

As U.S. fires tear gas at Mexico border,

Solidarity with
refugees grows

By M. Matsemela-Ali Odom
San Diego

Nov. 25 — This morning the San Diego Migrant and Refugee Solidarity Coalition held an International Day of Action in Solidarity with the Caravan and Exodus from Central America with the hundreds of migrants who have already reached the border at Tijuana, Baja California. Later in the day U.S. border police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at refugees trying to cross into the U.S.

The MRSC, a multiracial collective of grassroots and radical organizations, grew out of a coalition that has been protesting the Otay Mesa migrant detention center for many months. Union del Barrio offers key leadership to the coalition, which includes members of Colectivo Zapatista, Border Angels, American Indian Movement, Workers World Party, Party for Socialism and Liberation, Committee Against Police Brutality-San Diego, Palestinian Youth Movement and many other groups.

Concerned that groups from outside the San Diego area have “parachuted in” with little-to-no regard for local organizers, the MRSC issued a call focused on the needs and demands of people in San Diego and Tijuana. The group’s national call contained six demands: respect the right to asylum; process the asylum claims; acknowledge the role of U.S. intervention in Central America causing this exodus; increase international solidarity, including from the U.N. and Red Cross; release migrants in detention centers; and prosecute anyone who violates the human rights of asylum seekers.

Transnational solidarity

About 500 activists gathered at Larsen Field, a local park near the U.S.-Mexico border. There a multinational group of speakers addressed the crowd. Chicanx activists expressed internationalist solidarity with Central American refugees. Members of the Palestinian Youth Movement expressed their solidarity and declared an end to all borders from Palestine to Mexico.

A moving appeal came from Mexican activists who have helped the migrants in their trek through Mexico. These leaders expressed their gratitude to the crowd for their support and dispelled myths that the people of Mexico opposed the migrants.

Following the Larsen Field rally, the crowd marched three-quarters of a mile east to the U.S.-Mexico border crossing. As hundreds of protesters walked down the Camino de la Plaza, the crowd grew and traffic stopped.

Despite the solidarity march disrupting traffic headed to the Las Americas Premium Outlets, a popular destination for tourists, San Diegans and Mexican nationals, pedestrians and drivers greeted it with curiosity and support.

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WW PHOTO: M. MATSEMELA-ALI ODOM

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Solzhenitsyn and Jordan Peterson

PART 2: Not so strange bedfellows

By John Steffin

“The Gulag Archipelago” by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn is the book credited with bringing down the Soviet Union. Setting aside the fact that the situation was by far more complicated, it is true that the book holds a special place in anti-communist history.

Part 1 of this series drew out the similarities between Solzhenitsyn and Jordan Peterson, a well-known figure on the alt-right who wrote the forward for the new edition of Solzhenitsyn’s book. Part 2 goes into the history of how Solzhenitsyn’s work has been used by right-wing forces in the past.

Nikita Khrushchev and Solzhenitsyn

Solzhenitsyn’s rise to international fame began with the political scheming of Nikita Khrushchev, who was First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union when Solzhenitsyn published his first book, “One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,” in 1962.

At the time, Khrushchev and his circle were trying to push through reforms that would open the Soviet Union to the capitalist world. Underlying these reforms was the belief that peaceful coexistence with the imperialists was possible and the dictatorship of the proletariat wasn’t needed.

The program was controversial, and in order to implement it, Khrushchev needed allies. One of the main ways he tried to build support was by attacking Stalin, who was still very popular in the Soviet Union at the time. In his “secret speech” of 1956, Khrushchev argued that all the repression of the previous 30 years was because of one man, Stalin, whose hunger for power and blood was enabled by a “cult of personality” that granted him impunity.

Whatever one thinks of Stalin and the privileged bureaucracy in the USSR, it is impossible to lay the blame for developments in the Soviet system on just one person. Khrushchev should know, since he played a big role in the purges of the 1930s. But that is beside the point.

What Solzhenitsyn’s first book offered Khrushchev was essentially the novelization of his “secret speech.” In fact, the author said as much in the preface to the first edition of his book.

As its title suggests, the book depicts the trials and tribulations of a day in the life of a political prisoner in the Soviet gulag system of political labor camps. The story is filled with cruel guards, innocent prisoners and degrading labor conditions. These conditions were certainly present in the gulag system, but Solzhenitsyn suggests at the end that this was universal.

Historians like Robert W. Thurston have shown that conditions in the camps varied, but Khrushchev wasn’t looking for a proper appraisal. He needed those who would join him in demonizing Stalin so that he could placate the Western imperialists. Solzhenitsyn was the man for the job, and Khrushchev personally approved the publication of the book. Overnight, Solzhenitsyn became a household name.

To make a long story short, Khrushchev’s campaign failed and ultimately he was removed from power in 1964. Solzhenitsyn’s reputation in the Soviet Union faltered as a result, but many forces outside the USSR were eager to promote his merciless attacks on the foundations of Soviet life.

Dick Cheney and Solzhenitsyn

When Solzhenitsyn published “Gulag Archipelago” in 1974, he was already well-known outside the Soviet Union. Through Praeger Publishing, the CIA had circulated Solzhenitsyn’s works in the West, and when he was kicked out of the Union of Writers of the USSR in 1969 because he refused to write one good word about the Soviet Union, the imperialists quickly awarded him the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1970 for his “ethical force.”

The book’s publication was his most scathing critique of the Soviet Union yet, and could not have come at a more opportune time for the imperialists.

For several years, the Soviet Union and the U.S. had agreed to a period of detente, but by 1974, the situation had changed rapidly — and not in Washington’s favor. By the time “Gulag Archipelago” was published, the U.S. had officially accepted defeat in Vietnam, the Cuban Revolution had stabilized and was now supporting liberation struggles in Africa, and the struggle of the Arab people against Israel and the U.S. had generated an oil embargo that shocked the U.S. economy.

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

people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

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Car caravan demands: ‘Free Mumia!’

By **Betsey Piette**
Philadelphia

Several cars decorated with signs to “Free Mumia” traversed multiple Black community neighborhoods here on Nov. 24 as part of a Black Saturday Car Caravan for Mumia. The event, which lasted more than three hours, included stops at busy intersections to distribute fliers and constant messaging over a loud-speaker system. Despite the cold weather, the caravan received a warm reception.

On the microphone Pam Africa, minister of confrontation for the MOVE organization, raised that Mumia Abu-Jamal, prosecuted by the state for the murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner and imprisoned since Dec. 9, 1981, is factually innocent, and should be released. Abu-Jamal was on death row until December 2011, when his sentence was converted to life in prison without parole. The struggle continues to bring him home.

Africa described the car caravan as “a funeral possession,” intent on burying the “injustices of the

prison-industrial system.” She also targeted the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections for their efforts in September to institute draconian policies that would further isolate and silence prisoners.

Africa raised the impact of prison policies on Black and other oppressed communities, noting that untreated hepatitis C in prisons eventually becomes a health crisis for communities at large. Earlier this week the Pennsylvania DOC settled a case to provide antiviral treatment for thousands of prisoners suffering from chronic hepatitis C. Africa credited this victory to a groundbreaking lawsuit by Abu-Jamal in which the state was ordered in 2017 to give him treatment for the infection.

The car caravan kicked off what will be two weeks of activities focused on the Dec. 9 anniversary of Abu-Jamal’s frame-up in 1981.

Abu-Jamal’s case is currently going through an appeal based on conflict of interest of former Philadelphia District Attorney Ron Castille when he later ruled on the case as a Pennsylvania Supreme Court judge. Abu-Jamal’s attorneys were

Philadelphia, Nov. 24

granted an extension to Dec. 3 in the DA office search for missing evidence relevant to the case.

On Dec. 7 a Honk for Mumia will be held at 13th and Locust streets in Philadelphia, the location of the 1981 shooting of Faulkner and serious wounding of Abu-Jamal. The time of the event is to be determined.

A community forum around the theme “You can lock up prisoners but you can’t silence them” will be held Dec. 8 from 12 to 4 p.m. at The People’s Sanctuary, 5507 Germantown Ave. The event will include legal updates on Abu-Jamal’s case and speakers and workshops on a number of related issues, including women in prison, the school-to-prison pipeline, ending mass incarceration and e-carceration, the growing solidarity with prison struggles internationally, and more.

The Dec. 9 anniversary will be observed with an Ecumenical Service “amplifying the voices of Mumia and all prisoners” from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Church of the Advocate, 18th and Diamond streets.



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

The events are initiated by International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, International Action Center, Free Mumia Abu-Jamal (NYC), Campaign to Bring Mumia Home, Educators for Mumia, Food Not Bombs Solidarity and Workers World Party.

For more information on the events or on the case, visit freemumia.com, mobilization4mumia.com, [Facebook/Mobilization4Mumia](https://www.facebook.com/Mobilization4Mumia) or mobilization4Mumia@gmail.com

REMEMBERING OLIVIA HOOKER

Survivor of 1921 Tulsa ‘Catastrophe’

By **Dolores Cox**

The life of Olivia Juliet Hooker came to an end this year with her death on Nov. 21. She was born Feb. 12, 1915, in Muskogee, Okla., one of five children. Janis Porter, Hooker’s goddaughter, said she died at their White Plains, N.Y., home. Her mind was clear, and she did not have dementia, but she was just tired. She had no surviving relatives.

Hooker was the last known survivor of the 1921 racist attack in Tulsa, Okla. Over the decades, she referred to it as a “Catastrophe,” stating that “other people call it the Tulsa race riot. It wasn’t a riot. We were victims.” (New York Times, Nov. 23)

The Tulsa massacre is often referred to as one of the deadliest episodes of racial violence in U.S. history. Ignored for a long time, it took a struggle by survivors and their relatives to bring the truth to public view.

Dr. Hooker was a founder in 1997 of the Tulsa Race Riot Commission, which issued a report four years later, exposing a cover-up by city and state officials. In 2003, Hooker joined a lawsuit with 400 plaintiffs against Tulsa and Oklahoma, but the Supreme Court dismissed it. On Feb. 20, Oklahoma legislators announced the 1921 racist attack would be added to the online public school curriculum.

The ‘Catastrophe’

In 1921, the segregated, self-sufficient Black business and residential community thrived in Greenwood. This 40-square block area in Tulsa was known as “Black Wall Street.”

On May 31, false rumors circulated that Dick Rowland, a Black teenage shoe shiner, had sexually assaulted a white female elevator operator. He was in a downtown building in order to use the only bathroom available to Black people. The Oklahoma Historical Society later reported that Rowland probably tripped and stepped on her foot, causing her to scream. He was exonerated in September 1921.

A white lynch mob stormed the courthouse where Rowland was taken after his arrest. What ensued was a two-day, torch-carrying rampage and terrorist

attack on Greenwood’s Black community. During the massacre, racists set on fire and destroyed thousands of businesses, including stores, theatres, hospital, schools and homes. Hundreds of Black people were injured or murdered, some even burned alive. Bodies were dumped throughout the city, as well as thrown in the river. There are unmarked mass graves. City and state officials were slow to publicly acknowledge these horrific events.

Olivia Hooker was only six years old when the Tulsa massacre occurred. She recalled that her mother ordered her and her siblings to hide under the dining room table and be quiet. From under the table, Hooker heard people using an axe to destroy the family piano. She witnessed her grandmother’s bed being soaked in kerosene, her first “ethnic” doll’s handmade clothes being torched on the clothesline, food on the stove being dumped on the floor, and the house being ransacked.

It was horrifying trying to keep quiet as a child, she said: “The most shocking was seeing people you’d never done anything to irritate would just, took it upon themselves to destroy your property because they didn’t want you to have those things. And, they were teaching us a lesson. Those were new ideas to me,” Hooker stated. (NY Times, Nov. 23)

‘They smashed everything ...’

