allow this children's prison to be opened.

Speakers included representatives of Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere (FIRE), Houston Socialist Movement, the Brown Berets de Houston, Code Pink, Texas Environmental

Justice Advocacy Services (TEJAS), the S.H.A.P.E. (Self-Help for African People through Education) Community Center, Familias Inmigrantes y Estudiantes en Lucha (FIEL), Refuse Fascism and Democratic Socialists of America.

Kofi Taharka, national chair of the National Black United Front, spoke loudly as he said, "A slave quarters on Emancipation Avenue? Hell no! Our community fought to get the city to rename this street from one honoring a Confederate general to one our ancestors would recognize: Emancipation Avenue.

"Emancipation Park on the south end of this street was founded by the Rev.



Jack Yates and other newly freed slaves in 1872. We will not allow a prison to be on the north end of Emancipation Avenue. Black Panther Carl Hampton was assassinated by Houston cops on this street.

"Yes, immigration is a Black issue. Anytime the government talks about prisons, they are speaking about Black people. We are here today in solidarity with everyone who wants to stop this prison," Taharka asserted. □



WW PHOTOS: GLORIA RUBAC

Stop Trump's war on im/migrants!

By Kathy Durkin

July 10 — The Trump administration's war on im/migrant families continues. Some 3,000 migrant children are still separated from their parents, which the Department of Health and Human Services admitted on July 9.

From May 7 to June 20, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency took migrant children from their parents' arms at the U.S./Mexico border under the White House's "zero tolerance" policy. This mandated that all adult immigrants crossing the border would be taken into federal custody and their children placed in detention facilities without them.

The White House xenophobe in chief had to back down from this horrific "family separation" policy when a mass movement arose opposing it. Publicly, he reversed his order on June 20 not out of compassion — but because the "visuals" were bad for his public image.

Federal Judge Dana Sabraw has ruled that all children separated at the border be reunited with their parents within 30 days of his June 26 order, and he decreed that all children under 5 years of age be returned to their parents by July 10. The government now claims that it can only locate 54 of the 102 children under 5 and asked for an extension of the deadline to deliver a proposed timeline on July 10.

Children are being held in detention

centers, many in terrible conditions, caged, alone and neglected, and scattered to 17 states. Some parents have been deported without their children, causing a number of them to join lawsuits against U.S. government agencies to regain custody. The reality is that many youngsters may never be reunited with their parents, and could even be adopted.

Because immigrants are not entitled to due process, they are not provided with public defenders when they go to court, even if they are children. The absurdity of this policy is evident when toddlers must appear in court alone and a judge asks them if they understand immigration law!

This callous disregard for migrant children has infuriated millions of people and spurred on activism — even acts of heroism.

Outrage breeds resistance

On July 4, a courageous woman, Patricia Okoumou, protested these inhumane detention policies by climbing partially up the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor. An immigrant from the Congo, Okoumou told the Guardian newspaper that she feared being shot or tranquilized by police, who surrounded her for four hours. She said to officers, "My life doesn't matter to me now, what matters to me is that in a democracy we are holding children in cages." (July 7) On July 10, Judge Sabraw said these were "firm

deadlines," and threatened to penalize the government if it doesn't comply.

Okoumou boldly told police, "You could shoot me the way you shot Claudia González and killed the trans woman," alluding, first, to the 20-year-old Indigenous Guatemalan woman killed by the U.S. Border Patrol in Texas in June and, second, to Roxana Hernández, a Honduran immigrant who died a brutal death in ICE custody in May.

Arrested and charged with three misdemeanors, Okoumou appeared in federal court on July 5. She sent a strong message that day wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the slogan: "White supremacy is terrorism." With legal help from Rise and Resist, Okoumou was released. Her next court appearance is Aug. 3.

Protests against family separations continue in Texas border cities. Congressional delegations visiting immigrant detention facilities on July 9 were met by La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE) activists in McAllen and by Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network members in Brownsville. LUPE, Texas Civil Rights Project and other forces are staging daily protests and a hunger strike until July 17 in McAllen.

'Abolish ICE!'

Demonstrations and encampments have been organized in front of Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities

throughout the country. Police attacks have not stopped these actions, and calls to "Abolish ICE!" are only growing louder. Workers World Party has supported these protests.

Meanwhile, activists continue to plague Trump's political cohorts. A group confronted Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell outside a Louisville, Ky., eatery on July 7, calling for ICE's abolition. A few miles away, hundreds of people in Occupy ICE were demonstrating at the city's ICE office, with the same message. An encampment had been going on there for several days.

The 45th president campaigned on a program of racism and xenophobia. He started his election with racist propaganda against people from Mexico. In the vilest way, he slandered the peoples of Haiti and the African continent. With a sweep of his pen, he ended temporary protected status for hundreds of thousands of immigrants from countries oppressed by imperialism. And with a big assist from the U.S. Supreme Court, he secured a ban preventing immigrants from five majority-Muslim countries from entering the U.S.

While people across the U.S. are rightfully demanding the reunification of migrant families, it is essential to show solidarity with all immigrants who are targets of the racist Trump government.

Houston organizer Gloria Rubac contributed to this article.

Portland Occupy ICE begins hunger strike

By Roy St. Warren, Josh Allan and Lyn Neeley
Portland, Ore.

#OccupyICEPDX continues to face off with federal agents after three weeks of developing a thriving, organized resistance with more than 50 tents, hundreds of protesters and tremendous community support. Occupiers shut down the Immigration and Customs Enforcement office here for two weeks and began a hunger strike on July 4.

Protesters are not intimidated by the cops' use of arrests, tear gas and sharpshooters. They say they are here to stay until their demands are met: Abolish ICE, reunite immigrant families and stop incarcerating asylum seekers.

The occupation has developed a sophisticated community structure centered around a common anti-ICE, anti-capitalist program. Occupy teams include maintenance and engineering, food and water distribution, medical, child care and even group meditation. The People of Color caucus organizes 24-hour guard duty, security guidelines and decisions concerning interactions with cops, and policies concerning photos and videos. They hold nightly vigils and regular rallies centered around the voices of people directly affected by U.S. imperialism.



WW PHOTO: SCOTT WILLIAMS

Occupy ICE occupation in Portland, Ore., July 6.

#OccupyICEPDX has forged ties between various leftist groups in Portland and raised more than \$15,000 for Pueblo Unido, a Portland legal defense fund for immigrants.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler said the ICE agency was “on the wrong track” and that the city would not attempt to clear the occupation camp. He said there were no plans to interfere with the peaceful protests.

However, Portland police have a sordid history of violating the city's sanctuary city status by supporting ICE and Department of Homeland Security agents.

On June 28, city cops helped DHS agents by closing streets in the vicinity of the ICE office to make way for a raid of the encampment. They cleared the sidewalk in front of the building's entrance and erected a “no climb” fence around the perimeter of the facility.

The fence obstructs the sidewalk on all sides, yet the city has not issued any citations for blocking public property — as they routinely do for

houseless people. It makes the sidewalk inaccessible for those using mobility devices, in violation of Americans with Disabilities Act regulations.

On July 3, the Portland facility reopened. Several media outlets reported that the occupation was disbanded.

Yet the truth on the ground is very different: the occupiers maintain they will not stop until ICE is abolished. They see the U.S.-manufactured im/migrant crisis as a crisis of imperialism and a direct result of U.S. intervention. People seeking asylum in the U.S. aren't fleeing from

natural disasters, but rather from the violent, unlivable conditions created by U.S. hegemony in countries around the world.

OccupyICE has spread to other cities around the country. It echoes other occupy movements of workers and oppressed, like the Paris Commune, the general strikes of the early 20th century, Occupy Wall Street and Standing Rock. It presents an opportunity to expand the workers' struggle into deeper arenas of the class struggle and build.

A broad-based, global anti-war movement is intrinsic to solving the im/migrant and refugee issue. While the capitalist media frame immigrants and refugees as a crisis, the real crisis results from capitalism itself. Unaffordable housing and health care, extreme inequality, racist police violence, pollution and climate change are all real issues facing workers and oppressed peoples.

Racist attacks on migrants and refugees by the U.S. ruling class serve to divide the working class and distract us from the real culprits behind the serious problems we face today. But through continued proletarian internationalism, workers in both imperialist core countries and in colonized countries can fight together against their common enemy: the ruling class. □

Police attack on ICE encampment condemned

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Police raided an encampment outside the Philadelphia Immigration Customs and Enforcement facility for the second time on July 5. It was the fourth day of the people's protest.

Ten minutes before the early afternoon attack, police told protesters they had to move water coolers and supplies off a sidewalk and clear space in front of the building. As people began to comply and legal supporters tried to clarify the situation, the police, using bicycles, pushed through the camp, knocking down tents and canopies, throwing possessions aside and pushing people who questioned their attack. Seven people were arrested.

