

France

Government concedes to ‘Yellow Vests’ anger

By G. Dunkel

Bulletin, Dec. 4 — The French government has conceded on the original main demand of the Yellow Vest movement and suspended the tax hike on gasoline. The movement says it will continue to press its other demands.

Dec. 2 — For the third weekend in a row, tens of thousands of people in France have taken to the streets in hundreds of demonstrations that ranged from a near insurrection in Paris to occupying airport runways and toll plazas; blocking traffic circles, roads, malls and creating traffic jams; and having a huge but unmeasurable effect on France’s economy.

The government said that 136,000 people protested on Dec. 1. That figure is probably low, given that these “Yellow Vests” — named for the high-visibility vests that all French autos are required to carry in case of an emergency — were protesting a big tax increase that the government was going to impose on fuel for cars.

Beyond Paris, clashes between Yellow Vests and cops took place in Dijon, Bordeaux, Toulouse and Marseille. Confrontations took place even in small towns like Puy-en-Velay, southwest of Lyon. When the Yellow Vests were refused permission to talk to the prefecture, the central government’s representative in the area, they set fire to his office and several others nearby and blocked fire trucks.

In Toulouse, Yellow Vests joined up with railroad workers organized by the labor federation CGT. Both groups confronted the cops for three hours in the center city near the railroad station.

In Paris, confrontations begun in the morning lasted well into the night. The cops used tear gas — so much that when a police platoon was set to clear an intersection, it had to be issued additional equipment: water cannons. The protesters replied with stones they had crowbarred out of the street pavement, as well as sticks, Molotov cocktails and general debris.

Beyond occupying the Arc de Triomphe — the monument to heroes of the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars, which also contains the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier — protesters also attacked banks, the former stock exchange and high-end stores selling luxury goods and cars.

What disturbed the French government greatly was graffiti on the Arc saying “Macron resign” and “The Yellow Vests will triumph!” French President Emmanuel Macron, speaking at a press conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, brought up this graffiti in response to a question about the situation in France.

Broad public support

Since a huge majority of the French support the aims of the Yellow Vests — public opinion polls said 75 to 85 percent — the identity of the forces engaged in attacking

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PHOTO: CRIMETHINC

An announced spike in taxes on fuel pushed French masses to rebel.

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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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Black commentator fired over call to end Israeli apartheid

By Ted Kelly
Philadelphia

Temple University professor and author Marc Lamont Hill has been fired from CNN after giving an impassioned address to the United Nations on Nov. 29, International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Dr. Hill made an unequivocal call for the end of apartheid conditions for Palestinians and Africans living within the borders of the so-called state of Israel.

Dozens of protesters gathered in front of CNN headquarters here on Saturday morning demanding that the network reverse its decision and reinstate Hill as a contributor. His termination makes it clear that recognizing the humanity of Palestinians is a fireable offense in the United States.

The CNN executives who shredded Hill's contract are the same ones who, just last month, denounced the Trump administration's treatment of White House reporter Jim Acosta. But rather than defend Hill, a young Black academic and activist, the network gave him up to right-wing attack dogs.

Palestinian novelist and activist Susan Abulhawa, author of "Mornings in Jenin" and "The Blue Between Sky and Water," posted a statement on her Facebook page in support of Marc Lamont Hill:

"Marc has been one of our greatest champions, often at great personal cost, and over the past few days he has had to endure an inordinate amount of vitriol, pressure and threats to his person and livelihood. But his commitment to Palestine never wavered or buckled. ... I just want to offer my continued support and belief in Marc. He has always stood by us, still is, and I'm standing with him."

In October, Abulhawa was detained by Israeli forces for over 36 hours and ultimately deported when trying to enter Palestine to speak at the Kalimat Palestinian Literature Festival.

Many other writers, academics and reporters have joined Abulhawa in publicly expressing solidarity with professor Hill. His fellow CNN contributor Peter Beinart condemned the bosses' decision to fire Hill. George Ciccariello-Maher, who was ultimately dismissed from Drexel University after receiving a string of death threats from white supremacists, posted multiple messages of solidarity on Twitter. Two separate petitions demanding that CNN reinstate Marc Lamont Hill garnered a total of nearly 20,000 signatures.

Violence against Palestinian and African migrants

This comes at a time of increased fascist mobilization around the world. Since March 2017, young Palestinians in Gaza have gathered near the militarized barrier dividing them from the rest of Palestine in what they call the Great March of Return. At least 118 of these demonstrators have been shot and killed by Israeli snipers with high-powered rifles. Thousands more who were shot but survived their initial wounds, now face life-threatening consequences from the grievous wounds inflicted by this occupying army.