The Washington Post reported on Nov. 22 that Dr. Hooker stated in a June interview, “We could see what they were doing. They took everything they thought was valuable. They smashed everything they couldn’t take. My mother had [opera singer Enrico] Caruso records she loved. They smashed the Caruso records. It took me a long time to get over my nightmares. I was keeping my family awake screaming.”

Her father’s business was destroyed, and Hooker’s family moved to Topeka, Kan., but they subsequently returned to Tulsa, where she attended high school and then moved to Ohio. Hooker enlisted in the Women’s Reserve of the Coast Guard in early 1945, becoming one of the first African-American women to sign up.

Hooker got her M.A. from Columbia

University and her Ph.D. in psychology at the University of Rochester. From 1963 until her retirement in 1985, she was a senior clinical lecturer at Fordham University. She was also a civil rights activist.

The New York Times reported on Oct. 4 that there are still racial disparities in Tulsa. The Greenwood section remains predominantly Black. The impact of anger, fear and trauma linger.

The article said that Tulsa Mayor G.I. Bynum has renewed efforts to locate the victims’ mass graves, further uncover the history of the racist attack, and provide closure for the victims and their families. He stated: “It’s one of the defining events for our city. We ... [still] grapple with not just the event itself, but also a racial reconciliation in the aftermath of it. We can’t hope to reconcile as a city if we’re not committed to doing everything we need to fully understand what happened in 1921.”

‘It’s about what we give to this world’

The community mourned Dr. Olivia

Solzhenitsyn & Jordan Peterson

Continued from page 2

The U.S. leaned on the Soviet Union to tamp down the struggles in the Middle East, but it did not cooperate.

In short, the U.S. was losing ground to struggles for socialism and national liberation on a global scale. Most of the bourgeoisie were now of the opinion that a more aggressive stance was needed. Solzhenitsyn, who was known to be against detente, became a perfect ally in this period. Not only did he receive enormous praise in the imperialist press, he was even invited to the White House by two young warhawks named Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney.

As with Khrushchev, however, Solzhenitsyn soon outgrew his handlers in the U.S. In 1978, Solzhenitsyn was invited to give the commencement address at Harvard and was expected to praise Western values over communism and thank the U.S. for providing him

refuge. This he did not do. Instead, he ridiculed the U.S. elite for their depression, passivity and lack of courage; declared that individual rights had been over-extended; and called the West a failed model.

If he had not already been there, Solzhenitsyn now occupied a political position outside both communism and liberalism. As mentioned in Part 1, this was the year Solzhenitsyn offered his “Letter to the Soviet Leaders” recommending they dissolve the Soviet Union and form a patriarchal ethno-state of Russian nationals.

What this history shows is that if Solzhenitsyn’s works are again on the shelf, someone wants them there.

Next: Why we’re seeing a new edition today.

Day of Mourning honored at Plymouth

By Stephanie Tromblay

Indigenous people and supporters gathered despite sub-zero wind chills for the 49th National Day of Mourning at Plymouth, Mass. The undaunted crowd included Indigenous peoples whom the pilgrims menaced and murdered — Nipmuc; Mashpee, Aquinnah and other bands of the Wampanoag; Narragansett; Massachusetts; Pequot and other Indigenous nations from the immediate region.

Cole’s Hill showed vibrant solidarity with flags and signs from many different Indigenous nations as well as supporters from many communities — Puerto Rican/ Taino, Haitian, Palestinian, Filipino, Black Lives Matter and disabled supporters. Moonanum James, Wampanoag, co-leader of United American Indians of New England, opened the rally:

“The Pilgrims came here as part of a commercial venture. They didn’t need religious freedom — they already had that back in the Netherlands. The Mayflower Compact was merely a group of white men who wanted to ensure they would get a return on their investment. When they arrived ... one of the first things the Pilgrims did was to rob Wampanoag graves at Corn Hill and steal as much of their winter provisions of corn and beans as they were able to carry. ...

“The first official thanksgiving did not take place in 1621 when the Pilgrims had a harvest-time meal provided largely by the Wampanoag. Instead it was officially proclaimed by Gov. Winthrop of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1637 to celebrate the massacre of over 700 Pequot men, women and children on the banks of the Mystic River in Connecticut.

“Gov. Winthrop wrote: ‘Those that escaped the fire were slain with the sword; some hewed to pieces, others run through with their rapiers ... they thus destroyed about 400 at this time. It was a fearful sight to see them thus frying in the fire ... horrible was the stink and scent thereof, but the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave the prayers thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them.’

James continued, “And yet the history books call us the savages.”



WW PHOTO: RACHEL DUELL

National Day of Mourning at Plymouth, Mass., Nov. 22.

James also discussed recent attacks on the Mashpee Wampanoag: “The Department of the Interior ruled that the Mashpee Wampanoag should not be able to take their own ancestral territory into trust. ... [T]he Mashpee are threatened with having their very own land ripped away from them for a SECOND time. [It] represents an attack on the self-determination and sovereignty of all Native Nations throughout the country. ... Stand With Mashpee and support pending legislation that would give Mashpee the right to petition for land to be taken into trust.”

Ongoing genocidal attacks

UAINE co-leader Mahtowin Munro, Lakota, spoke of ongoing genocidal attacks, including the longtime kidnapping of Native children and placement in residential schools, foster care and adoption outside of their communities and the current attacks on the 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act. “ICWA was declared unconstitutional by a federal court in Texas. ... Before that law was passed, about a third of Indigenous children were being removed from their families and adopted into white families.

“But now there are many forces, ranging from for-profit adoption placement agencies to religious fundamentalists to right-wing think tanks such as the Goldwater Institute, that want to return us to those destructive times. ... [T]he media says that the separation of families by [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] is a new phenomenon ... this is not something that just started with

Trump or Obama. It has been happening for centuries to Black and Indigenous families.”

Munro also raised the struggle around Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirits (MMIWG2S): “Indigenous women and Two Spirits have been under attack since 1492.... One of the many reasons that Indigenous Nations all over are fighting against pipelines and fracking and mining is that man camps are set up for the workers. The men have huge sums of money and lots of drugs such as meth and heroin to entice Indigenous women, who often end up being addicted and trafficked. Some of these sisters disappear, some get killed.”

Red dresses were hung from the stage to symbolize MMIWG2S. As Munro explained, “Murder is the third leading cause of death for U.S. Indigenous women. In Canada, several thousand Indigenous women are considered to be missing or murdered. In cities like Winnipeg, Indigenous youth — many of them in foster care — women and Two Spirits disappear all the time. In border towns with Mexico, women disappear all the time.”

Attack on the environment

Munro and others speakers addressed the Indigenous struggles against fossil fuel pipelines and other corporate and governmental assaults on clean water, air and lands. Marjorie Flowers, Rigolet Inuk, a Labrador land protector who traveled from Labrador in the far north, raised the struggle against the Canadian plan to

build the Muskrat Falls mega-hydrodam that will destroy lands and homes in Labrador. Energy from this dam would run through the Maritimes, through precious forests in Maine, into the U.S. and Plymouth at the expense of Indigenous lives, culture and food.

Wampanoag elder Bert Waters, 88, read a statement from Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier and led the march through Plymouth. When the march arrived in front of the pebble called “plymouth rock,” the march paused to hear Juan Gonzalez, with a message from the Council of Maya Elders. June Sapiel and Dawn Neptune Adams (Penobscot) spoke about the battles against fossil fuel pipelines.

This writer (Tromblay, Huron/Metis non-status, undocumented Tsalagi heritage) spoke connecting the movement against violence toward women — “most sharply seen in the numbers of murdered and missing Indigenous women, girls and Two Spirits, and the lack of records thereof — which must acknowledge that this violence is part and parcel of the capitalist idea of ‘man over nature.’ ... All the carbon in the atmosphere, the assault of fossil fuel pipelines on clear water and air, and the assault on the remaining undeveloped lands around the globe are a war on Mother Earth. Indigenous people are leading the fight to protect Mother Earth.”

As James said to the crowd on Cole’s Hill, “We will continue to gather on this hill until the U.S. military and corporations stop polluting the earth. Until we dismantle the brutal apparatus of mass incarceration. We will not stop until the oppression of our Two-Spirit siblings is a thing of the past. When the homeless have homes.

“When people from Mexico, Central and South America are no longer demonized and targeted by politicians in search of a scapegoat. When the Palestinians reclaim the homeland and the autonomy Israel has denied them for the past 70 years. When no person goes hungry or is left to die because they have little or no access to quality health care. When union busting is a thing of the past. Until then, the struggle will continue.” □

Statement of love and respect

By Leonard Peltier

Posted Nov. 20.

Greetings Sisters, Brothers, Elders, Friends and Supporters.

Well here it is, sorry to say, another year, and I’m still writing to you from a prison cell. I am still in pain from my illnesses with no knowledge of whether I will ever get treatments for them. But I’m alive and still breathing, hoping, wishing, praying for not just my pains, but for all Native Nations and the People of the World who care and have positive feelings about what is happening to Mother Earth and against the evils committed by Wasi’chu in their greed for her natural resources.

It doesn’t seem as if any changes for the good or safety of Mother Earth will happen soon. But the good hearted people are fighting back, and some good people are winning in the struggles to beat back some of this evil and to make the Changes, the safety networks, we need for our grandchildren and great grandchildren so that

they will be able to live happy, successful lives, at least decent lives, that most of the poor underprivileged in my generation never got to experience or enjoy in [their] short lives.

So, I sit back and look at the world, and I wonder if I will ever get to see the outside world again, free from this prison cell? At 74 it is not looking too good for that to happen. But I keep my hopes alive and pray as hard as I can that it will happen. If not, when they bury me I want to be laid to rest face down and with a note pinned to my ass with the words in large bold letters, “Kiss my ass!!” ... just in case someone wants to study my bones years from now:))!

On a more pleasant issue one of my granddaughters Ashley is in college at University of Arizona, Flagstaff, and she wants to be a Medicine Woman! How awesome is that? My baby, a doctor! Wow! How proud am I! You would not believe just how much I am! I could use a little help now and then for her; don’t send it to me, but send it to ILPDC earmarked

for her use only!! She is going on a long hard journey, so she will need help now and then. One day, if she continues her studies to be a Medicine Woman, I know things can change as time goes by, but if she makes it, she will be an enormous help to Native Nations’ hospitals.

My friend Harvey Arden passed yesterday on Saturday, Nov. 17, 2018, 5:20 P.M. He was a very good and kind man who loved Native People and the poor and sick. We are all going to miss him. I hope he has a good safe journey to the Spirit World, and I hope our Relatives will all be there to greet him with open arms; that would be very pleasing to him. See you soon, my Kola.

Politically we are finally making gains in Congress; two great Native ladies made it in the House of Representatives! They are Shanice Davids, Ho Chunk of Wisconsin, for Kansas and Deb Haaland, Laguna Pueblo, for New Mexico. On Pine Ridge my nephew Julian Bear Runner made it as President of the great Lakota Nation! I’m hearing more states are doing



away with Columbus Day! Hell, we may just win the War for Survival yet.

My last thoughts on this day, that we Native People call a Day of Mourning, are for my sisters’ and brothers’ family by blood and by AIM that are now in the Spirit World, and to them I say Lila Pilamaya, thank you for your love and work for The People.

My thoughts are also with the youth such as the Water Protectors and all people young and old who are working to protect Mother Earth. I hope someday in the near future to be with you and part of this march and join you in the feast prepared by Native People and wonderful supporters who have joined together today to honor our Ancestors.