The encampment outside the Philadelphia ICE facility, the most aggressive facility in the U.S., followed days of protests beginning July 2 around three demands: Abolish ICE; close the federal immigrant detention facility in Berks County, Pa., where hundreds of families, including children, have been held indefinitely; and end local collaboration with federal immigration officials, including the Preliminary Arraignment Reporting System (PARS), a database of arrests that the city has contractually shared with ICE.

A press conference following the police assault was held later that day. Police threatened to seize sound equipment shortly before it was scheduled to start, leaving speakers without amplification against a noisy backdrop of city trash trucks removing debris from the camp.

Despite the police attempt to silence their voices, speakers delivered their messages and demands loud and clear. The conference was covered by most major news media.

Speakers outlined the encampment's three demands and noted that Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf has the power to close the Berks facility with an executive order. Im/migrant activists spoke on

the connection between U.S. imperialist wars and intervention abroad and the crisis of mass migration.

Nancy Nguyen, a child of Vietnamese refugees to the U.S. and executive director of VietLead, related the history of the U.S. war on Southeast Asia, where more bombs were dropped than during all previous wars combined. “We are here now, but since 2003, over 1,475 people from Vietnam and Cambodia have been deported. We are seeking justice and we stand in solidarity with the people who have been occupying this space. More eyes are on ICE now.”

Colombian activist Mara Hanao, from Philly Socialist, related a similar experience of migrants driven to come to the U.S. because of oppression due to U.S. intervention and attacks on workers by multinational corporations. She recalled the massacre of 2,000 banana plantation workers by the United Fruit Company in 1928, which contributed to the drive of people in Colombia to flee to the north.

The Rev. Katie Aikins of the Tabernacle United Church stated, “The U.S. is a nation bathing in the ideology of white supremacy since its founding. It uses this rhetoric to terrorize people who don't look like us. PARS is part of the problem of creating a terrorizing existence for immigrants.”

Representing Workers World Party and Philadelphia REAL (Racial, Economic and Legal) Justice, Cornelius Moody spoke to the issue of accountability and of resisting a system unaccountable to



Nancy Nguyen, VietLead



Cornelius Moody, REAL Justice and Workers World

the people: “This police force in our city, ICE and the U.S. government are not accountable to the communities they police and oppress. If you have a system that is acting upon you oppressively and is not accountable to you, as a community you have a right and responsibility to resist that force.”

“Philadelphia police, with increased funding of over \$650 million per year, have shown that they are incapable of being accountable to the city of Philadelphia. We have to hold them accountable ourselves — by whatever means necessary. Whether it is the Philadelphia police force, ICE or the U.S. military, we have to disempower, disarm and disband them, and for the people we have to do the opposite, for ourselves.”

Also speaking for REAL Justice, Anthony Smith, first generation U.S. born, from an immigrant family, raised that “Black people in Philadelphia and all across the country suffer from a very intense so-called separation of families. The military, police and ICE all function together to destroy families and communities.”

“The system isn't broken. It's working as it always has been. ... And until we decide that we will take power from the state and deal with our communities ourselves, we will be caught in this constant loop. We do not need the police or ICE to deal with issues we can deal with ourselves! Abolish the police! Abolish ICE!”

Miguel Andrade, with the immigrant rights group Juntos, expressed thanks to the people who came out at the encampment who are not fighting for immigrant communities, but with them: “White supremacy has been a disease in this country since 1492. Police come out of a racist institution of hunting down runaway slaves. Border

patrols come from a renegade group of the KKK. ICE comes out of intense Islamophobia after the 9/11 attacks.

“White supremacy has been fueling and perpetuating every single attack that communities of color have been facing for decades. It is time to stop it. ICE didn't start under [President Donald] Trump. The deportation machine that Trump is using white supremacy to fuel was handed over to him by the [President Barack] Obama administration.

“ICE has been terrorizing our communities for decades. My father was deported when I was 10 years old. I know what family separation at the hands of the U.S. government feels like. That is something you never recover from. I haven't seen my father in person for over 10 years. But I'm still fighting.

“My community has been fighting against ICE for years. We do not give credit to Mayor [Jim] Kenney or [former Mayor Michael] Nutter for declaring Philadelphia a sanctuary city. The policy that Kenney was in federal court to defend was written and strategized by the immigrant community of Philadelphia. We the people pushed them to do it.

“We must push them again. The ICE office here is the most aggressive in the country. Immigrant communities have been fighting this for years.

“Don't let this end after the occupation ends. Spread the word that this is happening. Amplify the voices of the immigrant communities. Don't speak for us, but make space. Follow the leadership and messaging of immigrant communities. Abolish ICE!” □



WW PHOTOS: JOE PIETTE
Miguel Andrade, Juntos



Interview with Debbie Africa on MOVE

By Betsey Piette

Following a 15-month-long siege on a MOVE compound in Philadelphia's Powelton Village neighborhood, police launched a major assault on the collective's home on Aug. 8, 1978. Nine MOVE members were arrested and convicted of third-degree murder and conspiracy in connection with the death of a Philadelphia police officer during the raid. Despite the lack of any evidence linking any of them to the shooting, they were given 30- to 100-year sentences. All nine became eligible for parole in 2008, but have been repeatedly denied.

On June 16, Debbie Sims Africa, minister of education for the MOVE organization at the time of her incarceration, became the first of the MOVE 9 to be paroled after nearly four decades in prison. She was reunited with her daughter Whit and son Mike Jr. for the first time in nearly 40 years.

Mike Africa Sr., Debbie's spouse and one of the remaining six MOVE members still incarcerated, becomes eligible for parole again in September. Two members, Merle Africa and Phil Africa, died in prison.

On July 6, this writer met with Debbie and her son, Michael Africa Jr., on the porch of their home in Delaware County, Pa., surrounded by a wonderful garden on the first cool day after a weeklong heat wave.

We started out by talking about how Debbie came to be involved with MOVE. I wanted to know who Debbie Sims Africa was before she became one of the MOVE 9. Debbie responded by describing her experience, and that of her brothers and sisters, as young teenagers growing up in Philadelphia's Black Bottom neighborhood, where there was always something going on: fights, police violence, etc.

Debbie made her long story short: "My brother got into a fight with one of his friends — ended up with my sister on probation. My boyfriend, Mike Africa Sr., got my mother, who, realizing summer was coming and didn't want us in the streets, reached out to some MOVE people she knew. They came to the house and talked with us for hours, giving us sound advice, talking about how violence wasn't the solution to problems. That we should try to avoid it at all costs.

"It wasn't called MOVE at the time, but one of their members invited my two brothers to come to their place in Powelton Village to work at a car wash they ran. This was around 1972 or '73. My brothers loved it. They didn't want to come home and they didn't. They got involved in MOVE activities, in speaking engagements — at the time they were in full throttle speaking out against injustice. They loved it, taking care of the dogs and going to study sessions that MOVE founder John Africa held, educating people how to avoid violence in their communities and on police brutality — the things that made people's lives miserable.

"My older sister took dictation for John Africa. My mother, aunt and cousin were all involved at that point, but I didn't want to go there. I was in high school and aspiring to be a graduate.

"Then something happened. My mother kept talking about guidelines she called 'the book,' written by John Africa. She kept talking about it, and the logic of it, and finally she let me read a part about education."

Debbie described being so moved and inspired by what she read that she wanted to read it to the world. "I took it to school and let my history teacher read it. It was



Debbie Africa with Betsy Piette.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

so strong and powerful that people might just look at it as too technical — but the truth is technical. He took it and read it, but he didn't want to give it back. I was worried I'd get into trouble because I had to return it. He finally brought it back, and I asked what he thought. He said, 'It's a lot. It is the truth.'

When Debbie Sims graduated a few months later, she started coming to the MOVE compound regularly, getting involved with activities — whether it was anti-zoo actions because of the abuse of animals, or at the police districts where someone had been brutalized. She noted, "John Africa's teachings really lock you into the reality of what's really going on. The rest is history."

When asked if she ever thought about what life would have been like if she had not met MOVE, Debbie responded: "Being young at that time, I can only imagine that it would have not have been good. My mom was married, but separated, with five children. It would have not been good for her. Growing up in a neighborhood like that, I can only see a lot of tragedy happening.

"My mom was struggling for my brothers. When I look back on their friends, and my friends, I see a lot of them were already in prison, some of them for life. Although we did come to jail, it was at least for a purpose. It wasn't gang-related. It was political."

Today, like too many of Philadelphia's predominantly Black and poor communities, the Black Bottom area has been decimated by gentrification, with a majority of its original residents pushed out to make way for the expansions of the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University and Presbyterian Hospital. It has been renamed "University City."

Powelton Village under police siege

In May 1977, police obtained a court order requiring MOVE to vacate their Powelton Village home. What followed was a tense siege of the surrounding neighborhood for more than a year, including shutting off water to the house and preventing food or aid to be sent to the family.

What was Debbie's experience during the siege, while she was in the house with a very young child? "We were pretty much confined in our house. It was restrictive. We couldn't come down off a platform outside the house, or we would have been arrested. We had to make do with what we had.