The youngest victim of Israeli violence during this year's protests was an eight-month-old girl named Layla Ghandour, who was suffocated in a tear gas attack. Two young journalists, Ahmad Abu Hussein and Yaser

Murtaja, were also assassinated by Israeli snipers while wearing vests clearly marked "Press." The Israeli soldiers also murdered 21-year-old Rawan al-Najjar, one of many health care workers in the partition zone where wounded protesters were treated.

This ongoing massacre is just one of the forms of violence inflicted on indigenous Palestinians and African migrants. Israeli jets have also strafed and bombed Gaza multiple times in the last year, leading to even more death, maimings and displacement. Attacks from the police and from armed settlers occur daily, the misery of the refugee camps and prisons is unrelenting, and there are constant shortages of water, medical supplies, food and electricity.

Despite new Israeli restrictions that make it legal to deport supporters of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, Hill was permitted to travel through Palestine last month. He is a frequent visitor, even in this time of rapidly accelerating aggression against Palestinians, in particular those living in Gaza and the West Bank. He returned in time to visit the United Nations on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and condemned these apartheid conditions. Hill called for a single state with equality and representation for all those living in the region, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexuality or ability.

This stance has made Marc Lamont Hill a regular target for right-wing and pro-Zionist forces. Just last month, he was pressured to condemn Louis Farrakhan's purportedly anti-Semitic views. Hill refused on principle to bow to this pressure, acknowledging that raising the specter of Minister Farrakhan is a common tactic to distract from criticism of Israel.

New threat to Hill's livelihood

Regardless of whether CNN reverses its decision, professor Hill faces a new threat to his livelihood: his tenure at Temple University.

In a front-page story on Dec. 1, the Philadelphia Inquirer quoted the outgoing chair of the Temple Board of Trustees, Patrick O'Connor, who called Hill's remarks "disgusting."

O'Connor — a corporate lawyer, hedge fund manager and board member of a major chemical company — has been much more protective of his fellow Temple board trustees than of university professors. He served as attorney for fellow board member and convicted rapist Bill Cosby, who assaulted Temple University employee Andrea Constand. When more of Cosby's victims came forward, reporters asked why O'Connor refused to sever the university's ties with him. He exploded at reporters, shouting, "I'm tired of this shit!" and called one of them "an imbecile."

Just last year, students called on O'Connor to resign his chairmanship for showing "a lack of respect ... for survivors of sexual assault." He had just approved the expenditure of \$3 million to renovate a nearby park, adding a memorial to honor famous alumni, including Cosby by name.

It could not be more clear that neither

the Temple Board of Trustees nor the executives at CNN speak for the workers in their employ. Rather, they represent the same corporate elite interests that profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

"Too often we have framed human rights through the lens of the West," Hill said in his address to the United Nations. "We have viewed it through the gaze of colonialism. And we've assessed them through the limited prism of our own experiences. Simply put, the powerful have too often attempted to universalize their own particular and local values."

It is ironic that Zionists are demonizing Hill for demanding a single, secular state where Palestinians, Jews and Africans can live together as equals. To say that Hill has called for "the destruction of Israel" is to admit that racial oppression and colonial occupation are the foundation of the Israeli state.

Late on Dec. 1, Hill did offer an apology to anyone who was offended by his use of the phrase "from the river to the sea," but at no point retracted any of the principled positions he had articulated. That slogan has been used for decades by various groups that struggle for Palestinian liberation. It is not anti-Semitic code language, as Hill's detractors imply.

The threat of anti-Semitic violence is very real in the United States and Europe. Since Trump's election, in Hill's hometown of Philadelphia, Jewish cemeteries have been desecrated and vandalized with swastikas. A coalition of white supremacist gangs attempted to hold a rally outside the National Museum of Jewish American History. And just weeks ago, a white nationalist in Pittsburgh carried out the most deadly anti-Jewish massacre in U.S. history, murdering 11 people in their synagogue. It is not only incorrect to conflate this racist violence with principled condemnation of Israel, it is dangerous.

The white supremacists who commit atrocities against Jewish people in the United States are on the same side as the settlers and soldiers who massacre Palestinians in Israel. Marc Lamont Hill is an enemy to both.

We stand with Marc Lamont Hill! From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free! □



PHOTO: BASYM HASAN

New York protest in support of professor Marc Lamont Hill.

On a working-class movement for socialism

By Sam Marcy

There is a new and fundamental trend which has to do not only with the ups and downs of the capitalist economic cycle, but with the social composition of the working class. It is an objective trend that arises out of the changes in the technological structure of capitalist industry, which in turn have changed the working class itself.