In The Spirit of Crazy Horse
Doksha
Leonard Peltier □

Marxist feminism necessary for liberation

By Zachary Richardson
Chapel Hill, N.C.

A thorough Marxist critique of class society is essential to a truly liberatory feminism, argued members of Workers World Party at a public meeting here Nov. 10.

Organized and facilitated by Durham WWP’s Logan Emil, Meghan Watts and Taylor Cook, the meeting was held at the club and event space Nightlight. Before a full room, Emil, Watts and Cook gave a materialist analysis of the systemic oppressions facing women and LGBTQ individuals, detailed WWP’s historical role in these struggles, and then led a discussion on how to advance the causes of feminism and LBGTQ rights in the era of #MeToo.

“There was a time when patriarchy didn’t exist,” said Emil, laying out the historical development of “women” as a specific class in society as detailed by Marxists like Friedrich Engels and WWP’s Dorothy Ballan. Emil explained that patriarchy was a product of the division of labor between women and men, the development of private production and surplus value by men, and a focus on securing and maintaining familial wealth through inheritance, among other things.

Emil, Watts and Cook utilized a passage from Ballan’s groundbreaking 1971 work “Feminism and Marxism” to further explain their point: “The conversion of social property to private property eventually meant even the conversion of humans to private ownership. ... This

became transformed into its opposite, with marriage and childbearing isolating and insulating women from social production, making her totally dependent on her husband, and reducing her to the role of procreation for inheritance, and to the role of servant for husband.

Much of the meeting’s most engaging discussion came when the three detailed the differences between bourgeois and Marxist feminisms, particularly the “white” nature of bourgeois approaches, which explicitly and implicitly center the white, monied woman’s struggle as central to the struggles of all women, including those who are subject to special oppressions due to race, gender identity and/or sexuality.

A truly comprehensive liberatory movement, they said, would incorporate a systemic analysis of who suffers most under capitalism and why. They cited WWP’s Monica Moorehead, who wrote in 2017 that the “feminization of labor manifests itself with women workers, especially the most oppressed women, Black, Latinx and Native, being in the forefront of not only economic struggles, but also leading in political struggles. Those range from the Fight for \$15 and a Union movement, to Indigenous water rights at Standing Rock, Black Lives Matter led by Black trans women and, of course, the struggle for reproductive justice.”

The danger of a bourgeois/white approach to feminism, said Cook, was its tendency to provide false solutions, to focus on efforts to “shatter the glass ceiling rather than the structures that created it.”

“Bourgeois feminism has a tendency to disregard any racial or class analysis,” stated Watts, but “feminism and women’s liberation are inherently a form of class struggle.” She said, “When we think of women workers across the whole population — Black women, LGBTQ women, etc. — we see that there are very real disparities there.”

Moreover, in the era of #MeToo — a movement the three noted was started by Tarana Burke, a Black woman — the hollow promises of liberal/bourgeois feminism are increasingly difficult to square with the lived experiences of so many. “Even the ‘right kind’ of woman cannot achieve justice within this system,” Watts said, pointing to the example of Christine Blasey Ford, whose Sept. 27 testimony against Brett Kavanaugh during confirmation hearings to consider his nomination as a U.S. Supreme Court Justice riveted the nation. Despite several credible accusations of sexual assault, Kavanaugh was still confirmed.

“Capitalism is the vehicle as well as the means of creating these oppressions,” Cook continued. She added that although bourgeois feminism can provide some immediate gains, it often comes at the price of buttressing other oppressions — particularly those against already-marginalized racial, class and gender groups. It can be difficult for those who benefit from bourgeois structures to accept their own culpability, Cook said. “When you’re a part of any oppressing group, it’s easy to want distance — but we have to accept the truth if we want to destroy those oppressions.” □

No to DeVos’ proposed Title IX regulations!

By Sue Davis

U.S. Department of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos ran a touchdown Nov. 16 for her predator-in-chief coach Donald Trump — when she introduced a revised proposal for Title IX regulations addressing sexual violence and misconduct in K-12 schools and colleges and universities that receive government funding.

Survivors’ advocates, women’s and LGBTQ rights organizations, and educational and legal groups quickly united to oppose the new rules. Not only do the revamped rules include a more stringent definition of misconduct, decrease schools’ jurisdiction and liability, and promote “due process” for attackers, but predictions are that these rules will discourage students from reporting abuse and often lead them to drop out.

One of the major changes in Title IX is that the standard needed to convict an accused will change from “preponderance of evidence” to “clear and convincing evidence.” The bar will also be raised for what counts as sexual harassment from “unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature” to “unwelcome conduct on the basis of sex that is so severe, pervasive and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person access to the [school’s] education program or activity.”

This is just another plank in the anti-woman, anti-LGBTQ agenda of the viciously misogynous, totally reactionary Trump administration.

Title IX is the landmark civil rights law, passed in the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits sex discrimination in federally funded education programs, including sexual assault, rape and sexual harassment, that would limit or deny students access to education. Title IX is often used to demand women have equal access to sports.

One of the first changes DeVos instituted after she took office in early 2017 was to ditch the more survivor-friendly Title IX rules of the previous administration. Then in July she made a show of meeting openly with so-called “men’s rights” groups, which promote the unfounded claim that “false accusations” are the real problem. As former DOE Secretary John King Jr. told mic.com, “There is just no evidence to support that.” (Nov. 21)

Over 3 million students sexually assaulted in 2018

Rewire.News reported Nov. 16 that more than 3 million students will be sexually assaulted in 2018, and less than 10 percent of them will report it to school or college officials. The article noted that eight of 10 trans and gender-nonconforming students in K-12 grades experience harassment, with more than 1 in 3 physically assaulted in high school. “More than a third of students who have been sexually assaulted drop out of school, indicating that sexual violence is a major factor in equal access to educational opportunities.”

Rewire quoted the statement of the National Center for Transgender Equality: “Transgender people know all too well the experience of having our stories put on trial, our experiences disbelieved and our suffering ignored. If adopted, this rule will put more barriers between transgender survivors and justice.”

Statistics published Nov. 16 by the Center for American Progress confirm that. Campus sexual assault is a widespread national problem when 1 in 5 women and 1 in 20 men report some form of sexual assault during college. Women of color join LGBTQ students in having higher rates of sexual assault compared with other students. Out of fear of retaliation or privacy issues, 80 percent of students choose not to report abuse.

Send comments to stop proposed changes

But the DeVos regulations are not yet final. There will be a 60-day comment period when all institutions and individuals are invited to respond to the proposed regulations, after which the DOE is supposed to make changes reflecting that feedback. But before the comment period begins, the revised regulations must be officially listed on the Federal Register. As of Nov. 27,

they had not been, although a DOE staffer told this reporter that they were supposed to be registered before the “Thanksgiving” holiday.

Some pro-survivor groups are noting that the length of the comment period is shorter than the more frequently used 90-day period — perhaps to limit responses during finals and semester break. A Nov. 21 blog on the National Women’s Law Center website (nwl.org) stresses that the law cannot be finalized or implemented until the DOE “reviews each comment and either makes changes to the rules, or explains why they’ve ignored the element of the public’s input.”

The NWLC notes that the link to submit comments on the DOE website hasn’t been posted yet, so it provides detailed instructions on how and where to submit written comments by mail. While stating that the Center will also help survivors and allies submit electronic comments, it reports: “[L]egible handwritten messages are often especially effective at persuading public officials ... particularly when received in large numbers.” □

Part 2 will detail how the proposed Title IX regulations are anti-survivor and pro-predator.

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Workers strike at Amazon in Germany, Spain

By John Catalinotto

More than 600 workers walked out of Amazon’s buildings in Bad Hersfeld and Rheinberg, Germany, on Black Friday, Nov. 23. The Verdi service workers’ union represents the Amazon workers, who are asking for higher wages and better working conditions. Amazon has a reputation for pressuring workers horribly, especially during the peak retailing season starting now.

In Spain, according to UNI Global Union, workers at Amazon’s Madrid-area San Fernando de Henares facility, where 1,800 workers are employed, also stopped work that day. They were last on strike during Amazon Prime Day, July 16-17. That day is another major shopping day at Amazon.

On a picket line, 38-year-old employee Eduardo Hernandez said, “[Black Friday] is one of the days that Amazon has most sales, and these are days when we can hurt more and make ourselves be heard because the company has not listened to



us and does not want to reach any agreement.” (AP, Nov. 23)

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos was recently named the richest person in the world. This ego boost gives him bragging rights among other top exploiters of the world’s workers, like Bill Gates, Warren Buffet and Mark Zuckerberg.

It also eliminates any chance he can plead poverty if the more than half million people who work for Amazon decide to fight for higher wages. That’s just what happened on Nov. 23.

According to GMB Union officer Mick Rix, about 500 workers in Britain also demonstrated at five Amazon warehouses. “What we’re saying is Jeff Bezos, you’re the richest man in the world, you have the wealth and ability to make sure your workers are treated with respect and dignity,” Rix said. (TeleSur English, Nov. 23)

There are more worker actions in Europe than in the U.S. because more workers are unionized there. None of Amazon’s U.S. warehouse workers are

represented by unions.

That doesn’t mean there is no U.S. organizing. A group of Somali Muslim women workers at Amazon’s Shakopee, Minn., warehouse are planning a job action in December over workplace conditions and religious accommodations. The workers have held meetings with Amazon management protesting speed-ups and the inability to take breaks from work in order to pray.

The women in Minnesota are the first group in the U.S. that has made some headway organizing against the powerful company. They voted to stage a large protest and walkout on Dec. 14, in the thick of the holiday season, according to the Nov. 20 New York Times.

The giant company has 110 warehouses across the U.S. The one in Shakopee needed 1,000 workers when it opened in 2016.

Workers at Whole Foods, which is owned by Amazon, have also recently begun talks of organizing. □

Oakland action supports refugee caravan

By Judy Greenspan

A community rally was held at Fruitvale Station in the heart of East Oakland, Calif., on Nov. 25, led by young Central American migrant activists to show solidarity with the caravan of Central American families seeking asylum in the U.S. Organized by Pueblo Sin Fronteras, today’s event was called to support the international Day of Solidarity with the migrant caravan.

Chris Lopez, a Honduran immigrant with Pueblo Sin Fronteras, welcomed everyone to today’s protest: “We are here today in solidarity. We are here to support the rights of all migrants to seek asylum.”

A major emphasis of today’s protest was Honduras and the repressive regime that has created the conditions leading migrants to seek refugee status in the U.S. Honduran flags were prominent in the crowd.

Christian Pineda, a University of California-Berkeley student who received asylum in 2015, spoke about poverty, violence and corruption in his country. “More than 56 percent of the people live in poverty,” Pineda stated. “I would see dead bodies on the way to school. People are fleeing to find safety.” Pineda noted that Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández secured re-election with the support of the U.S. and Donald Trump.

Verónica Aguilar, a Salvadoran migrant who came to the U.S. last year on a similar caravan, talked about

repression and violence faced by migrants in the U.S. She spent 11 months in detention and her ankle bracelet was only recently removed. “We must start collecting basic needs for people on the caravan — food and warm clothing,” Aguilar stated. She urged everyone who could to go to the U.S.-Mexico border and support migrant families.

Arlette Jàcome, cofounder of Central Americans for Empowerment and a Guatemalan activist, talked about repression that the caravanistas faced when traveling through Guatemala. “The people of Guatemala supported the caravan and give them rice and food. Later, Guatemalans joined the caravan in Mexico because of extreme hunger and racism,” said Jàcome.