"The city had shut off water and electricity. When the city was about to put up the blockade, lots of supporters came and brought us food and supplies. We also had a lot of support from neighbors, who gave us food, water and canned goods.

"At every point we were about to run

out of water, I kid you not, it rained. We used the rainwater to bathe the kids and for drinking water. I lived in an upstairs room where I could sit and collect rainwater from outside."

Due to litigation restrictions on what she could say about the actual police raid on Aug. 8, 1978, we did not discuss the event that led to the arrests and imprisonment of the MOVE 9. However, while incarcerated, Debbie wrote on her experience for onamove.org.

Then 22, Debbie was in the house during the 1978 attack with her 23-month-old daughter. She was eight-and-a-half months pregnant with her second child.

Debbie described the terror of the police attack. When family members woke up to find police surrounding their home, they quickly gathered up children and dogs and went to the basement, where they thought they would be safe.

"We huddled together, scared because we knew cops had lots of guns and other weapons. We didn't know how they were gonna do it, but we knew their plan was to kill us. Cops were yelling over a loud-speaker for us to come out the house ... but we didn't trust them, so nobody went out there."

Debbie described how police used fire hoses to forcefully spray water through a broken window in the basement. The impact was enough to throw two-by-four oak beams across the room, literally tearing the house apart and killing dogs in the process. Then, a second wave of water came through another window, catching them in a crossfire of water. The cops started throwing smoke bombs and tear gas into the basement and shooting directly at the people inside. The smoke was so dense Debbie could not see her child's face.

Having had her almost 2-year-old daughter snatched from her arms when she was taken into custody, and giving birth to her son a month later in prison, only to have him taken from her as well, Debbie could relate to the anguish of immigrant parents being forcibly separated from their children today.

"While my daughter and son were eventually given back to MOVE people, they went through a lot. These kinds of separations have been going on for a long time. I'm happy to see that this situation is getting so much coverage and that it is being challenged. It's hard when your baby is being taken away and you don't know where they are. It was hard for me, and I knew where they were. I'm glad they are starting to reunite the families that are seeking asylum."

Life in prison prior to parole

We spent some time talking about Debbie's experience in prison and what's

next for the campaign to win release for the remaining MOVE 9 members. Before Debbie was sentenced, she and the other MOVE 9 members were in a county house of corrections for three years. After sentencing, the women were all taken to State Correctional Institution Muncy.

"When we got there, they just put us in the hole, no ifs, ands or buts," she recalled. "When Merle asked when we could come out, a security lieutenant said, 'Your minimum sentence is 30 years. You can come out in 30 years.' The county prison had advised Muncy to 'give them hard work and they would be okay.' The state didn't listen.

"We hadn't done anything wrong, so we went on a hunger strike for 45 to 50 days to draw attention to what was going on and to get justice. They would bring us food, and we would refuse to eat it. We lost so much weight they could see it and it scared them. That forced them to let us out of the hole.

"They actually took us to court and sued us just to take our blood samples. When we were finally released into general population, they jumped us and took our blood, and made the excuse that 'now you can be in population.' It was their intention for us to be there all the time."

Later the women were moved to SCI Cambridge Springs which, like Muncy, was a former college campus. "They turn a lot of old college campuses into prisons. The cells may look like dorm rooms, but we were not living in college conditions," Debbie explained. "There were locks on our doors and other jail restrictions. We were not able to move around, not able to make phone calls that much and had limited contact with our families. Eventually, phone calls and visits were made available.

"Up until my release, I was in a room with other MOVE sisters. We didn't generally socialize with everybody because we have very specific beliefs and consistent principles we follow. Because of that, we carry ourselves a certain way, and people are drawn to us.

"The other prisoners saw our mental toughness and physical strength, that we were running and exercising and that we care for people and respect them. We always had a strong impact on what happened in the prison, and there was support for us. During the end of my incarceration, I even had officers wish me good luck and say it was time for all of us to go. We did our time and should be released."

Free the MOVE 9

The conversation turned to the work to win parole for the MOVE 9 members who remain imprisoned, more than nine years after they became eligible for parole. "We are asking for MOVE people to be released. We were given 30 to 100 years, and we've done over our minimum — nearly 40 years at this point — and we've earned the right to be paroled," Debbie explained.

"People can send letters to the MOVE organization in Philadelphia, since letters need to be written in a certain way, and we can make sure they get to the proper place. On Aug. 5, there will be a program to commemorate 40 years of MOVE people being in prison. It includes a short run/walk, a panel discussion and entertainers. People are welcome to join and give donations if they can. More information can be found on onamove.org.

"People have already done so much in support year after year, decade after decade. We've had so much good support, often from a small, consistent group of strong supporters who have never let us

Prison conditions breed hopelessness

down. It's just been awesome for me coming home, but it's still surreal."

Much has changed since Debbie Sims Africa was imprisoned in 1978, including the political movement. We talked about the recent developments of the Black Lives Matter movement, new groups opposing police brutality and the most recent movement to abolish Immigration and Customs Enforcement. I asked Debbie if she had any advice for the young activists of today.

She responded: "To the people who really want to work for peace and justice, it does take a lot of hard work and commitment. But in the end, it is worth it. We're not talking about violence. We're talking about revolution. We have to understand what we want and what we are fighting for.

"Be consistent and do what it takes, whether it's demonstrations or just standing in silence. If people can find a peaceful solution to their problems then they should do it, but we have to be unified. It makes it harder that everyone has different ways of doing things, but we need to be moving in the same direction.

"My message would be to stay focused on what your purpose is. Don't get diverted by anybody. Don't let people or other things pull you away from what you want to do. Stay focused."

As our time wound down, I turned to Debbie's son, Mike, to ask about how his three weeks reunited with his mother have gone. Mike responded: "It has been all that I hoped it would be. There's been the back and forth, with my mom, my sister and my wife teaming up on me, but it has been beautiful."

Debbie interjected by noting that one principal of MOVE is the recognition of equality between women and men.

Mike continued: "I told her it feels like you've been gone for a short vacation. The whole transition has been so smooth, things fell into place. I really didn't know what to expect. I didn't plan — it's been one foot in front of the other.

"We are still learning each other, but the fact that we are both MOVE members and have the same beliefs helps. MOVE does not believe in killing life unnecessarily. There were fruit flies in our house, and there was one right in front of her, and she saw it. There was a part of me that forgot she is a MOVE member too, so I expected her to swat it, her being a new person in the house. I was wondering how was she going to react. When she just ignored the fly, I remember feeling happy about it. I don't have to teach her our beliefs. This is a person who has known them longer than I do.

"It's all love! It's all great!" □

By Jared Ware

The deadliest incident of violence in a U.S. prison in a quarter century took place at the Lee Correctional Institution in South Carolina on April 15.

According to multiple reports, including South Carolina Department of Corrections Director Bryan Stirling's own, prison guards and emergency medical technicians made no attempt to break things up or lend medical aid until hours after the fight was over, while imprisoned people were beaten and stabbed. Seven people were killed and dozens injured, with at least 22 requiring hospitalization.

I interviewed three individuals from prisons inside the South Carolina Department of Corrections on April 22. One of them identified himself as a member of Jailhouse

Lawyers Speak, a group of imprisoned human rights advocates who have made national calls to action for a prisoner-led strike in response to conditions they feel are responsible for the violence and hopelessness in prisons across the U.S.

These three individuals, identified as D, S and E to protect their identities and prevent retaliation by prison officials, highlighted the impacts of policies pushed by President Bill Clinton's administration and implemented by states across the country. They point to the dehumanization of prisoners and challenge our conception of "gangs" — which do not take into account the ways in which incarcerated people are forced to create their own collective means for safety, survival and camaraderie in a situation where hope is the scarcest commodity.

The three urge the public to reconsider the nature and source of violence in prisons and the absence of human dignity and a rehabilitative environment. They present actionable solutions to mitigate some of the harm caused by prisons on our ultimate path toward shedding carceral responses to societal needs.

When I wrote this introduction on May 2, South Carolina prisoners confirmed that all Level 2 and 3 facilities had remained on lockdown since April 15. This

An April 15 rebellion at a South Carolina maximum security prison was the deadliest prison uprising since the Lucasville Uprising on April 11-21, 1993. (Workers World, tinyurl.com/y9grqhd7) South Carolina prison inmates have called for a National Prison Strike from Aug. 21 to Sept. 9. Demands and support actions are at incarceratedworkers.org. The following is an edited interview with some of the prisoners.



means people imprisoned had been denied any freedom of movement, regular access to showers, recreation or meals outside their cells.

Jared Ware: Firstly, there have been a lot of things that have gone down in South Carolina prisons over the last year or two. If you could lay down some of that context, because I think a lot of people don't understand some of the things that prisoners have been dealing with and how those conditions might contribute to a sense of hopelessness.

D: I'm going to take you back a little step here — to 1996 at least [to] Bill Clinton's Prison Litigation Reform Act and Antiterrorism [and Effective Death Penalty] Act. These acts, that went into full effect in 1996, initiated 85 percent Truth In Sentencing laws [a movement to end parole and increase the length of prison sentences, as well as ensuring that prisoners convicted of certain offenses served at least 85 percent of their sentences] throughout most of the states today.