We have written elsewhere about the change as it pertains to the growing proportion of Black, Latinx, Asian, Native, women and undocumented workers. That, however, could be interpreted as a mere numerical change, or one that is related to "ethnicity," as they phrase it in bourgeois sociology.

But the change in social composition goes beyond that. It involves a relative reduction in the percentage of skilled workers and a tremendous increase in the number of semi-skilled.

Also, on an overall scale, it means the creation of lower-paying jobs as against higher-paying ones. It means the decline of the traditionally more privileged workers and industries with higher wages and the creation of a vast pool of lower-paid workers. This trend is still surfacing ...

From a class point of view, it is truly one of the most profound, socially significant trends to emerge. The number of lower-paid workers is bound to increase at the expense of the more privileged workers.

Prospects for a class-wide movement

Up until now, when the word movement was used, it could mean either the Black movement, the Latinx movement, the civil rights movement, the anti-war movement, the LGBTQ movement, the women's movement. But the term seldom, if ever, referred to the working-class movement. By and large, the progressive movement as a whole was more or less separate from the working class.

Now, however, the change in the social composition of the working class lays the objective basis for a movement of the working class itself, of which these movements will become so many constituent parts.

When we speak of the women's movement or the anti-war movement or the Black movement as part of the working-class movement, it doesn't mean they won't have an independent character. Of course they will.

But they will be part of the working-class movement because it will have come alive as the fundamental class in society which alone can weld these movements together in a genuine anti-capitalist and progressive struggle, a struggle both for democratic rights and for socialism. □

This edited excerpt from the book "High Tech, Low Pay," written in 1986, can be downloaded from the list of Sam Marcy's books at workers.org.

On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

UCal workers fight racism in contract struggle

A Nov. 10 Labor Notes article highlights egregious racist attacks on workers in Local 3299 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees at the University of California. UC is the third-largest employer in the state, and the 24,000-member local is its largest union, representing patient care and service workers across 10 campuses and five university hospitals. Its members are majority women, and 80 percent are women of color.

Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, Local 3299 set up the Racial Justice Working Group after signing their last contract in 2014. Using UC-supplied data, they discovered the system was following the corporate model. Top executives’ pay ballooned from 2005 to 2015, their positions filled mainly by white cis men. Meanwhile, the share of payroll going to the bottom 50 percent of women and workers of color fell, as more and more jobs were outsourced and fewer African Americans were hired when workers retired.

The RJWG met with members around the state who shared stories about pay differences, lack of promotion and decline in the African-American workforce. Due to outsourcing and hiring bias, the percentage of Black workers fell by 37 percent between 1996 and 2015. What members knew from experience — Black and Latinx workers earn on average 20 percent less than whites and are more likely to get fired or have management outsource their jobs — the union was able to show UC bias in two reports filled with analyses of racial and gender disparities.

They are now using the reports to craft bargaining demands including training and promoting existing staff and hiring more full-time workers from Black and Latinx communities. They propose “banning the box” — eliminating consideration of incarceration during hiring — and cutting ties with contractors linked to Immigration and Customs Enforcement; such UC contractors earned \$280 million last year. They called a three-day strike in May (WW, May 17) when other unions struck in solidarity, and they joined unionized CU hospital workers in solidarity when they struck in October. (OTPL, Nov. 10) Local 3299 workers are now in contract mediation. Read the detailed story at tinyurl.com/ya8angh7/. Stay tuned.

AFGE warns of rising racism against its members

In a searing statement on Nov. 8, American Federation of Government Employees National President J. David Cox Sr. encouraged workers to unite against the rising tide of racist attacks on government employees. The statement raises how AFGE workers are disgusted to witness racist and anti-Semitic attacks, especially on federal property. For example, at the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia, a racist hung a noose on a Black worker’s desk. In Washington, an executive director at the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization exhibited a portrait of KKK founder, slave trader and Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest. (tinyurl.com/ydbfwv2j) A vandal scribbled the “N word” on the National Park Service-owned African Burial Ground Monument in NYC. (WW, Nov. 14) These attacks aren’t all coming from anonymous haters: Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke told his workers that “diversity isn’t important,” and AFGE directors rightly called this out. (AFGE.org)

What the statement failed to raise, however, were actions of ICE, represented by the National Border Patrol Council, under the AFGE wing of Homeland Security. Nevertheless, it’s a good sign in the time of Trump’s racist hatred that unions recognize racism is a cardinal threat to unity and power in the labor movement.