The young activist pointed out that the Indigenous people are suffering from malnutrition because the Guatemalan government will not let them grow their own food. “Poverty is political,” she added. “We have had decades of U.S. intervention that has caused both this poverty and racism. When people say they are hungry, we need to give them asylum.”

Organizers urged everyone to attend upcoming local events to build support for the Caravanistas and their fight for political asylum. □



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Solidarity with refugees grows

Continued from page 1

Once the marchers reached the border crossing, speeches and chants resumed. In a volume surely loud enough to be heard across the wall in Tijuana, protestors chanted, “Let them in! Let them in!” “Hey, hey! Ho, ho! This border wall has got to go!” and other messages of solidarity.

It became evident that the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol intended to ramp up their maneuvers even before skirmishes occurred on the Mexican side of the border. Twin CBP Blackhawk helicopters circulated above, and CBP agents patrolled Camino de la Plaza in Chevy Tahoe SUVs and even all-terrain vehicles.

The MRSC march was held in concert with an even larger action across the border in Tijuana. As many as 1,000 refugees and supporters marched there, demanding their asylum claims be respected.

Over the past month, the refugees had begun to arrive. Many of the earliest arrivals consisted of people of oppressed genders and sexualities who had faced state-sponsored repression and sexual assault in their home countries and later by Mexican authorities.

By many accounts, the Tijuana working class has been

gracious in its reception of the Central American asylum seekers — just as many had earlier been for Haitian migrants to the city. However, reactionary forces have also mobilized in opposition.

Highly unpopular Tijuana Mayor Juan Manuel Gastélum, of the far-right National Action Party, has instigated local panic and even begun to wear a red baseball cap inscribed “Make Tijuana Great Again” — taking his cues from Trump’s bombastics.

CBP fires upon asylum seekers

Some have wondered whether the U.S. president’s approval of the use of force against the asylum seekers was mere hyperbole. Reports have noted that many of the troops deployed are unarmed and their numbers seemed to be decreasing. However, the CBP’s use of force this past Sunday underscores the seriousness of Trump’s words.

As a group of about 500 refugees and activists began to run toward the border crossing, in hopes of gaining entry and having their cases heard, the CBP fired tear gas and rubber bullets from the United States into Mexico at the asylum seekers, including children. There are reports

that a young girl was seriously injured.

In their eagerness to repress, CBP agents were witnessed speeding down Camino de la Plaza so fast that they almost broadsided a car leaving the shopping center.

The Mexican Interior Ministry has said it would deport the people detained for rushing the border. The refugee conflict presents the incoming government of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador with a crisis, since most of Lopez’s voters are sympathetic with the refugees, while Washington will demand that he repress them.

The protests on both sides closed the border for five hours to pedestrians and autos, disrupting the regular flow of business. Las Americas Premium Outlets was also forced to shut down. While people on social media and at the border expressed concern over the delays, the general consensus was in support of the refugees.

Sunday, Nov. 25, signals a long struggle ahead for the migrants and their allies. □

SF hotel workers stay strong

On Nov. 22 — a national holiday, which many have as a paid day off or get with increased holiday pay — the striking Marriott Hotel workers were out on the picket line in San Francisco. It was their seventh week without a paycheck.

The workers are strong and determined to win what they deserve in the most expensive city in the U.S. The website of their union, UNITE HERE, asserts, “We’re united in the face of

insulting economic proposals from Marriott and more resolved than ever that One Job Should Be Enough.” Some 5,200 hotel workers are still on strike between San Francisco and Hawaii.

The next day, “Black Friday,” a massive picket line marched through San Francisco’s downtown shopping area, ending at the central Union Square.

— **Story and photo by Shane Hoff**



‘Thanksgiving’ on the picket line in San Francisco

The plight of home care workers

By Mike Kühlenbeck

In the United States, over 2 million home care workers are paying the price for the greed of the few.

Home care workers help people with “disabilities, chronic illnesses, or cognitive impairment by assisting their daily living activities,” as noted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This field includes personal care aides, home health aides, nursing assistants and direct support professionals.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found 4.9 million adult patients received some form of home health care in 2013. As the senior population increases, so will the demands for home care services. Current projections indicate that home care work is the fastest growing occupation, with 1 million jobs to be added by 2026.

While one cannot put a price tag on a human life and the quality of that life, the home care health industry does so

under the banner of capitalism. Home care health is dominated by for-profit agencies. CDC data from 2014 indicates that of the 12,400 home care agencies operating in the U.S., 80 percent of them were for-profit organizations, with the other 20 percent nonprofit or government owned.

As with other health care entities — pharmaceutical companies raise costs for lifesaving medicines and health insurance companies raise premiums — these for-profit agencies will continue overcharging clients and underpaying home care workers.

Hourly wages for home care workers have “barely risen” over the past decade, according to the Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute study “Home Care Workers: Key Facts.” (phinational.org, August 2018) Adjusted for inflation, the median hourly wage for home care workers was \$11.03 in 2017 compared to \$10.66 in 2007.

In many cases, workers have to

shoulder the burden of on-the-job costs without compensation. For example, many agencies do not provide company vehicles for direct support professionals, forcing them to drive their own cars, pay for their own gas and pay for repairs.

From there, it only gets worse. Home care workers have lower job stability, shorter working hours and are less likely to have fringe benefits than those working in hospitals and nursing homes. As a result, over 20 percent of home care workers live in poverty.

Besides the financial toll, these jobs also take a physical and mental toll on these workers.

In 2017, a study from the American Journal of Public Health concluded: “Workers jobs affect their health-related quality of life.” AJPH ranked home care aides (along with nursing and psychiatric aides) among the occupations “reporting the most cases of workplace injuries and illnesses.” (tinyurl.com/ybshkssn)

One BMC Nursing review found that

home care workers were at “higher risk of injury than registered nurses and licensed practical nurses.” (tinyurl.com/y8n599w5)

The stress of the job combined with financial insecurity are responsible for the high turnover rate in this field. BMC Nursing even fears there might be a shortage of home care aides in the future.

Home care health services are a necessity, as are the workers providing them. But with mass privatization and cuts to nonprofit and government-owned agencies, these services are treated as a luxury and the workers are treated as expendable.

Home care workers, along with the people they help, will continue to suffer financially, mentally and physically under the current system. Only revolutionary change will provide such services to those who need them and fairly compensate those who provide them. □

Boston hotel workers win!

By Ed Childs and G. Lechat
Boston

Boston’s UNITE HERE Local 26 Marriott hotel workers ended their 46-day strike with a decisive victory. Chanting “One job should be enough!” — the slogan of this historic national strike that included locals from Detroit, San Diego, San Jose, San Francisco, Seattle and Hawaii — Boston workers ratified a new contract with anti-union Marriott International on Nov. 17.

For Local 26, which also represents dining hall workers at Harvard University who struck for 22 days in 2016, this is a second landmark victory for the working class in the current national struggle against “right-to-work” (RTW) laws and other anti-union actions like the Janus decision.

Marriott acquires a new hotel property almost every day. After purchasing the country’s biggest hospitality chains — including Sheraton, Westin and Ritz — the company was determined to prevent unionized housekeepers, cooks, wait-staff and door attendants from making progress on their most important issues. Marriott wanted to outsource food services and impose hundreds of layoffs for each local.

However, city-by-city, hotel workers have been out-organizing this megacorporation. The details of UNITE HERE’s new achievements in Boston, and in other cities that have ratified contracts, are under wraps until striking workers in Hawaii and San Francisco also see victory.

Local 26 won on respect and dignity as well as bread-and-butter issues. Workers made strong demands for women’s rights at work, health and safety, immigration and union rights, as well as wages, job security, pensions, health care and holding onto their jobs.

Public support has been very strong. Teamsters refused deliveries of laundry, liquor and other essentials. Other unions contributed thousands of dollars to the strike fund; members bulked up picket lines and rallies. Rank-and-file members of weaker unions, which lacked understanding of the strike that these solidarity efforts represent, organized support delegations on their own.

Community groups and passersby gestured and honked approval or dropped off coffee and warm clothes. Relatively few scabbed or heckled strikers. Celebrities, especially unionized athletes who crossed picket lines while in Boston, were booed and scorned online.

Curiously, some crossing the picket line expressed support, in evidence of contradictory tendencies, while some showed sympathy but also unfamiliarity with strikes. On the other hand, this also revealed that class consciousness, enough to radically change systemic inequality in the U.S., could be developed.

Strike the only serious threat to capital’s attacks

The 2016 Harvard University Dining Services victory received worldwide attention and reintroduced the strike to today’s working class. Wall Street is on the attack, and these days striking is no longer just a negotiating tool. Workers who organize the power to shut down their workplaces are winning.

Workers are fighting back triumphantly even in states with anti-union, “right-to-work” (for less) laws, as in Michigan, where collective bargaining is very difficult. Despite that, Detroit’s UNITE HERE Local 24 hotel workers have already won. They’re also winning in Republican-dominated “red states” like West Virginia and Oklahoma, where teachers’ strikes have succeeded.

The significance of the strike effort

in today’s defensive period can hardly be overstated. Striking is only possible through concerted organization. Some unions have made the strategic decision to focus on growth, advocacy and electoralism to resist the mounting pressures they face, including RTW. But developing the member consciousness required to strike is the only serious threat to capital’s relentless attacks.

Obviously, striking is very difficult. Within days workers run low on the necessities of daily life. A few days later, it is already time to apply for food stamps. However, hotel workers knew that accepting management’s take-backs meant not making ends meet anyway. Similar to Harvard, where workers’ only alternative to going on strike was losing their health care, hotel workers recognized the power of the strike and their power to win against the unacceptable.

The strike is a demonstration of worker power — not, as the anti-union logic goes, a risky decision made by “union bosses.” It reflects the organization and power workers have already built for themselves through years of struggle.

Building rank-and-file workers’ power

Union hotel workers prepared for a decade to coordinate this multicity battle. They voted to substantially increase dues to shore up strike funds. Shop stewards trained members to survive weeks of hardship, organizing food pantries and other relief in order to negotiate a contract that would serve the needs of a diverse membership.

While national companies like Verizon have always employed the coast-to-coast strike strategy, this strike of 10 locals, each with their own contracts, is something new. It required aligning contract periods for all cities that struck. Thanks to rank-and-file development, locals near the end of contract negotiations were able

to add changes to the contract periods as an additional demand.

Only because of the credible threat member consciousness represents to employers was this even possible. Short or very long contracts demanded by employers can tie up unions in constant defense or cause them to fall into inactivity, but this rank-and-file-enabled strategy put the union years ahead of management’s mergers and acquisitions.

The strikers’ loud and spirited chants over the beat of makeshift drums, 12 hours a day, at seven hotels in bitterly cold temperatures, traveled up to penthouse suites and into corner offices blocks away. Gentrifiers filed noise complaints, pricey downtown hotel rooms had to be deeply discounted, and the Nov. 6 Wall Street Journal reported “weaker demand” impacting Marriott’s bottom line. Inside, service standards plummeted. But street action was only part of the picture — the tip of an enormous iceberg of working-class power underneath.

Because of decades of workers’ organization, Marriott was forced to concede on wage, pension, health care and workplace demands, with mostly immigrant women of color leading the way and setting a new standard for U.S. workers.

Many lessons from this momentous strike will inspire and guide working-class organization for years to come. More and more workers are facing struggles that are both offensive and defensive. Increasingly polarized times have intensified attacks on the working class by an emboldened bourgeoisie. But workers with nothing to lose but their chains are rediscovering the strike — with a world to win.

Childs is chief steward, Harvard University Dining Services, UNITE HERE Local 26.

US threatens China — as new superpower

By Sara Flounders

China’s growth into the world’s second-largest economy is being evaluated by all the corporate media, reflecting debates in U.S. ruling circles and the U.S. top military command.