It's not necessarily something that incubated inside South Carolina; it was actually national. There was a domino effect. But [before] 1996 in the state of South Carolina, there was no such thing as a natural life sentence. There was no such thing as a forever-type sentence, where individuals thought that they weren't going to be able to get out.

Even if you had a violent offense, or a labeled-violent offense, you still had something known as a work release date. You still had some type of eligibility to go to work release, and that also meant eligibility to go to work at some place on the street, or go home even on the weekends in South Carolina. Individuals had the opportunity to make state pay [a system where the state paid prisoners for work],

even when you [were] at what was known as the max yard. These yards [were] clearly open; everybody could roam and move around.

But when 1996 set in, this mindset started to kick in, as Hillary Clinton called [it], of locking down these "super predators." The government called it the War on Drugs, which I call the war on the Black and Brown community. All these things is playing into effect, and that created the environment inside.

We found fences starting to be wrapped into the prisons; we found prisoners that was labeled as violent offenders, was sent into these fences, and caged into buildings all day. We found that the food started deteriorating; we saw the clothes removed; and we saw the ways that [imprisoned people] could make money removed out of the system. There was no longer any type of state pay. Even though state pay was very minimal, it was still an opportunity to buy a bar of soap or a Honey Bun. We saw that visitation was being restricted.

It was just a host of things that started being incubated. And then the hopelessness set in, because we started having these life sentences coming through under 85 percent [required time served], where prisoners knew they were never going to see daylight again. We started having what we call "football numbers": 80, 100, 150 years coming through 85 percent.

So this is where actually a lot of the problems started accumulating. Not only that, but education was removed by the prison system. Any type of Pell Grants, all that was gone. Education, technical colleges, everything was removed. So that's a little bit of what started to shape the environment here. □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

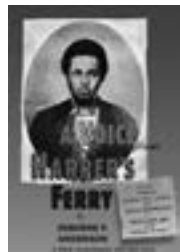
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A Voice from Harper's Ferry

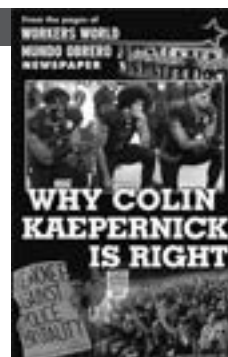
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appeared in pamphlet form in 1861 right after the start of the Civil War. Includes essays by Mumia Abu-Jamal, Monica Moorehead and Vince Copeland.

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Examines the special relationship with the state that has allowed the Ku Klux Klan to exist for over a century despite its criminal history of lynchings, murders, and intimidation.



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WHY COLIN KAEPERNICK IS RIGHT

Articles from Workers World/Mundo Obrero

Excerpt: 'Last October, Colin Kaepernick, the African-American former quarterback for National Football League's San Francisco 49ers, was asked after a game why he was wearing a Muhammad Ali t-shirt. He said, "To pay homage. [Ali] fought a very similar fight and was trying to do what's right for the people."

Chicago forum exposes U.S. attacks on Korea

By Kaitlyn Griffith
Chicago

Deirdre Griswold, a founding member of Workers World Party and editor of WW newspaper, spoke at a July 7 forum titled “Korea: Behind the Headlines.” The forum, which attracted over 35 people to Chicago’s United Electrical Workers union hall, was co-sponsored by Chicago ALBA Solidarity Committee and Workers World Party and endorsed by Anakbayan Chicago, Chicago Anti-War Coalition, Chicago Committee Against War and Racism and Freedom Road Socialist Organization.

Griswold based her presentation on her firsthand experiences visiting the northern and southern regions of the Korean peninsula over several decades. She provided historical context to the current political climate, including the ongoing talks between the U.S. and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.



WW PHOTO: KAITLYN GRIFFITH

She laid out an historical timeline beginning with the unsuccessful U.S. attempts at gunboat domination of Korea in the 19th century, the subsequent takeover of Korea by Japanese imperialism, the development of the Korean armed liberation struggle under Kim Il Sung’s leadership, the devastating bombings of the north by the U.S. during the Korean War, the division of the country engineered by the U.S. after World War II, the establishment of a U.S. puppet regime in the

south, and the development of socialist foundations in the north.

Griswold condemned the intimidation tactics employed by the U.S. against the DPRK, including military wargame exercises and open calls for the DPRK’s annihilation, as well as the expansion of Camp Humphreys, the largest U.S. overseas military base in the world.

Refuting the widespread lies about DPRK aggressiveness and emphasizing the vast difference between the roles of the U.S. and North Korean military, Griswold challenged the audience: “When have you seen a DPRK soldier outside the DPRK? Where have you seen DPRK weapons deployed outside that country? You haven’t because all their soldiers and weapons remain in the DPRK. They are there to protect their country, not to spread aggression.” Griswold added that the DPRK’s nuclear program serves solely as a deterrent and has thus far proved effective.

Griswold also emphasized the perspective of the South Korean people, who are largely supportive of peace with the DPRK, reject U.S. provocations and seek to reunite the peninsula. She described protests of tens of thousands in the south, which led to a significant change in the South Korean government last year and has forced the U.S. to the negotiating table. Even though South Koreans face imprisonment under their government’s National Security Act for publicly expressing any support to the DPRK, Griswold explained, their deep yearning for peace and unification drove many into taking a stand.

The forum was co-chaired by Stan Smith of Chicago ALBA and Katherine Cavanaugh of WWP. Maya Arcilla of Anakbayan also spoke, emphasizing the important links between the struggles against U.S. imperialism in the Philippines and Korea. □

Opportunism aids imperialist aggression

Commentary

By Christian Noakes

In imperialist Western Europe, North America and the U.S. in particular, a perennial issue is again rearing its ugly head within progressive circles — involving vital support for imperialism and military aggression.

As has been the case historically, this support ranges from denial of self-determination for oppressed countries — countries of the Global South — to jingoistic participation in a drive toward war.

In mid-2018 it is all too common for such so-called progressives to refuse to support the right of Korean, Venezuelan and Syrian self-determination. Some also refuse to denounce U.S. military and economic aggression against these countries. They line up their positions with the campaign of U.S. politicians and the corporate media to demonize the countries under attack.

The ability of U.S. imperialism to construct a popular consensus for war and subversion against these countries relies in part on the willingness of these “progressives” to line up. Lining up, in effect, is a type of opportunism, a caving-in to the war drive under the pressure of public opinion manufactured by the imperialist ruling class.

To understand the consequences and function of this opportunism in acts of imperialist aggression, it is helpful to consider the blow to internationalism over 100 years ago during the buildup to World War I.

World War I, 1914-18

The Second International was a worldwide organization of parties calling themselves Socialist or Social Democratic; some in Western Europe had a mass following of workers. Representatives of these parties had pledged at international meetings to resist any moves of their countries’ ruling classes to wage war, which would be an imperialist war of conquest. This position was meant to facilitate working-class revolution through international class solidarity.

Of course the ruling class, the militarists and all the rightist elements in each country promoted chauvinist, hostile attitudes toward all foreigners. It was the duty of the leaders of the Second International to fight against these attitudes among the masses and especially among the workers. Instead, the positions taken at the international conferences proved

illusory in many parties.

While these leaders did not themselves promote the hostile, almost racist, stereotypes, they found “progressive” pretexts for war.

In Germany, the Social Democratic Party voted to fund the war, with much of the leadership arguing for the need to wage war against what was then Czarist Russia. From left to right, German society largely accepted nationalistic class collaboration, which was framed as an imperative to defend German culture and society from “backward” Russian influence.

In France and Britain, the social democratic leaders, with few exceptions, railed against German militarism and in support of their own capitalist democracies.

Presenting imperialism as a progressive endeavor or defense against repression and backwardness promoted bourgeois nationalism that ultimately tore the Second International apart and pitted workers against one another. The Second International was dissolved in 1916 after its organizations in the separate European countries supported their own national bourgeoisies and followed them to war — on both sides.

There was a material basis for this treachery. Imperialist exploitation of the colonies enabled the ruling class, as Workers World contributing editor Fred Goldstein wrote in his book “Capitalism at a Dead End,” to “throw crumbs at the upper strata of the working class.” These sectors allowed the development of a privileged labor leadership and workers’ parties that were no longer committed to revolution.

In Russia social democratic parties were split. Lenin’s Bolsheviks supported international working-class solidarity and maintained the principle of anti-imperialism. Segments of the Mensheviks supported Russian involvement, rejecting revolution in favor of opportunistic class collaboration with bourgeois nationalists.

Having experienced the social-imperialism that divided socialists during World War I, Lenin was keenly aware that “the fight against imperialism is a sham ... unless it is inseparably bound with the fight against opportunism.” (Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism)

21st-century ‘opportunism’

Just as colonizers asserted the beneficence inherent in the “white man’s burden” — a racist concept — to impose

Western imperialism on the world, so too do today’s “progressives” promote the narrative that U.S. imperialism is a gift to the Global South.