Union solidarity helps win strike in St. Louis

Machinists Locals 777 and 313 in District 9 went on strike in mid-November. The 54 Machinists at Dave Sinclair Ford’s body shop in St. Louis struck to secure bonuses for service advisors and techs, who also wanted a guaranteed 40-hour workweek; both were sticking points in negotiations. The resulting three-year contract “was good for everyone,” said Machinists District 9 Directing Business Rep Mark Conner.

A critical factor in winning the strike was union solidarity, which sent a strong message to employers everywhere: Thirty members of Teamsters Local 618, who also work in the shop, honored the walkout without pay in solidarity with their fellow unionists. “When you have 30 guys that honor a picket and go without a paycheck, that gets [employers’] attention. It’s huge,” said Marvin Kropp, principal officer of Teamsters Local 618 and president of Teamsters Joint Council 13. (Labor Tribune, Nov. 26) Union solidarity forever!. □

Mass layoffs loom as GM gets bailed out, workers get sold out

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

Workers in Michigan, Maryland, Ohio and Ontario, Canada, are in a state of shock after learning that General Motors intends to close their plants. On Nov. 26, with no advance warning from the company, auto workers at five plants in Metro Detroit; Baltimore, Md.; Lordstown, Ohio; and Oshawa, Ont., learned from news media their plants would stop producing current vehicles next year and were “unallocated” for any new product.

Many workers will have to relocate to keep their jobs. Temporary workers and workers who work for subcontractors in the plants — such as janitors — won’t have that option. In addition, 8,000 nonunion salaried positions are being cut corporatwide in the U.S.

Altogether 14,000 jobs are slated to go. The cuts in Canada represent 25 percent of GM’s union workforce.

The job cuts will have a “multiplier effect” — many more jobs will be affected indirectly, from parts supplier plants to steel mills to public sector jobs affected by the drop in tax revenue. At least 10,000 workers in the Oshawa area produce components for the GM Assembly plant, for example.

Plant closings are an act of corporate class war, not only against the workforce but against whole communities.

Cities, neighborhoods, environment under corporate axe

Lordstown, Ohio, is located in Trumbull County, which abuts Mahoning County. These counties comprise the Youngstown-Warren area, parts of which became “ghost towns” since the steel industry shut down most of the mills a few decades ago. GM is one of the few manufacturers left in the area that provides good union jobs.

When the auto complex opened in the 1960s, many thousands were employed there. More recently, sections of the Lordstown plant were permanently closed, with additional jobs lost to automation. Now the remaining 1,600 positions are on the chopping block.

Detroit has been devastated by decades of plant closings and predatory lending that led to mass housing foreclosures and extortionate interest rates on public debt. The predominantly white suburbs have also suffered, but nowhere near as much as this impoverished African-American-majority city. Most of the city has been untouched by the mythical “comeback” story that has been fed to the rest of the country.

That means the projected closing of the

“Poletown” plant, part of which sits in Detroit and part in Hamtramck, would be a major blow to both cities. Hamtramck is a small, multinational city surrounded by Detroit.

In the 1980s GM got Detroit’s elected officials to use “eminent domain” to acquire the site of Chrysler’s closed Dodge Main complex for its new plant, along with many residential properties in the surrounding area. This neighborhood was home to a large Polish community, sometimes referred to as “Poletown.” The destruction of the neighborhood was justified by the number of jobs the plant would provide. In addition, GM received city tax breaks for decades. After all these concessions, the company wants to close its only assembly plant in Detroit.

Workers at the Oshawa, Ont., assembly plant are represented by Unifor, which was formed by the merger of the Canadian Auto Workers and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada. The CAW originally split from the United Auto Workers because the UAW had made concessions and was committed to labor-management cooperation. Nevertheless, in 2016 Unifor made some concessions to GM with the understanding that the Oshawa plant would be kept open. Now workers are being double-crossed.

GM transmission plants in Baltimore, Md., and Warren, Mich., which formerly employed thousands, are both down to a few hundred workers due to outsourcing and automation. These workers and the surrounding communities will suffer if the plants shut down.

What GM is doing is criminal! Yet it’s not unprecedented. The Detroit Three auto companies closed hundreds of plants since the 1970s, with GM closing the most. The company used its 2009 bankruptcy to shed another 16 plants, deemed excess capacity. Now, however, GM is not only back on its feet but making billions in record profits. Its comeback would not have been possible without massive financial assistance from both the U.S. and Canadian governments.

GM is also reaping the benefits of Trump’s massive corporate tax cuts, but the company won’t use the windfall to invest in job-creating new products. GM is moving away from car production to focus on its most profitable vehicles — trucks and sport utility vehicles — the least fuel-efficient vehicles with the biggest carbon footprint. The automaker will ax its electric Chevy Volt along with the Chevy Cruze and other sedans, even its legendary Chevy Impala. This is environmental recklessness.