They are forced to admit that most of their hopes and dreams that the Chinese government could be easily overwhelmed, and that Wall Street would find an open road into China, are now dashed by the reality of a stable government that seems to have wide mass support and growing prosperity.

The New York Times Sunday edition ran a 20-page special supplement titled “China Rules” on Nov. 25. It begins with the admission: “The West was certain China would fail. Government-controlled economies stifle growth. Oppression smothers innovation. The Internet is an untamable force. A new middle class will demand a vote. None of these proved true. China is a superpower and it may soon surpass the United States. This is the story of how it got there.”

Of course the whole supplement is full of self-congratulatory myths about the “democracy and freedom” of imperialist countries. But there is also recognition of 40 years of uninterrupted growth in China and that the country is on track to become the world’s largest economy. “Economic growth in China has been 10 times faster than in the U.S. and it is still more than twice as fast,” the Times states.

It is an incredible accomplishment! More than 800 million people have been pulled out of dire poverty. This is a measure without precedent in modern history. The rate of extreme poverty in China is now less than 1 percent, according to World Bank studies. Yet China remains a developing country, because its per capita income is still a fraction of that in “advanced” countries.

While opening the country to foreign capital investment, organized and centrally planned attention was focused on raising the economic level of the whole population, especially in rural and most underdeveloped areas.

From an illiteracy rate of more than 80 percent at the time of the Chinese Revolution in 1949, illiteracy is now totally eliminated. China today produces more graduates in science and engineering than the U.S., Japan, South Korea and Taiwan combined.

The billionaire deciders and power brokers of U.S. imperialism are totally hostile to the dramatic improvement in the lives of hundreds of millions of people in China.

Whether this stunning growth will continue, despite U.S. imperialism’s determined effort to stop it with tariffs, a trade war and military encirclement, is now debated in ruling circles. Can they stop China?

As the Washington Post explained: “The trade war isn’t about trade. The trade war is about the United States trying to contain China and counteract its rise.” (Sept. 24)

Every economy in the world will be impacted. The Nov. 16 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in Papua New Guinea, with 10,000 delegates and guests, was so riled by the trade war, new tariffs and U.S. Vice President Mike Pence’s arrogant demands that diplomats could not even issue a closing statement. The Nov. 30 meeting of the Group of 20 in Argentina is under a cloud of uncertainty.

Remembering past Western domination and humiliation, China is determined to defend its national sovereignty, both economically and now militarily. China has imposed its own tariffs on U.S. products. Confrontations are accelerating with U.S. warships carrying out aggressive “freedom of navigation” exercises in the South China Sea.

The “pivot to Asia” is a major military reorientation of the Pentagon war machine to focus on China. Aircraft carriers with nuclear weapons, destroyers, nuclear submarines and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense missile batteries are being moved into place.

U.S. demands

Under the screen of diplomatic negotiations, just what are the fundamental changes in China’s policies that U.S. corporations and banks want?

The Trump administration — and other major imperialist powers — want to reverse China’s industrial and development policies. Their terms seem abstract: ease restrictions on market access, end forced technology transfers for corporations setting up factories in China, respect intellectual property and patents, and weaken currency controls.

For example, Trump accuses China of keeping its currency artificially low in order to boost its export industry. The value of Chinese currency, the yuan, is largely shut off to foreign speculators. Interest rates are set to help guide the economy.

The hostility is sharpening. It is an all-out effort to fundamentally overturn Chinese economic policies put in place starting in 1978.

Market socialism: a compromise

Market socialism, or “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” is the compromise of maintaining a planned economy while opening up a market economy. It is described in China as a primary stage of developing socialism in an underdeveloped country.

Since 1978 China has experimented with ways of attracting foreign investment and different forms of integration into the global capitalist market. They made deals with many Western corporations, while maintaining centralized control of the state apparatus. They also continued many forms of public, cooperative and social ownership.

Special economic zones were established to lure Western technology. These zones, with thousands of labor-intensive factories and millions of workers earning low wages, were centers of capitalist

exploitation that reaped enormous profits for the U.S. and other global capitalists. Private minority stakes in state firms were sold. The communes were broken up and land was leased. Many forms of small businesses were allowed.

In recent years, through thousands of strikes and job actions, workers in China have won increased wages, social benefits and improved working conditions.

There are many different views of this process and its future dangers for the socialist organization of society. But in almost all the deals with Western capital, China has insisted on keeping the technology and blueprints and demanded that Chinese workers be trained in operating and running the enterprise. This was a radically different deal than other countries had previously required. And while Western technology and funding of factories were welcomed, Western-funded political ideas, organizations, oppositional political parties and media were tightly monitored by the state and by the Communist Party.

State-owned enterprises predominate

What frustrates the capitalist class, far more than China’s incredible growth, is that the top 12 Chinese companies on the Fortune 500 list are all state owned. They include massive oil, solar energy, telecommunications, engineering and construction companies, banks and the auto industry. They receive state support and subsidies. (fortune.com, July 22, 2015)

Chinese firms filled an unprecedented 115 places on the Fortune Global 500 list for 2017. There were only 10 Chinese firms on the list in 2000. The U.S. has trended in the other direction: from 179 firms in 2000, only 143 U.S. firms were in the top 500 in 2017.

The U.S. is opposed to subsidies to state-owned enterprises and declares the subsidies an “unfair advantage.” They consider SOEs to be squeezing out the profits the global capitalists feel are rightfully theirs. They are enraged that SOE profits are plowed into developing and modernizing China’s most underdeveloped regions. This “unfair advantage” granted to state-owned industries is the primary reason given by the Trump administration for new tariffs on Chinese steel and aluminum. (industryweek.com, April 17)

Both the Obama and Trump administrations and the World Trade Organization have opposed subsidies to China’s SOEs.

This is sheer hypocrisy! The largest U.S. corporations are military contractors with billions in federal subsidies, but super-rich investors reap all the profits. Privately owned U.S. agribusiness has received decades of subsidies. Privately owned Wall Street banks received U.S. federal bailouts, a giant subsidy totaling \$16 trillion, in the 2008 global financial crisis.

It was during the 2008 crisis that the difference in who controls the state stood out in sharpest contrast. China saved and further strengthened its state-owned enterprises, while letting the privately owned and foreign-owned corporations fend for themselves.

China’s internet is way ahead

An expectation of big capital globally was that the wide use of the internet would forcibly pry China open to Western pressure, ideas and propaganda. But China allowed Chinese innovators to compete in setting up privately owned but monitored internet companies. Today Alibaba, Tencent, Weibo, ByteDance, TikTok and Baidu rival Amazon, Google, Facebook and YouTube.

Tencent, with 647 million active users, is the world largest online community. Alibaba is the largest e-commerce platform in the world.

Smartphone payments in China are years ahead of those in the U.S. Chinese companies operate a cyberspace of creative short videos, podcasts, blogs and streaming TV. For example, WeChat has 889 million users who socialize, play games, pay bills and buy tickets all from the mobile messaging app.

National laws on sexual harassment, workers’ rights

The social gains in China are monumental, especially when compared to no rights, no education and no standing for women, and no rights for any workers or peasants, before the Chinese Revolution. As in every country, social gains, especially for women, are uneven and in continuing struggle.

In China, many gains have been codified into national laws, rather than through piece-by-piece struggles against every corporate boss or laws passed state by state.

The inclusion in China’s civil code of laws to curb sexual harassment in the workplace is ahead of what exists in the U.S. and most other countries.

Included in the draft of the new civil code, presented to the National People’s Congress Standing Committee on Aug. 27, management and employers are responsible to take measures to prevent, stop and deal with complaints about sexual harassment. Victims can demand perpetrators “assume civil liability” for committing sexual harassment through words or actions or by exploiting someone’s subordinate relationship. (reuters.com, Aug. 27)

The China Labour Bulletin states: “China has a comprehensive legal framework that gives workers a range of entitlements and protects them from exploitation by their employer. Workers have the right to be paid in full and on time, a formal employment contract, a 40-hour working week with fixed overtime rates, social insurance covering pensions, healthcare, unemployment, work injuries and maternity leave, severance pay in the event of contract termination, equal pay for equal work, and protection against workplace discrimination.

“Workers also have the right to form an enterprise trade union and the enterprise union committee has to be consulted by management before any major changes to workers’ pay and conditions.” (clb.org.hk)

Belt and Road Initiative threatens U.S. position

China’s trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative provides infrastructure loans, equipment and training to countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America for a network of trade routes, with new rail lines, ports, highways, pipelines, telecommunications facilities and energy centers linking countries on four continents. It includes financing to promote urban planning, potable water, sanitation and food development. China is calling it the “plan of the century.” It is projected to be 12 times the size of the U.S. Marshall Plan, which rebuilt Western Europe after World War II.

Imperialism is worried that China’s huge, unfolding global infrastructure projects could challenge the U.S.-led world order.

Because the most powerful U.S. corporations are military industries, U.S. aid is built around enormous debt for military equipment purchases that are quickly obsolete.

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The suppression of Bo Xilai and the capitalist road

Can socialism be revived in CHINA?

The Suppression of Bo Xilai and the Capitalist Road: Can Socialism be Revived in China?

This 32-page booklet is a compilation of articles from Workers World newspaper, with a new introduction, written by Fred Goldstein.

Read online at workers.org/books.

Part 3: Revolution sets up Bavarian Soviet Republic, seizure of Berlin

First imperialist world war ends, November 1918

By this time 100 years ago, World War I — fought mainly among the imperialist powers in Europe and rightfully called “The Great Slaughter” — was finally drawing to a close, its end accelerated by the 1917 Russian Revolution a year earlier. There was no “good side” in this war that brought death to 20 million people. The major states on both sides of the 1914-18 war — Britain, France, Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary — were all oppressor nations, as was the United States, which did not enter World War I until April of 1917.

This article focuses on developments in Germany, especially the events in the first nine days of November 1918, when an uprising of sailors of the North Sea Fleet ended the war and forced the German ruler, the Kaiser, to abdicate. The text is from the book: “Turn the Guns Around: Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions” by John Catalinotto.

The revolt leaped over central Germany to Bavaria in Germany’s south. Although it was part of the German Reich, Bavaria had the structure of a separate kingdom. There, as early as Nov. 3, a mass demonstration in Munich, the capital, against continuing the war freed political prisoners from Stadelheim prison.

On Nov. 5, at a mass anti-war demonstration in Munich, both the Social Democratic Party and the more leftist Independent Socialists called for a meeting of the entire population two days later, on Nov. 7, the one-year anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. The meeting would be to demand an end to the Kaiser’s rule. That Nov. 7 afternoon, 100,000 people cheered the 12 speakers who demanded that the Kaiser abdicate.

The soldiers in Munich at the Nov. 7 demonstration moved in military formation to release their comrades, who had been confined to quarters by their officers. Thus, the opening of the military revolt in Munich began with the freeing of 250 soldiers who had been confined in the military prison for their “revolutionary acts,” as their officers judged them. Soldiers in trucks with red flags patrolled the streets, and Bavaria’s capital was in the hands of the soldiers and workers.

Soviets control Bavaria

By the morning of Nov. 9, the southern region of Germany was controlled by the Councils of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants of the Free State of Bavaria. Bavaria’s King Louis III put up no resistance. On Nov. 13 he abdicated and fled to his estate in Hungary.