Those committed to anti-imperialist principles are often attacked by people who claim to uphold socialism and international solidarity. The Western progressives’ stated reason for hostility against countries in the Global South is often that they do not see these countries as socialist enough or democratic enough to deserve their support.

This is a completely inconsistent and hypocritical standard. Most of these “progressive” imperialists would rather defend the right of self-determination for Western capitalist countries.

A selective standard infects the left. It makes some people enthusiastic supporters of imperialist aggression. It makes many others at least reluctant to speak out against imperialism for fear of breaking with public opinion that is manufactured by pervasive bourgeois ideology.

This ideological domination is the root of 21st-century opportunism. Those then find a pretext in the problems faced by the demonized countries, which themselves are struggling to defend their independence from imperialism.

Just as was the case for WWI, the marching lines of imperialism are presented as a march of progress.

What should be a question of self-determination is derailed by red herrings that opportunists would never use as a pretext for the subjugation of their own country. It is an insidious means of undermining internationalism for the sake of the imperialist powers.

Although rarely left of center, liberals have likewise shown themselves to be enthusiastic “progressive” imperialists. Media figures like Rachel Maddow have criticized Trump for negotiating with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Maddow, and many more like her, prefer that the U.S. enforce its will on the DPRK rather than come to any sort of diplomatic agreement.

Maddow went so far as to suggest that their meeting was orchestrated by Russia to undermine U.S. interests in Asia. As ridiculous as it is, this militaristic thinking should not be dismissed as fringe conspiracy theory or mere sectarian pettiness.

Nor should it be seen as unique to U.S.-Korean relations. John Oliver, another media figure who enjoys credibility as a progressive, recently dedicated

an entire show of his HBO series to denouncing supporters of the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. Oliver showed himself a willing collaborator of U.S. imperialism by downplaying Washington’s hostility to Venezuela and glorifying the violent and undemocratic U.S.-backed opposition there.

To denounce the recent Venezuelan election and the legitimacy of the Bolivarian Revolution more generally, Oliver took to using misleading abbreviated quotes and a highly selective history of U.S. imperialism in the region. He did not mention the U.S.-backed coup in 2002, which tried to overthrow the democratically elected Chávez or any other facts that might reveal the extent to which Washington has consistently tried to undermine Venezuelan self-determination.

Even Democracy Now!, the most prominent alternative broadcast outlet that often provides a left voice, has fallen into the same trap with regard particularly to Syria. It has provided alleged “independent” corroboration of the imperialist narrative touting regime change in Syria, broadcasting reports from the White Helmets grouping and other obviously biased sources that have been exposed as aligned with the imperialists.

The progressive façade propagated by liberals has made it easier for Washington to carry out military aggression without arousing mass resistance. It also provides an in for opportunist segments of the left to support imperialist maneuvers while disguising this as leftist criticism. This was the case during this year’s Left Forum where opportunists attacked Black Alliance for Peace organizer Ajamu Baraka for his support of Syrian self-determination. (workers.org, June 14)

In adopting and enforcing imperialist lies against the people of Venezuela, Korea and Syria, these media — along with political organizations that take the same positions — align themselves with the U.S. ruling class in support of nationalist military aggression.

The historic lessons of the Second International teach the working class and its parties that they must confront opportunism on the left if they are to adequately oppose imperialism. This requires rooting out bourgeois colonial ideology, which is used to vilify self-determination of countries in the Global South and present the liberation of those countries as a hazard for people living in the imperialist countries. □

Mexico: Masses move left

Continued from page 1

more powerful than dropping votes into ballot boxes.

Who is AMLO?

López Obrador has never been part of a socialist or communist movement. He is a politician with nationalist roots, harking back to Lázaro Cárdenas, who was president from 1934 to 1940 and promoted local capitalism — as opposed to collaborating with imperialism — while allowing the workers and poor to win some benefits. AMLO was allied with Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the son of that historic politician, who narrowly lost a presidential election in 1988 that was rigged against him.

Expelled from the PRI, López Obrador became the first elected mayor of Mexico City in 1997. As a presidential candidate of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) in 2006, AMLO would have won the election then had it not been stolen from him. In 2012 he lost again. When the PRD drifted rightward, he broke with it.

AMLO ran this year in an ad hoc coalition called Together We Will Make History (Juntos) consisting of his own party, the Movement for National Regeneration (MORENA) — a party that depended on his popularity without an entrenched structure — and two smaller parties with contradictory programs: the Workers Party (PT), a party with Maoist roots, and the PES, a right-wing party with an evangelical Christian origin that opposes abortion and LGBTQ rights. The alliance with PES might have won some evangelical votes, but it also brought legitimate criticism from activist women and the LGBTQ movement.

Probably the contemporary Latin American politician who AMLO most

closely resembles is Lula da Silva of Brazil. Lula's Workers Party had closer ties to the union movement, however, and Brazil has both a larger economy and larger population than Mexico, and it's further away from the U.S.

In the course of this year's elections for president and many local offices, some 130 candidates and political activists were assassinated. While those who pay the death squads were unable to stop the masses from voting for AMLO in the national election — and his supporters made sure that most votes were counted — the killings changed many of the local contests. There are many who fear he may still be targeted in the period between now and Dec. 1, when he is scheduled to take office.

José Humberto Montes Oca Luna, a leader of the combative Union of Electrical Workers of Mexico (SEM), commenting on the possibility of an AMLO election, told *Resumen America Latina* in a June 23 article: "The mere fact of having a government that does not kill us and persecute us will be a great step forward and will allow the left to reorganize itself, to fill the political vacuum left by the lack of an alternative that can really represent us as the left."

Mexico is a pluricultural land of many Indigenous nations speaking 89 different languages, with a revolutionary history. The clearest message of the election was to show that, within the range of realistic choices, what most Mexican people want is sovereignty, more social opportunities and benefits for the poor, and less violence and corruption. While the election alone doesn't bring this, it shows what is possible should the mass of voters become a cohesive force. □



PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Venezuelan Consulate celebrates independence

The Venezuelan Consulate in San Francisco held a ceremony in celebration of Venezuelan Independence Day on July 5 at the Simón Bolívar statue in the United Nations Plaza. Consul General Antonio José Cordero Rodríguez addressed

the small crowd, honoring Bolívar, considered the "father of the nation," with a floral offering. A reception was held at the San Francisco Consulate office afterwards.

— Terri Kay

ECUADOR

20,000 protest to support former Pres. Correa

By Michael Otto
Quito, Ecuador

A massive manifestation of popular support for ex-President Rafael Correa took place on the sunny afternoon of July 5 here in Quito, the capital. The action was at the same time a dynamic expression of growing Ecuadorian resistance against current President Lenin Moreno's moves to restore the conservative policies that preceded the fledgling Citizen Revolution that began with Correa's first term in 2007.

That the Citizen Revolution now lies in ruins was evident in the banners and the chants of some 20,000 people who flocked here from all parts of the country. Ecuador is a little smaller than Arizona, with a population of 16 million people.

Thousands marched through Quito's center in a 10-block-long protest that ended in Plaza Santo Domingo. Protests in Guayaquil and other cities emphasized the same demands: end the political persecution of Correa and free political prisoner, former Vice President Jorge Glas.

Ecuador's people elected Moreno along with Glas in April 2017, expecting him to continue the progressive agenda of the Citizen Revolution. But during his campaign Moreno was making secret deals to turn over control of the public electric company to the Abdala Bucaram mafia, which later earned him the title of "professional impostor."

Glas blew the whistle on the deal, the so-called Bucaramato, last Aug. 2. Two months later Glas was imprisoned.

Wealthy oligarchs own nearly all of Ecuador's media, which was hostile to and

demonized Correa and the Citizen Revolution. Instead of combating this corrupt media, Moreno used the vengeful hatred it fostered between 2007 and 2017 and then employed Ecuador's judicial system to persecute and destroy his former comrades.

'Lawfare' used to serve oligarchs and imperialism

The law as a weapon of political warfare, called "lawfare," was also used against presidents Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff in Brazil and Cristina Kirchner in Argentina, all of whom Washington saw as obstacles to imperialist domination. As Kirchner observed, the objective of lawfare is "to hide the economic disaster that the neoliberal governments are carrying out in the region." (perfil.com, July 9)

All who served in Correa's regime have become judicial targets of the soft coup d'état that started with the preventive detention and frame-up of Glas in October 2017. Some 70,000 public employees will now lose their jobs in the name of "austerity" to fix a manufactured fiscal crisis, while the government has forgiven billions of U.S. dollars in unpaid taxes owed by the rich.

Correa has been indicted for kidnapping a former public official. The official at the time was a fugitive from Ecuador law, living in neighboring Colombia and engaged in sabotage against Ecuador as an agent of then right-wing Colombian President Alvaro Uribe.