The main target of the North Sea Fleet uprising was Berlin, the capital of the empire, which was the seat of power of the Hohenzollern family monarchy, of which Kaiser Wilhelm was the last ruling member. Germany’s old noble ruling class was ready by this point to try to set up a constitutional monarchy led by Prince Max of Baden if, by pushing out Wilhelm, they

could save some of the old ruling structure, along with their privileges. This old structure had prepared its defense. Since 1916 the German General Staff had made plans for an elaborate defense of Berlin and the Kaiser should the masses revolt, which they apparently expected was likely as war sacrifices continued.

The General Staff prepared a chain of command and set out the key points of the city to be held, from the railroad station and post office to the Kaiser’s palace. On paper, it was a perfect plan. It had only one problem: It needed obedient troops to carry it out. There were none to be found. Berlin’s population did not need Facebook or even cell phones for word to travel that the troops would not shoot down the workers.

On Nov. 6, Prussian Gen. Alexander von Linsingen, who was in charge of this repressive machinery without gears, still had the arrogance to forbid a demonstration set for Nov. 7. The workers wanted to celebrate the first anniversary of the Russian Revolution. And they did. As each hour passed, even Von Linsingen was beginning to get the message. His troops were in place at key points throughout the city, but he began to doubt they would fire on the workers.

Goodbye to Berlin

Instead of waiting to find out, Von Linsingen said goodbye to Berlin on the evening of Nov. 8 without ever giving an order to fight. The next morning, Saturday, Nov. 9, 1918, workers spontaneously began a general strike, shutting every factory in Berlin. There was no resistance from the old government.

With the empire vanished, two diverse political leaders each declared a republic — really two different kinds of republic. Karl Liebknecht, recently released from prison for his anti-war agitation and a co-leader with the still-imprisoned Rosa Luxemburg of the Spartacist League, declared a socialist republic in the afternoon.

Friedrich Ebert, who had rushed to beat Liebknecht to the punch, had declared a democratic (capitalist) republic two hours earlier. The two declarations signaled the struggle that was to take place between these two political tendencies.

On one side, Ebert and the conservative Majority Social Democrats defended the rule of the capitalist ruling class of Germany, but without the Kaiser and eventually without any trace of the monarchy. On the other side was the Spartacist League, which was to develop into the Communist Party of Germany. The Independent Social Democrats, whom Lutz referred to as playing a role in the November revolution, held an intermediate position.

Over the next two months the Majority Social Democrats did all they could to restrain the revolutionary workers from taking over the government. In



Sometimes all it took was a group of armed sailors to land, and the workers would join them and change who ran the city.

political changes among the workers? Could they isolate the workers from the revolutionary sentiments of the fleet?

There is another important point: Once the sailors began to revolt, it was almost impossible for them to safely retreat without first upending the monarchy. Leaving the monarchy intact left all the sailors at risk. They had mutinied. At a minimum they faced long terms in military prisons, at a maximum, execution. From the sailors’ point of view, the struggle had to be seen through to its conclusion: political revolution.

In addition — and this is essential — the sailors were armed. After the first repression in Kiel, they distributed tens of thousands of weapons and ammunition. This meant they could march into city after city, connect with striking workers and place a tacit ultimatum before the military authorities and, more importantly, before the rank-and-file soldiers: Either join us or we fight! Once discussions began, the troops on land could see that if they joined with the sailors and workers in solidarity, they would represent the new power in that city and could reach out city to city until they took Berlin.

Again in history, the collapse of the capitalist military forces — albeit a temporary collapse — opened the door to a successful political revolution by dissolving the prior-existing structure and opening the path to a possible social revolution. Unlike in Russia a year earlier, however, the German working class and its disparate parties were unprepared to seize this opportunity to take power and wield it in their own class interests.

Ernst Toller, whose book is quoted in Parts 1 and 2 of this article, served for six days in April 1919 as president of the short-lived Soviet Republic of Bavaria and was jailed when the counterrevolution won. The class battle continued for 14 more years of the Weimar Republic and ended in the defeat of the workers in 1933, when Adolf Hitler’s Nazis took power.

This failure to seize power eventually had tragic results for humanity. But this does not negate the historic lessons of the heroic revolt of the sailors of Germany’s North Sea Fleet.

To read all three parts of Chapter 16, “The Revolt of the Kaiser’s Blue Youths,” reprinted from “Turn the Guns Around: Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions” by John Catalinotto, go to workers.org.

mid-January 1919, they made a desperate and brutal move. They collaborated with the military officers of the Freikorps — the officer-led organization of military reactionaries — to execute the leaders of the Spartacist League.

The Spartacist group was too small and weak to seize power on its own, as the Bolsheviks had done in Russia. The Independent Socialists vacillated and refused to challenge the Majority Social Democrats. Consequently, the German working class was unable to take advantage of the revolt in the military, seize power in its own name and smash the old state.

Who led? Workers or sailors?

Lt. Cmdr. Von Forstner made an important assertion in his pamphlet: that the rebellion came not from within the fleet but was brought in from the outside by social-democratic organizers. Von Forstner refused to believe the impulse came from the sailors themselves. Perhaps, since he was a submarine captain, he imagined the relations within the entire fleet mirrored those on his submarine, where a handful of officers, mates and ordinary sailors worked closely together, shared conditions and dangers, and depended on each other to survive in combat.

Even then, Von Forstner might have overestimated the loyalty of the sailors on his vessel. Still, the hierarchical relationship on a big battleship, with much greater privilege and comfort for the officers, was more likely to accentuate class differences and antagonisms.

Organizer Ernst Kuttner argued, on the contrary, that the revolutionary impulse came more from the sailors than from the worker-organizers. This is believable. For the sailors, everything was an immediate question of life and death. Also, the sailors’ living conditions on the fleet mirrored that of workers in factories, only under more repressive conditions.

Is it really possible, though, to separate the political changes taking place in the working class and the population as a whole from those within the fleet? The sailors were from the working class in the major cities and had family members who were Social Democrats. Some were themselves workers and union members as civilians. Could the officers possibly isolate the sailors from these

US threatens China — as new superpower

Continued from page 8

They are not able to match China’s development proposals. But U.S.-funded nongovernmental organizations and media outlets are waging widely publicized scare campaigns against these sorely needed development projects.

Meanwhile, China is reining in a number of projects by Chinese capitalists who were seeking ways to move their profits outside of Chinese government controls through exploitative foreign investment schemes.

Hands off China!

Big debates will continue within the progressive U.S. working-class movement on the social character of the Chinese experiment in “market socialism.”

It is valuable to study the impact of the global and internal capitalist market and a growing consumer society in China. The forms of socialist planning in the economy and in the culture hold lessons for the many developing countries.

The social weight, legal status and inheritance rights of the millionaire, and

now even billionaire, capitalists in China should be evaluated.

The Chinese working class now numbers 623 million people. Its social weight and political consciousness are growing. Thousands of strikes and job actions have consolidated new gains in pay and working conditions. Its capacity to organize all future society will be decisive.

There is much we don’t know about the ownership of the productive forces in China — by the state, by Chinese and foreign capitalists, and about the many forms of collective ownership of small

industries at the provincial, city and rural township levels. A lot is in rapid transition.

But in the final analysis, clarity and militant working-class solidarity are essential in opposing all threats to China from U.S. imperialism and its giant military machine.

Opposing sanctions, economic threats, trade wars, increasingly hostile media lies and military encirclement by U.S. imperialism is not open to debate.

Hands off China! ☐

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

What could be more urgent?

In all the dire news about the increased severity of climate change and its catastrophic effects, the most important element is not just downplayed — it is missing altogether.

For example, in a report issued Oct. 8, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicted that as soon as 2040, rising world temperatures will bring inundated coasts, intensifying droughts, worsening food shortages and wildfires, and a mass die-off of coral reefs. (“IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C”)

This stunning report, prepared by more than 200 scientists from 40 countries, quantifies the cost of damages to the world economy at \$54 TRILLION, but doesn’t even attempt to put a number on the loss of lives.

This means that a 3-year-old today could face a terrifying world when they reach 25.

Can anything be done to avert this staggering prediction? The cause of global warming and climate change is now well-established: the accumulation of heat-trapping carbon dioxide gas in the atmosphere, resulting mainly from burning fossil fuels.

But while scientists say that “it is technically possible to achieve the rapid changes required to avoid 2.7 degrees

[1.5°C] of warming, they concede that it may be politically unlikely.” (New York Times, Oct. 7)

So the science and the technology DO exist to avoid this catastrophe. Shouldn’t that mean a worldwide mobilization to make sure it gets done?

Yet it is “politically unlikely.” If anyone thinks that means we just have to get rid of Trump and his cronies, think again. U.S. administrations have been warned about this problem since the 1980s. Both Democratic and Republican administrations decisively rejected the advice of the scientists. (“Losing Earth: The Decade We Almost Stopped Climate Change,” New York Times Magazine, Aug. 1)

Global warming is not a problem of science and technology. It’s a problem of class relations. It demonstrates, in the most urgent way, that private ownership of the means of production stands in the way of carrying out rational decisions about the economy.

While climate change most damages the people who have the least, it affects all of society. Given what we now know, turning back this catastrophe should be at the top of everyone’s agenda. Instead, the big corporations and banks are totally invested in doing only what turns a profit for them. And they can’t do otherwise because capitalism is a dog-eat-dog

society in which cooperation for the common good has no place.

In early human society, when people lived communally and shared what they had, it was to everyone’s benefit to work together to solve problems. Even with limited technology, humans were able to accomplish daunting projects think of the huge stone statues on Easter Island and the massive circles of Stonehenge. What sacrifices they made to demonstrate their ability to literally move mountains!

Class society changed all that. The interests of those owning property in the form of enslaved people, land and finally capital became antagonistic to the interests of those doing the work. Human solidarity was destroyed. Greed triumphed over the common good.

For human society to be sustainable, there must be solidarity. It was no accident that the early anthem of the workers’ movement in the U.S. was “Solidarity Forever.”

Capitalism breaks down solidarity. It pits boss against workers, worker against worker, nation against nation; it divides us by gender and sexual expression, by our place of birth, by our hair and skin color, by language, by religion, ad nauseam.

Right now, Indonesia is at the epicenter of countries releasing carbon dioxide

into the atmosphere. From 2007 to 2014, vast tropical forests were leveled at the rate of three acres every minute to make way for palm oil plantations. In 2015, fires set to then clear the land raged out of control. NASA satellites detected more than 120,000 hot spots. All this was the direct result of supposedly environmental-friendly legislation in the U.S. promoting biofuels over coal. Big U.S. investors like Black Rock were in on the deal. (“Palm Oil Was Supposed to Help Save the Planet. Instead It Unleashed a Catastrophe,” New York Times Magazine, Nov. 20)

How did U.S. corporations get such influence in Indonesia? Through a military coup and massacre of a million Indonesians in 1965 that destroyed solidarity by decimating the once-powerful Communist Party there. (Read “Indonesia 1965: The Second Greatest Crime of the Century” at workers.org/books.)

Nothing about climate change is inevitable. It’s all connected to the class struggle to take the means of production, as well as science and technology, out of the hands of capitalist exploiters and use it, not for the profits of the few, but for the common good. Which is another way of saying, we urgently need to ramp up the struggle for socialism.□

Haitians strike on Vertières

By G. Dunkel

It’s an uprising. Some 80 percent of Haitians went on strike for days after massive protests throughout the country on Nov. 18. That date marked the anniversary of the Battle of Vertières, which sealed the victory of the Haitian revolution in 1803. Major protests, marches and disruptions continued through Nov. 24.

President Jovenel Moïse was scheduled to lay a traditional wreath at the memorial to the heroes of Vertières near Cap-Haïtien, but the boiling anger of the people led him to deposit the wreath at the Musée du Panthéon National Haïtien, 100 yards from the presidential palace, while a five-minute, 50-second prerecorded speech was played on national television.

The tens of thousands of people who came out in Port-au-Prince Nov. 18, as well as in most of Haiti’s major cities, including Jacmel, Les Cayes, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Saint-Marc and Léogâne, were demanding to know “Kot Kòb Petwo Karibe a” “Where is the PetroCaribe money?” The slogan refers to the billions of dollars Haiti got through a special deal with Venezuela, which let the Haitian government use its profits from discounted oil to finance development.

This vast sum, for the least developed country in the Western Hemisphere, could have brought people ravaged by earthquakes and hurricanes the development they need, but this money appears to have “evaporated” into the pockets of some politicians and their spouses.

But there were other pressing reasons to hit the streets: Two out of three Haitians live on less than \$2 a day; less than 50 percent have access to potable water and less than 25 percent have access to sanitation. Although the unions have been demanding a much bigger raise, the government recently doubled the minimum wage to \$5.11 for an 8-hour day.

In a brutal massacre in the Port-au-Prince neighborhood of La Saline on Nov. 13, a pro-government militia killed at least 15 people and dumped their bodies in garbage pits, according to a report by the newly founded Open Eyes Foundation.

Pressure on Haitian government to resign

The protests on Nov. 18 started out in good spirits, with marchers chanting and dancing to bands marching along with them. When the marchers confronted the police, however, the tone changed. Videos show cops prowling the streets, rifle or gun in hand, throwing tear gas grenades. Protesters built barricades of tires and other trash, which they set on fire from time to time.

The Haitian National Police claimed that three people were shot dead. A major opposition group, the Democratic and Popular Sector, an alliance between outspoken lawyer André Michel and the Lavalas Family party, claimed that 11 people had died, 47 had been wounded and 75 arrested. The Haitian Press Network reported Nov. 18 that six people were killed in protests in Petit-Goâve, Jacmel and Cap-Haïtien.

The U.N. Police Force, which is supposed to be “advising” the various Haitians police forces, had U.N. patrol cars surveying the action.

While the protests began over the PetroCaribe corruption, the attacks on President Jovenel Moïse and his Haitian Bald Head Party (PHTK) grew sharper and more intense as the week progressed. Calls for his resignation or dismissal became much more frequent.

There were reports that residents of different neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince also set up barricades to keep the cops out.

Tensions have been rising in Haiti

for decades, but have sharpened in particular since the disastrous earthquake of 2010. Both the Nov. 20 Washington Post and the Nov. 23 New York Times reported on this uprising in Haiti as if it were not connected to Haiti’s extreme poverty, reinforced by the U.N. occupation acting as a proxy for the U.S., nor to the U.S. picking the last two Haitian presidents.

The Haitian government is currently under tremendous popular pressure to resign. However, the U.S. embassy in Haiti issued the following statement:



PHOTOS: HAÏTI LIBERTÉ

France: Mobilization of ‘Yellow Vests’ marks new stage of struggles

By **Rémy Herrera**
Paris, France

Nov. 22 — A profoundly new mass mobilization has emerged in recent weeks in France: that of the “yellow vests.” That’s the name and color of the high-visibility jacket that every motorist is supposed to have in their vehicle to use, for their safety, if necessary. It was worn, as a uniform of common struggle, by hundreds of thousands of French people expressing their disapproval of President Emmanuel Macron’s actions.

This is a new mobilization in terms of its origin, scale and forms of popular rebellion. It all started on a small scale at the end of October with a simple citizen petition, without any party or union affiliation, without leaders or organizations, posted on social networks. It called for the cancellation of the fuel tax increase recently approved by the government.

A few days later, nearly a million people had signed it, and slogans were beginning to call to “shut down the country.” This protest movement initially concerned the price of gasoline and the high taxes. It quickly included “the high cost of living,” “low purchasing power” and a “boycott of the big department stores” before it finally focused on one clear slogan: “Macron, resign!”

The common point of these confrontations, which were everywhere in the country, was to express a general malaise, a “fed-up” feeling of the population, and a rejection of the social inequalities caused by the application of Macron’s neoliberal program.

The peak was reached Nov. 17: Some 280,000 yellow vests (according to police figures), scattered over 2,000 rallies throughout France, blocked access to key roads, motorway tolls and supermarkets. Most of the groups were inexperienced and spontaneous in the streets. Many people were taking part in their first political protest. Fewer than 10 percent of the demonstrations were registered with the police force in a district (prefecture), which is the usual procedure. In many villages in rural areas, this was the very first time a demonstration had taken place.

The day’s outcome included one death (an unlucky yellow vest woman was mowed down by a driver who had lost control of her vehicle), nearly 500 were injured, including about 10 seriously (and 93 police officers), and more than 280 were arrested for “acts of violence” (mostly motorists who had broken into the barricades).

Spontaneous struggle in Paris

In Paris, the action was an indescribable mess that the police were unable to control. A crowd of tens of thousands of yellow vests, extremely heterogeneous and absolutely unclassifiable, was made up of young adults (sometimes with their children), retired people (including grandmothers who had seen their pensions reduced), office employees, workers, artisans, motorcyclists, truckers, taxi drivers, civil servants, medical assistants, high school students, even young business people, veiled women, young people from the cities, rastas, people of all colors and religions, from all walks of life. They all swept, in incredible disorder, along the Champs-Élysées singing the national anthem, La Marseillaise, “Paris, on your feet, rise up” and, of course, “Macron resign!”

Multiple small improvised groups of yellow vests arrived from all over. They were very mobile and managed to make their way through and bypass — without violence — the lines of police and gendarmes, who were overwhelmed on all sides. Barricades were improvised in various parts of the capital, made up of security barriers, wooden pallets, bicycles and everything else that lay around on the road. Garbage cans were set on fire.

Luxury shops in upscale districts preferred to close their doors — although no windows were broken or robberies reported. Here, we read a slogan: “To arms!” (words from the national anthem); there, we could see the banner: “Neither Macron nor fascists, Black Blockage Total” (Total is the French oil multinational which, it seems, did not pay what it owes to the tax authorities.) On another, a drawing of a guillotine, without comment. We could hear: “It is like May 68,” “Angry,” “It is war” or “Macron to the stake.”

Despite the riot control CRS lines, several thousand peaceful but vocal demonstrators managed to enter the street leading to the Elysée Palace before being repelled by the shields, batons and tear gas of the security forces, and finally dispersed. Everyone was stunned — including the yellow vests and police officers. We’ve never seen this before.

The next day, protests continued throughout France, and the day after that, Nov. 19, access to some 20 oil refineries was blocked. On Nov. 20, in Paris, railway tracks from Gare du Nord were invaded and journeys to Roissy Charles-de-Gaulle airport were slowed down.

In almost all regions of France, the people continued to carry out blockades: In Toulouse, around Lyon, Bordeaux,

Île-de-France, Vaucluse, Normandy, Brittany, in the north of the country, in Corsica, and as far away as French overseas departments. On Réunion Island (more than 5,800 miles from Paris in the Indian Ocean) where social inequalities are blatant, protests turned to rioting. The army in Réunion was called upon to repress the rebellion, and a curfew was introduced in the most rebellious towns. On social networks, the yellow vests have already warned: next day of struggle is Nov. 24.

Macron ignores mass uprising

An outstanding actor, with a smile on his face and full of contempt, President Macron seems to ignore this mass uprising, as unprecedented as it is heterogeneous — but he seems motivated and determined to continue the fight. Will he be able to do so for long when surveys reveal that between 75 and 85 percent of the French say they support the yellow vests? For the time being, the President has simply warned that he will be “intractable” in the face of the “chaos” on Réunion Island.

Usually so sure of himself, Prime Minister Édouard Philippe appears on the defensive when he states that “the government will not change course” and “will not tolerate anarchy.” Minister of the Interior Christophe Castaner, for his part, is overplaying his firmness.

Called upon to help, Minister of Ecology and Energy François de Rugy says — no kidding — that the fuel tax should be used to finance the “ecological transition.” For how many euro cents, if France does not have an environmental policy? The anxiety of the government is palpable.

That the right and the far right are trying to co-opt the mobilization of the yellow vests, who have no visible leaders, is obvious and expected. It is just as significant that the mainstream media insidiously insist, in order to discredit the movement and fuel the hostility, on reporting (extremely rare) xenophobic or homophobic statements made during these actions by a few demonstrators (who were immediately stopped by their own friends on the spot).

At a time of savage capitalism and a dominant ideology that stirs up hatred and pits one against the other in an attempt to save the elites, the people who endure and suffer are also the victims of these contradictions. It is precisely the role of militant and enlightened progressives to stand by them in the struggle to show those who are misled the road to solidarity and fellowship.

Should the faces of the exploited

always be smiling? Would we insist that the poor people who are fighting for their survival and dignity be photogenic?

Organized left should join rebellion

Much more worrying is the fact that the leaders of the left-wing parties and trade unions are still — at the present time, and quite broadly — keeping a distance from this popular rebellion. Do they fail to understand that the revolt of the yellow vests opens the current second stage of the French people’s struggles against neoliberal tyranny and for social justice?

Can’t they understand that this is the continuation, in an innovative, combative, lively and extraordinarily broad scale, of the same process of generalization of mobilizations that launched thousands of unionized comrades into strikes and demonstrations last spring?

Do they not see that the yellow vests, in their own way (not without courage, risk and danger), are determined to fill the gaping void left because the institutionalized left for decades now has abandoned the defense of the class interests of all workers and of internationalism toward the peoples of the world? Do they fail to realize that it is the class struggle that makes history?

Fortunately, things can change. And what seems forgotten in the leadership, the bases will take care of reminding them. On Nov. 20, the first transport union announced its support for the yellow vests.

On the evening of Nov. 21, the actions of the electricians and gas companies resumed intensifying (if they had really ceased since June). Several refineries and oil depots (in Gonfreville-L’Orcher and Oudalle near Le Havre, Feyzin in the Lyon suburbs, La Mède near Marseille, but also on other sites, notably those supplying Blagnac (Toulouse) and Saint Exupéry (Lyon) airports) declared themselves on strike.

At the same time, we learned that “captain of industry” Carlos Ghosn, CEO of the French automotive group Renault and chairman of the board of directors of Nissan, was arrested and summoned by the Japanese courts on suspicion of tax fraud and embezzlement of the company’s funds for personal purposes. Is a popular revolt against that world so difficult to understand?

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Incendios de California son crisis del capitalismo

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Como de costumbre, la administración de Trump quiere evitar pagar los fondos de emergencia federales para desastres de este tipo. En su lugar, utiliza los fondos para desplegar tropas federales en la ahora militarizada frontera sur.

Las/os activistas sociales e incluso los políticos preguntan por qué Trump no ha enviado más bomberos, rescatistas y trabajadores de la salud para ayudar a las personas devastadas por los incendios. En cambio, gran parte de la lucha contra incendios se deja al sector más alienado de los californianos, su población encarcelada.

El programa del Departamento de Corrección y Rehabilitación de California paga a los prisioneros de \$1 a \$2 por día para combatir incendios activos, más tiempo libre de sus sentencias. Más de 2.500 prisioneros están arriesgando sus vidas combatiendo incendios en todo el estado. (tinyurl.com/ydbus2at y tinyurl.com/ydy9colb)

Al utilizar este trabajo “voluntario”, el estado dice que ahorra de \$90 a \$100 millones al año. También aduce que ayuda a los reclusos a aprender nuevas destrezas mientras trabajan en un entorno de equipo. Por supuesto, ningún trabajo en este campo está garantizado para ex prisioneros.