On July 3, Judge Daniela Camacho requested that Interpol arrest Correa and return him to Ecuador for preventive detention. This charge is even more lu-

dicrous than the cases against Glas and Lula da Silva. Ten or more cases against Correa are now underway by the Ecuadorian judiciary.

Marchers: 'Rafael Correa is still our leader'

Amparo Castillo, leader of La Resistencia Ciudadana, explained to *Workers World* that untold numbers of public workers joined the march after work, along with many "like us, the people who ride the bus because we don't own cars" and "other people of the heart who love Rafael Correa and many others who are thankful for the benefits that came from him."

Compañera Castillo supports Correa and denounces especially the judicial and constitutional irregularities promoted by the current government. She says that people marched because we wanted to tell Moreno that "Raphael Correa is still our leader."

Huge banners from every province and hundreds of handwritten placards told a story: "Correa amigo, the people are with you." "Freedom for Jorge Glas." "We are all Rafael Correa." "No to Dictatorship." "The New Economic Law Serves Only the Oligarchy." "There Is No Rule of Law in Ecuador." "The Homeland Is Not for Sale." "No Justice No Peace."

The corrupt media ignored the Quito march, but after sunset when the rally in the Plaza Santo Domingo was ending, they blamed the protesters for violence. Castillo witnessed cops on motorcycles attacking demonstrators with batons. She saw a young man knocked down by one cop on a "moto" and then run over by

another. Things got desperate when ambulances did not respond to her 911 calls for assistance.

Angela Cayetano, originally from Quito, traveled from New York City to represent the International Action Center on the march and to find a way to involve the International Action Center in legal and political support for Jorge Glas.

The media have confused people, but recent polls find that more than 50 percent of Ecuadorians don't believe a word that Moreno says. Cayetano told *Workers World*, "More and more people are not happy in Ecuador and want to heat up the streets to take [Moreno] out."

Compañera Cayetano observed that the July 5 march was much larger than the protest held in Quito on April 10, which she also attended. Based on reports from her family members who live in Quito, she highlighted the fact that even some people who were longtime critics of Correa were marching on July 5.

Correista Wellington Echegaray told *Workers World* that 250 Ecuadorian immigrants demonstrated international solidarity in New York, joined by their allies on the afternoon of July 5.

Echegaray and Cayetano are active in collecting signatures to register the new MANA party, whose leaders organized the demonstrations. Ecuadorian leaders plan to organize more national marches to build the MANA party network and mobilize people against political persecution and austerity measures that Washington and the International Monetary Fund have imposed as part of their neoliberal demands. □

Capitalist baby killers

In the course of one week in July, baby formula monopolies exposed that the drive for capitalist profits kills infants, and the Trump gang showed how an imperialist regime serves these monopolies — or tries to — whatever ruthless means it takes. Good that they failed.

Capitalist monopolies strive for profits above all other goals. The Donald Trump administration not only aids and abets these crimes, it does so in such a blatant way that it is impossible to ignore.

A 2016 study by The Lancet, one of the world's most prestigious medical journals, found breastfeeding could prevent 80,000 child deaths a year globally. That means Nestlé, based in Switzerland, and Abbott Laboratories, based in the United States, among others, have already contributed to millions of children's deaths on a worldwide scale. Abbott was a big contributor to Donald Trump's inauguration ceremony.

These companies have killed millions of babies over decades by aggressively promoting their baby formula. Although they know it's a lie, they claim their product is more healthful than breast milk from the mother. They also imply in their advertising that breastfeeding is what poor women do who don't know better.

No formula to date is more nutritious than breast milk, but that's not itself the cause of the deaths. The main problem is that in countries where safe drinking water is difficult to obtain, mixing dry formula with local water can provoke diarrhea or other illnesses that kill babies. Breast milk also provides immunity to diseases through antibodies passed from mother to child.

Even if local water is drinkable and refrigeration available, the formula can cost more money than people have. To extend the life of the formula, the baby's

caregiver is tempted to add more water, and the thinned-out drink is inadequate to nourish the baby. This also happens in poor families in wealthier countries.

Aware of these problems, the World Health Organization has tried to limit the use of formula, especially in poorer countries around the globe. The World Health Organization promotes breastfeeding as a health measure to save the lives of babies and improve their nutrition.

Nestlé, Abbott Laboratories and others, in their relentless drive for profits, are trying to expand the \$11.5 billion world market in baby formula. They are growing desperate, because in wealthier countries, especially in the United States, more mothers, for various reasons, are choosing to breastfeed and buying less formula. This leads to the companies' aggressive and false advertising.

Aware of this growing aggressive-

ness, WHO tried to get agreement for a standard resolution to promote breastfeeding in member countries and to continue to limit false advertising of the formula monopolies. Ecuador was prepared to introduce the resolution.

That's when U.S. imperialism elbowed in, threatening Ecuador with sanctions if it introduced the resolution. When Ecuador backed off — after all, no small country likes to be in Washington's gun sights — the U.S. threatened any other country that might want to introduce it.

That means the Trump administration was using the economic and diplomatic weight of U.S. imperialism to promote policies that kill babies.

Russia finally introduced the measure. And it passed. After the uproar in health agencies around the world, the U.S. was even forced to vote for the resolution.

A small victory and a big lesson. □

Trump's tariff war an attack on workers

By G. Dunkel

The Trump administration imposed tariffs at 12:01 a.m. on July 6 on \$34 billion worth of Chinese products. The Chinese government immediately countered with its own tariffs on U.S. pork, soybeans and automobiles.

"The wrong actions of the U.S. have brazenly violated the rules of the World Trade Organization, attacked the whole world's economic sustainability and obstructed the global economy's recovery," Lu Kang, a spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry, said in a daily news briefing. "It will bring disaster to multinational corporations, small and medium businesses and normal consumers across the world."

China's Ministry of Commerce asserted that the United States "has launched the biggest trade war in economic history so far." (New York Times, July 6)

Trump is threatening ultimately to impose tariffs on \$450 billion worth of goods currently imported each year from China. He has also imposed tariffs on goods imported from Mexico and Canada as well as from the European Union. A tariff is basically a tax on goods imported into a country.

Trump argues that tariffs on steel and aluminum are necessary to bolster U.S. production and "protect U.S. national security," since the metals are necessary in weapons production. Trump also argues that tariffs will "protect" and generate jobs for workers in these industries.

What is indisputable is that prices will rise for workers. Steel and aluminum are used to create a lot of necessities — from cans for food to buildings and bridges — and steel and aluminum will be more expensive with the tariffs. Trump's tariff war

has sentenced U.S. workers to higher prices, which hit retired people and others on fixed incomes particularly hard, no matter what the impact turns out to be on the overall economy.

But a closer look at tariffs, as well as manufacturing technology, shows how U.S. workers will also get hit through job loss.

Tariffs and technology target workers

While tariffs might be a boost to steel and aluminum manufacturers, other companies that use these metals, previously cheaper when imported, will lose out — and have to cut jobs.

The Trump tariff on steel and aluminum will hit hardest on imports from Canada, top supplier to the U.S. in 2017, especially on the U.S. auto industry. A 2004 Border Transportation Partnership study shows that 257,000 jobs in Michigan and \$13 billion in annual production depend on production links between Detroit and the bordering city of Windsor, Ontario.

General Motors stated on June 28 that a new wave of tariffs on its products could lead to "less investment, fewer jobs and lower wages." Workers would find car prices substantially increasing, with the cost of less expensive cars jumping the most. Workers will lose jobs as increased prices lead to reduced sales.

The Mercatus Center, a market research think tank at George Mason University, points out: "As a result of new import taxes on steel, the largest nail manufacturer in the United States is on the verge of closing. The Mid-Continent Nail company, based in Missouri, has already laid off 12 percent of its workforce." Mid-Continent represents a small part of the U.S. economy, but its dilemma shows



what a tariff war can do to workers here.

Historically, the Smoot-Hawley tariff, which went into effect in 1930 and certainly contributed to the severity of the Great Depression, reduced international trade by over 60 percent. Economist Paul Krugman estimates that the new U.S. tariffs and responses to them could reduce international trade by 70 percent. That means the 10 million U.S. workers engaged in international trade could face large job losses as a result. (New York Times, June 17)

Even if tariffs on foreign competitors increase the profits of U.S.-based steel and aluminum companies, there is no evidence these businesses will hire more workers.

Technological advances in manufacturing mean that fewer workers can produce more goods, and use of technology continues to reinforce that trend. According to the American Society for Mechanical Engineering: "In 2015, manufacturing output per manufacturing worker was \$482,242; by contrast, each manufacturing worker in 2000 produced \$336,847 in 2015 dollars. In 1976, the inflation-adjusted production was just \$276,525." (tinyurl.com/y9fy9f7r)

ASME points out that, with increased factory automation, between 2000 and 2016, U.S. workers lost 5 million jobs, even as manufacturing output has grown.

So if tariffs could eliminate all manufacturing trade deficits with other countries, that still won't come close to bringing back jobs lost to technology.

Independent action by workers needed

In Great Britain, facing a 25 percent tariff on its steel, the steelworkers union, which is called Community, pointed out that although these tariffs will offer U.S. steel companies some protection at a time when steel is being overproduced

globally, it will endanger the jobs of workers.

Roy Rickhuss, the general secretary of Community, said: "This news is deeply worrying for the UK steel industry. Donald Trump is putting jobs at risk on both sides of the Atlantic." (community-tu.org)

The United Steelworkers union represents workers in both the U.S. and Canada. President Leo Gerard generally supports Trump's trade policies, but wants Canada exempted. Trump currently opposes exemptions, so some USW members — those workers in the U.S. engaged in steel production — would benefit from the tariff policies while workers in Canada won't.

The U.S. government is in the process of renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement. NAFTA has regulated trade among Canada, Mexico and the U.S. since Jan. 1, 1994. This trade amounts to \$600 billion a year. NAFTA gave an opening to U.S. agriculture that let it wipe out millions of Mexican farmers, while providing U.S. manufacturers with readier access to low-wage workers. It also intensified the U.S. domination of the much smaller Canadian economy.

Despite advantages to capitalists on both sides of the border from the easy flow of goods and services, Trump has threatened to walk away from NAFTA if it is not reconfigured to favor the U.S. even more.

Rather than urging exemptions from tariffs that hit some of their members, unions should defend the interests of all workers. As Workers World Party founder Sam Marcy wrote in 1993 about the role of labor: "To go along [with U.S. trade policy] is to become a silent partner to the devastating role of U.S. finance capital abroad — and at home. ... Labor's real objective should be to forge a solidarity agreement among the trade unions" internationally. (tinyurl.com/y9jynjrh)

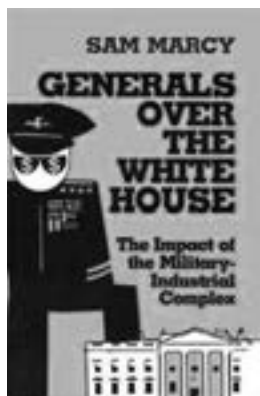
In the words of the workers' hymn "Solidarity Forever":

"When the union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run,

There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun;

Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one,

But the union makes us strong." □



The Impact of the Military-Industrial Complex

"Our view of the military differs fundamentally from the anti-militarism of the liberal and progressive elements in capitalist society. They fail to recognize that the structure of capitalist society, that is, the relationship between the basic classes, determines the politics of the capitalist state, no matter which policy the governing group may pursue. This policy is inevitably imperialist and today inexorably serves the military-industrial complex, which, willy-nilly, is propelled in the direction of imperialist war."

Free pamphlet online at:
workers.org/book/generals-over-the-white-house/

Germany

Protest week held to ‘Stop Ramstein’ AFB

Guilliard is an anti-war activist and analyst living in Heidelberg, Germany.

By Joachim Guilliard
Ramstein AFB, Germany

As the final action of a “Stop Ramstein” protest week against the largest U.S. Air Force base outside the United States, about 2,500 anti-war activists marched to and held a rally at the main gate of Ramstein AFB in Germany. Around 300 activists succeeded in symbolically blocking the access to the main gate for 45 minutes.

“Stop Ramstein” is a nationwide German campaign supported by numerous peace groups, left-wing organizations and individuals. It is directed primarily against the central role the air base plays in the U.S. drone war in the Middle East and Africa.

Among the speakers at the final rally were Sahra Wagenknecht, faction leader of the party Die Linke (The Left Party) in the Bundestag (Lower House), and Ann Wright, a retired U.S. Army colonel and then a U.S. State Department official who publicly resigned in direct protest of the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The U.S. military uses the relay station in Ramstein for communication with the killer drones, which carry out attacks with no legal due process — what many call “lynch justice” — against people who Washington claims are terror suspects. The drones have already killed thousands of uninvolved civilians in addition to targeted people.

At times, drone attacks have massacred entire wedding parties because the



PHOTO: JOACHIM GUILLIARD

U.S. suspected enemy combatants were among them.

The campaign is also directed against the equally central role played by the huge base in U.S. and NATO’s illegal wars. Operations centers in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria have been and are coordinating combat operations by the U.S. Air Force and the armed forces of other NATO states. A significant part of the supplies to operational areas of the U.S. armed forces also pass through the airport.

Action week diverse

Although there were half as many demonstrators on the last day as in the two previous years, overall the action week, which culminated in the demonstration, was even more diverse than the previous ones. More than 200 people attended

the 40 or so workshops of the four-day “Peace Workshop,” and 600 attended an evening event highlighting the aggressive policies of the Western imperialist states against Russia and the poisonous role of the media.

As in the previous year, activists against foreign military bases from 12 countries — including Pat Elder and Phil Wilayto from the U.S., Giuseppe Firrincieli from Italy, and Hoyhon Choi from South Korea — met to exchange experiences and strengthen international networking for national and regional activities. Around 600 campers organized a large protest camp not far from the air base.

Since the missions of the killer drones are crimes under both German and international law, the “Stop Ramstein” campaign demands that the German govern-

ment must immediately stop the control of these drones via Ramstein. The demonstrators also demand the closure of the military base.

Under the terms of the contract with the U.S., the German government could simply terminate the contracts on which deployment of the U.S. armed forces is based, after giving two years’ notice.

“Kill orders are arranged at the touch of a button. These are just outrageous crimes! And it is unacceptable that they be supported here, from German soil, in any way!” said Sahra Wagenknecht to the participants at the closing rally.

Referring to the wars against Iraq and Afghanistan, Wagenknecht demanded that in the future there should not be a single German region from which wars of aggression could be fought. Such activity is prohibited by the German Constitution.

“There are over 1,000 U.S. military bases around the world, and none of them exist to ensure the security of those countries,” continued the prominent leftist politician.

The well-known theologian and writer Eugen Drewermann, who spoke after Wagenknecht, reminded the demonstrators that the U.S. military has bombed seven predominantly Muslim countries since 2001. Referring to the German government’s role, he said: “We are involved in these actions, and we are partly responsible. We must finally reject this policy. We Germans have every reason to press the brake, with all our might, to correct old mistakes.”

Translation by Workers World Managing Editor John Catalinotto.

France

Strategy changes for striking railroad workers

By Rémy Herrera
Paris

The “reformist” (CFDT) and right-wing (UNSA) union federations officially exited the struggle against the management of the SNCF, the French national railroad company, on June 28. But the combative union confederations, the CGT and Sud-Rail, which between them represent more than 50 percent of railway union members, announced their intent to continue mobilizing together in July — and probably even later in the summer.

Their strategy, however, will change. Since the beginning of April, they have conducted two days of walkouts followed by three days of work, which they call a “off-and-on strike.” Establishing the calendar of strike days well in advance allowed passengers to plan alternate travel solutions. But it also let SNCF management arrange to mitigate the effects of the strike.

So CGT and Sud-Rail have decided to reveal the dates of work stoppages only a few days ahead, targeting them to coincide with the days most people leave for their monthlong summer vacation. The week-end of July 6-7 is the first, followed by an action involving freight trains on July 11.

President Macron’s promises that no jobs would be lost lasted only a few hours. SNCF management has already announced that the company’s freight division will cut 700 jobs by 2021. What is the pretext? They expect the deficit incurred by this branch to increase “because of” losses caused by the strike!

The railway workers, many of whom lost more than 30 days of salary over the last three months, are ultimately being held responsible for these layoffs!

And, shamelessly, the CFDT and UNSA union confederations, after dropping out of the strike movement — as was expected — are begging for crumbs in negotiations with the company’s human resource department over the new “collective agreement for rail transport” that is to replace the former law regulating conditions for railway workers. As the saying goes, “When the bosses decide to restore slavery, the ‘reformists’ will negotiate with their masters over the size of the slaves’ chains.”

Another mobilization grows

At the same time, another large-scale mobilization is developing, historic also in its strength, determination and duration. Energy workers have been fighting for over 10 weeks in a very dynamic and massive strike led by young workers, which started in Marseille. At the call of the CGT energy federation, electricians and gas workers moved into action, cooperating with and supporting the railway workers’ strike, with quite similar demands but specific to their sector, in the spirit of solidarity to defend public services.

Mobilization grows

Since mid-June, this mobilization has been growing. It includes workers at Ene-dis, a subsidiary of Électricité de France (EDF), the leading electricity supplier in Europe; and Gaz Réseau Distribution

France (GRDF), a subsidiary of Engie (formerly GDF Suez), the main distributor of natural gas in Europe. By the end of June, workers had blocked nearly 300 worksites and occupied more than half of them.

These strikes were at first “off-and-on” before becoming extended and even unlimited — making this mobilization the largest strike in the French energy sector in the last ten years. The atmosphere at the strike sites is often welcoming and family-like, reforging broad bonds of local solidarity.