Trump continúa negando que el comportamiento humano produce calentamiento global y que esta es una causa importante de más incidentes de sequía. La vegetación se torna seca e inflamable, proporcionando más combustible para los incendios. Las líneas eléctricas mal puestas pueden iniciar un incendio y luego los vientos de Santa Ana lo propagan.

Los incendios forestales de California son síntomas de una crisis en el capitalismo. La explotación y el desprecio por la tierra y los recursos y por las personas pobres y trabajadoras han creado esta experiencia anual de terror para las/os residentes.

Sin embargo, las/os más oprimidos ya

han dado las respuestas. En California, las casas vacantes superan a la población sin hogar. Las/os activistas exigen que llenemos los hogares que tenemos en lugar de alimentar la burbuja inmobiliaria.

Las/os activistas también piden pagar a los trabajadores — los bomberos pobres y encarcelados — los salarios que merecen en lugar de explotar su trabajo y costarles la salud y, en última instancia, la vida.

Por último, las/os activistas quieren crear una infraestructura que sea sostenible y reduzca nuestra huella de carbono, en lugar de crear más vertederos que llenen nuestra atmósfera con gas metano, que aumenta la probabilidad de estos incendios. □

‘E-carcelación’: Nuevas ganancias para prisiones

Por Betsey Piette

Desde principios de la década de 1980, las corporaciones se han beneficiado de las inversiones a gran escala en lo que se conoce como el “complejo industrial de prisiones”. Este impulso para aumentar los márgenes a costa de las/os trabajadoras pobres y oprimidos, desproporcionadamente personas de color, se ha convertido en un elemento clave en el crecimiento del encarcelamiento masivo. Las condiciones en la mayoría de las prisiones parecen esclavitud moderna.

Desde 1983, cuando se otorgó a CoreCivic el primer contrato para privatizar los establecimientos penitenciarios, la población carcelaria de EUA se ha multiplicado por cinco, de 500.000 a más de 2,2 millones. En 1987, WCC, ahora GEO, recibió su primer contrato de prisión. Para el 2017, estos dos gigantes de prisiones privadas tenían ganancias anuales combinadas de \$4 mil millones.

No están solos. Un informe del Proyecto de Responsabilidad de Correcciones del Centro de Justicia Urbana, publicado a principios de este año, encontró que más de 3.100 compañías han obtenido miles de millones de ganancias anuales por contratos con alrededor de 130 centros penitenciarios. Estas corporaciones privadas ahora administran casi todos los aspectos de las prisiones, incluida la administración de casos, construcción, equipamiento, servicios de alimentos, atención médica, operaciones y telecomunicaciones.

Varios contratos corporativos de prisiones garantizan pagos por cama para el almacenamiento de trabajadoras/es indocumentados y sus familias. En agosto de 2018, el Departamento de Corrección de Pennsylvania firmó un contrato de \$15 millones con Smart Communications, con sede en Florida, para procesar el correo personal de las/os prisioneros.

Beneficios amenazados por reformas populares

La publicación en 2010 de “The New Jim Crow” por Michelle Alexander destacó el papel que el racismo ha jugado en el dramático crecimiento de las

poblaciones penales, y ayudó a lanzar un amplio movimiento en contra de los aspectos de la encarcelación en masa. Esto ha llevado a cambios en la condena de jóvenes a cadenas perpetuas, a los límites de la pena capital y al inicio de las reformas de la fianza.

Sin embargo, como advierte Alexander en su artículo de opinión “The Newest Jim Crow”, “las recientes reformas de la justicia penal contienen las semillas de un sistema aterrador de e-carcelación.” (New York Times, 8 de noviembre) Alexander define el uso creciente de monitores de tobillo en lugar de la fianza en efectivo como “e-carcelación”.

Ante las crecientes demandas de reformas penitenciarias, las corporaciones penitenciarias con fines de lucro han encontrado nuevas formas de reforzar sus ganancias. El Grupo GEO y otras tres grandes corporaciones ahora tienen el monopolio de los contratos para proporcionar monitoreo electrónico de personas en libertad condicional en más de 30 estados. Sus ingresos combinados por monitoreo electrónico superan los \$200 millones.

Alexander abrió su artículo de opinión reconociendo las victorias electorales de medio término para legalizar la marihuana (Michigan), restablecer los derechos de voto a 1,4 millones de personas con condenas por delitos graves (Florida) y dictar veredictos unánimes de jurado en juicios por delitos graves (Louisiana).

Sin embargo, señala que aunque la “práctica de la fianza en efectivo finalmente está llegando a su fin”, las nuevas políticas en varios estados se basan en “algoritmos de evaluación de riesgos para recomendar a las/os jueces si una persona que ha sido arrestada debe ser liberada” sin restricciones o encadenada con un dispositivo de monitoreo GPS.

‘E-carcelación’

Alexander cuestiona el uso de e-carcelación basado en modelos matemáticos supuestamente “ciegos”. Ella cita a la científica de datos Cathy O’Neil, quien llamó a estos modelos “armas de destrucción matemática” que “no solo están altamente correlacionados con la raza y la

clase, sino que también están significativamente influenciados por el sesgo generalizado en el sistema de justicia penal”. O’Neil llama estos algoritmos basados en computadora “opiniones integradas en matemáticas”.

A pesar de que la opción de usar un monitor en lugar de pagar una fianza en efectivo puede parecer una “salida de la cárcel”, los dispositivos de monitoreo GPS vienen con una etiqueta de precio considerable: alrededor de \$300 mensuales que debe pagar el usuario.

Los dispositivos limitan la capacidad de ir más allá de un área controlada, lo que dificulta la obtención o el mantenimiento de un trabajo, el cuidado de sus seres queridos o la visita de familiares que no se encuentran en el área designada. Como explica Alexander, “estás efectivamente sentenciado a una prisión digital al aire libre. Un paso en falso traerá policías a tu puerta”.

Los estados también utilizan ampliamente los monitores de tobillo para monitorear a las/os individuos en libertad condicional. En lugar de liberar a las personas después de haber cumplido su condena, el uso de dispositivos de monitoreo de tobillo se ha convertido en la última condición de supervisión impuesta a las personas en libertad condicional.

El estudio realizado en julio de 2018 por el Centro para la Justicia en los Medios encontró que las condiciones de supervisión de libertad condicional se han vuelto más estrictas, incluyendo pruebas regulares de drogas, prohibiciones a las personas con las que se puede asociar y un amplio conjunto de tarifas y multas. En Wisconsin, por ejemplo, las personas en libertad condicional pueden enfrentar más de 70 condiciones para la libertad condicional.

El estudio del CJM observó la asombrosa cantidad de personas afectadas. Desde 1980 hasta 2015, el número de individuos a nivel nacional en libertad condicional aumentó de 1,1 millones a 4,3 millones. Las filas de individuos en libertad condicional, el enfoque de su informe, casi se cuadruplicaron de 220.400 a 826.100.

Cuando a Debbie Africa, miembro de

MOVE 9, se le concedió la libertad condicional en junio de 2018, después de haber sido encarcelada injustamente durante casi 40 años, se le exigió que llevara un monitor de tobillo, y su movimiento limitado al Condado de Delaware, en las afueras de Filadelfia. La naturaleza arbitraria de esta imposición se hizo evidente cuando su esposo, Mike Africa Sr., fue liberado en octubre y no enfrentó la misma restricción.

Tasas de reincidencia en aumento

Como resultado de estas condiciones draconianas, las tasas de reincidencia están en aumento. En 1980, el 17 por ciento de las personas liberadas fueron enviadas de regreso a prisión debido a “violaciones” de libertad condicional. Esto aumentó a un tercio de las admisiones en prisión en 1999, y las cifras siguen aumentando.

El monitoreo electrónico es esencialmente una extensión del encarcelamiento en masa que limita en gran medida la libertad de las personas en libertad condicional y su capacidad para evitar el re encarcelamiento. El crear una condición prolongada de arresto domiciliario, también puede utilizarse para apoyar el aburguesamiento al evitar que las/os prisioneros pasen a los barrios seleccionados por los inversionistas de bienes raíces.

Alexander finaliza su artículo de opinión citando la voz cautelar del Reverendo Dr. Martin Luther King Jr: “Cuando las máquinas y las computadoras, los motivos de lucro y los derechos de propiedad se consideran más importantes que las personas, los trillizos gigantes de racismo, materialismo extremo y militarismo no pueden ser conquistados”. Ella agrega: “No prestamos atención a su advertencia en ese entonces. ¿Haremos hoy una elección diferente?”

Los llamados para reformar el encarcelamiento en masa seguirán siendo limitados y, en algunos casos, se convertirán en obstáculos a menos que logremos confrontar el sistema del capitalismo con fines de lucro que sigue tratando a los seres humanos como poco más que productos básicos. □

Incendios de California son crisis del capitalismo

Por Gloria Verdieu y M. Matsemela-Ali Odom

16 de nov. 2018 — En las últimas dos décadas, los incendios forestales se han convertido en un problema que afecta cada vez más la salud y la vida de las/os californianos. Actualmente, hay más de 20 incendios activos en California según el sitio web de CAL FIRE, fire.ca.gov/general/firemaps.

Algunos se conocen como incendios forestales nacionales que son naturales y ocurren anualmente en California después de un verano largo y seco.

La abundancia y la frecuencia de la actual ola de incendios, sin embargo, puede verse como el resultado del capitalismo anárquico y el impulso de las ganancias en el sector inmobiliario. Y las graves consecuencias de muerte y destrucción pueden atribuirse a la falta de

planificación social para enfrentar emergencias, complicada por un presidente ultraderechista.

Los incendios en sí mismos son el resultado directo del desarrollo excesivo de partes de California que antes no estaban pobladas por razones divergentes, pero relacionadas. En el sur de California, el fuego en Woolsey ha consumido en gran medida propiedades inmobiliarias de alto precio en hermosas áreas vírgenes que se venden a personas adineradas.

El incendio en Camp, en el Norte de California por otro lado, ha afectado a muchas/os californianos más pobres y envejecientes, algunas/os de los cuales han sido expulsados de las áreas urbanas costosas — en otras palabras, debido al aburguesamiento.

El fuego en Camp, uno de los incendios más letales en la historia de California, ha demostrado ser trágico. A partir de la

tarde del 16 de noviembre, el número oficial de muertes era de 71, pero el número de personas desaparecidas fue de 1.011, dado que muchas de las personas mayores o discapacitadas no tienen forma de escapar. Ubicado a unas 60 millas al norte de Sacramento, el incendio en Camp ha incinerado toda la ciudad de Paradise, destruyendo más de 12.000 estructuras y 150.000 acres.

Los fuertes y extremadamente secos “vientos de Santa Ana” que se originan tierra adentro han extendido el humo del fuego, que puede verse cientos de millas en múltiples direcciones y ha empeorado la calidad del aire, que ya era deficiente.

Las personas que viven a cientos de kilómetros de los incendios respiran aire cargado de humo, que es peligroso especialmente para las personas con enfermedades cardíacas, asma u otras afecciones respiratorias. Las autoridades aconsejan

a las personas que permanezcan adentro o limiten las actividades al aire libre.

Los irresponsables tuits de Trump

Miles de personas viven en tiendas de campaña, después de haber tenido que abandonar sus hogares, angustiadas, perdiendo todo lo que tienen. No saben cuándo pueden regresar a sus hogares para salvar lo que queda, si es que quedan.

En medio de todo este sufrimiento, el presidente tuiteó que el estado de California ha administrado mal sus bosques causando los incendios. Sin lugar a dudas, Donald Trump está atacando al gobierno de California, que es progresista en comparación con él. El gobierno federal, sin embargo, posee el 98 por ciento de las tierras forestales en California y es responsable de su mala gestión.

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