Infuriated by the astronomical dividends paid to private shareholders, the strikers are on the offensive. They are demanding wage increases of at least 400 euros (\$464) per month, permanent hiring of colleagues currently on fixed-term or temporary contracts, cancellation of scheduled job cuts, return of outsourced work, and nationalization of the energy sector to make it a true benefit for public service consumers — and not for the capitalists.

This strike is the culmination of the numerous powerful struggles led by electricians and gas workers over the past two

years, which included the “days of anger” organized over several months in early 2017. Given the scale of the rebellion, the big-business media are imposing a total censorship of information. The frightened employers and government are impatiently awaiting the start of the summer vacation period in August, when they assume the struggles will run out of steam.

Terrified at the risk that the struggle will spread, the ruling class is counting on the fragmentation of the workforce that has resulted from years of privatization and the dismemberment of the public sector. Bonuses for employees who stay on the job are even being discussed in the nuclear and high voltage lines sectors.

What will happen when vacationers return, when the people’s anger against Macron is renewed, and when the hope of change is reborn?

Herrera is a Marxist economist, a researcher at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), who works at the Centre d’Économie de la Sorbonne, Paris. WW staff translated this article.



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Filadelfia, a 4 de julio.

Desde adentro, hablando de las cárceles

2da Parte

‘El primer prisionero ambientalista en el mundo’

Segunda y última parte de la entrevista con Bryant Arroyo, prisionero dentro del cárcel a SCI Frackville, Pensilvania.

Por Ted Kelly

Años más tarde, cuando Bryant Arroyo encabezó un tipo de levantamiento sin precedentes en la prisión, fue su amigo y mentor Mumia Abu-Jamal quien lo apodó “el primer prisionero ambientalista en el mundo”.

Escribiendo en el 2013, Mumia explicó el contexto. “En 1998, un ex gobernador de Pensilvania, Tom Ridge, invitó a un empresario del área a unirse a él en un viaje a Sudáfrica. El empresario John W. Rich Jr., era un operador de planta de energía y un terrateniente importante en el área del condado de Mahanoy Susquehanna, una región empobrecida y en dificultades donde las minas de carbón cerraron hace décadas. Rich se reunió e hizo tratos con la empresa de energía y químicos SASOL de Sudáfrica, y poco tiempo después, anunció planes para un importante proyecto de convertido de carbón a gas líquido, literalmente al lado de la prisión estatal en Mahanoy”.

Un aviso oficial de la Agencia de Protección Ambiental captó la atención de Bryant entre lo que él llama una “vorágine” de otros avisos, regulaciones y anuncios clavados en el tablón de anuncios en Mahanoy. Lo sacó y le preguntó a uno de los desconcertados superintendentes que quería ver la declaración de impacto ambiental de esta planta de gasificación de carbón que estaba programada para construirse a 300 pies de la prisión a la que estaba confinado. Los resultados eran claros: esta planta iba a envenenar a todos en la instalación.

Así que Bryant se enfrentó a SASOL, Bechtel, Chevron, Shell, Jack Rich, Tom Ridge y Ed Rendell. Calificó la campaña como una básica, caminando por el bloque de celdas y haciendo que otros prisioneros se unieran a él



Bryant Arroyo y Ted Kelley

FOTO: BENJAMIN IRVIN

para detener la construcción de la planta. Consiguió que los reclusos más precariamente posicionados, las personas LGBTQ, las pandillas rivales y tanto las facciones negras como las racistas cooperaran entre sí.

Si bien es ilegal circular peticiones entre prisioneros, Bryant no pudo encontrar ninguna razón por la cual no pudiera organizar a los presos para que enviaran sus propias cartas. Cambió el lenguaje en el texto de “nosotros” a “yo”, y “nuestro” a “mi” y “mío”. Los censores solo podían encogerse de hombros. Irónicamente, el individualismo proporcionó la salida para la acción colectiva revolucionaria.

Cuando el periódico local publicó una historia en primera plana sobre la campaña liderada por los prisioneros para luchar contra la planta química, Jack Rich y sus compinches quedaron apopléjicos. Más tarde esa misma semana, los reclusos en Mahanoy podían oír ruidos ensordecedores de construcción cerca de las paredes. Desde ciertos puntos de observación en el patio, se veía claro que Rich estaba limpiando el área para comenzar la construcción, nivelando la tierra y talando árboles.

Así que Bryant respondió consiguiendo que otros 500 prisioneros enviaran cartas. En total, hubo 902 cartas enviadas de una población carcelaria de 2.300. Para visualizar cuán asombroso fue este logro, imagínese caminando por un bloque de celdas de la prisión, sabiendo que cada tercera celda estaba ocupada por un prisionero que arriesgaba sufrir una severa represalia por escribir una carta inscribiéndose a este movimiento.

Las contradicciones de clase eran tan crudas, que incluso algunos oficiales correccionales de la prisión aplaudieron en silencio sus esfuerzos, haciendo inusuales pequeños gestos de apoyo a los prisioneros. Bryant dice que aprendió “a juzgar a una persona por el contenido de su carácter, no por el color de su uniforme”. Después de todo, dice: “Todos estamos aquí encerrados juntos”. El sindicato de guardias se unió a la oposición del proyecto.

Al final, el proyecto fue desechado. Bryant Arroyo luchó contra los estafadores corporativos, y ganó.

Una casa, para todos nosotros

De vuelta a Frackville, Bryant nos cuenta acerca de una entrevista que leyó de un astronauta que estaba en la Estación Espacial Internacional. Explica con elocuencia y en detalle lo que vivir en condiciones de gravedad cero le hace al cuerpo, cómo se expande la columna vertebral y cómo los astronautas en realidad son una o dos pulgadas más altos cuando regresan. Bryant quedó impresionado por la descripción que hace el astronauta de la experiencia trascendente y alucinante de ver la Tierra desde fuera de la Tierra y cómo las pequeñas barreras (muros, bordes, cercados blancos) nos distraen del hecho de que todos tenemos una sola cosa en común.

Bryant, a su pesar, hace una pausa durante bastante tiempo. No puede continuar hasta poner en orden sus pensamientos. “Todos tenemos un hogar. Y no importa hacia dónde te diriges, siempre intentas ir del punto A al punto B. Todos intentamos ir a nuestra casa”.

Bryant Arroyo tiene el corazón compasivo de un ecologista. Siempre cuando discutía los efectos tóxicos de la planta de carbón que ayudó a bloquear, él es inflexible en recalcar que se trataba de proteger a los prisioneros, a los guardias, a la comunidad en general, pero específicamente a nuestra “progenie” y las generaciones futuras. Bryant, siendo padre, está profundamente preocupado por salvaguardar la salud de los niños, que son tan vulnerables a la contaminación y al desperdicio tóxico. Es oportuno decir que el programa educativo que le permitió a Bryant obtener su diploma de GED lleva el nombre de Daniel Pennock, un niño de 17 años que murió en 1995 después de que se vertiera lodo tóxico al lado de su casa cerca de Reading, Pensilvania.

“Cuando un niño muere”, escribió Mumia después del asesinato de Tamir Rice, “el orden natural se rompe, las estrellas lloran y la tierra tiembla”.

Ya sea que envenenen al niño con lodo o plomo o polvo químico, o le disparen sin considerarlo dos segundos, los magnates corporativos son inhumanos en su desprecio por las vidas de los niños. Bryant es categórico en la lucha contra este tipo de inhumanidad.

Mientras nos alejábamos de Frackville, garabateé apresuradamente notas en una libreta legal que había traído para la entrevista. A pesar de las múltiples garantías del personal penitenciario previo a la visita, a Joe y a mí se nos negó la autorización para traer papel y un bolígrafo. La autorización como reporteros fue misteriosamente eliminada del registro. Mientras escribía todo lo que podía recordar de nuestra conversación con este extraordinario individuo, volví a pensar en esa incomprensible cifra: hay 2,2 millones de personas más en las cárceles de Estados Unidos.

Esta fue solo una historia. Una historia entre millones. □

TRIBUNAL INTERNACIONAL sobre los Crímenes de EUA contra PUERTO RICO

27 de octubre de 2018

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Acusamos a EUA:

De la destrucción de la economía de PR; de la represión de su lucha histórica de liberación, del movimiento independentista y sus héroes y heroínas libertarias;

De la imposición de un modelo económico parasitario que no intentaba desarrollar la autosuficiencia, incluyendo la alimentaria tan básica para el mínimo sustento;



De la imposición de una ciudadanía que facilitaba el flujo de mano de obra barata y carne de cañón en sus cruentas guerras;

De la imposición de una deuda ilegal y una Junta de Control Fiscal que representa a los mismos que causaron esta debacle, como lobos cuidando ovejas;



De la crisis actual – luego de los devastadores huracanes Irma y María – que ha sido incrementada enormemente por las políticas coloniales que priorizan el capital antes que las necesidades humanas básicas y la salud del planeta;



Acusamos al gobierno de EUA de negligencia criminal por su respuesta a la devastación de los huracanes, forzando a un pueblo a emigrar de su patria, con un siniestro plan de reestructurar Puerto Rico.



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