GM got bailed out, but workers and communities are getting sold out.

Continued on page 5



Workers at GM’s Oshawa plant in Canada at their UNIFOR union headquarters on Nov. 26, protesting planned job cuts.

U.S. life expectancy under capitalism continues to drop

By Taryn Fivek

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released its latest numbers for life expectancy in the U.S. on Nov. 28, and the news reveals a disturbing pattern. Few researchers were surprised that U.S. average life expectancy slipped another tenth of a year to reach 78.6 years. This indicates that drug overdoses, suicides and other preventable or treatable conditions have continued to grow. (tinyurl.com/y9g3kawy)

Indeed, if not for scientific and technological advancements in treating heart disease, cancer and cigarette addiction, life expectancy would be even lower. As the economic situation in the United States continues to deteriorate, so will people’s prospects for living happy, healthy and long lives, no matter the advanced treatments offered in private hospitals with the best health care services.

It’s worth noting where these numbers emerge from and how they are used. In certain parts of the United States, life expectancy is quite high. Wealthier, mainly white families can afford access to both quality health care and healthy environments. They have access to better food, cleaner water, gyms, yoga studios and personal trainers. They can afford access to psychiatrists and detox facilities. They can afford good lawyers to make sure their children get detox and rehab and not jail time.

In other parts of the country, such as rural areas, non-white-majority urban areas, Indigenous reservations, prisons and generally impoverished areas,

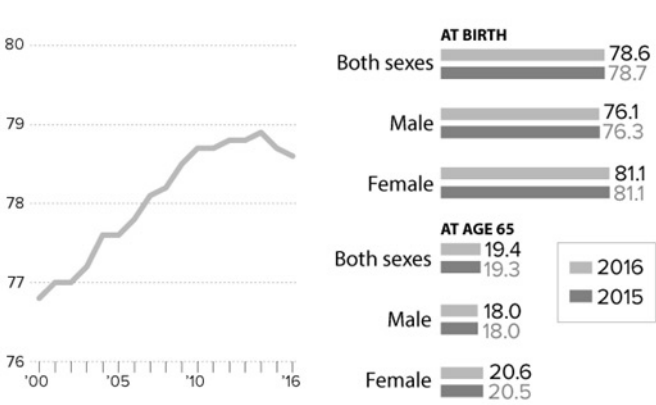
the situation is the opposite. Racism and class war have resulted in a disproportionate body count in these parts of the country. People struggle for access to everything that keeps them healthy and happy. Their jobs are more dangerous, more scarce and paid with poverty wages. Because of their race, gender or class, they do not have access to health care or healthy environments.

Life expectancy doesn’t necessarily mean that people will start dying at 78.6 years of age. Rather, it’s an assessment of how likely a person is able to survive events such as infancy and childhood, giving birth, illness, crime and accidents. Some older people will live into their second century thanks to advances in medical science and health care, but most of them will survive so long because they can afford to.

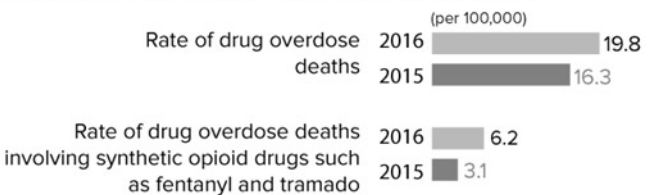
The poor and oppressed are left to die from preventable conditions. This is why Black women are more than twice as likely than white women to die from childbirth in the United States. This is why life expectancy for Black men is 71.5 years (tinyurl.com/ybto9ax8), and for Indigenous Lakota people on the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River reservations it’s a staggering 50 years! (tinyurl.com/y9dyp6gl)

The U.S. spends more per capita on health care than any other country globally, but this money mainly circulates

US life expectancy declining again



Drug overdose deaths increase 21% in 2016.



These are government statistics and unfortunately do not include gender nonconforming people.

among insurance companies, big pharma and lobbying firms to increase their profits. The same amount of money spent on the poor or on universal health care would bankrupt Wall Street, but increase life expectancy across all sectors.

In countries that have universal, free health care, life expectancy rates are much higher, such as in Canada (82.3 years) and Britain (80.9 years), but even they are stalling. In Britain, life expectancy has stopped growing altogether. (tinyurl.com/y9asft2u) This is a result of austerity eating away at working-class gains. Housing has become increasingly tenuous, and rough sleepers are filling doorways, decreasing their quality of life.

Socialist planning extends, saves lives

While people in capitalist countries continue to suffer and decline, in socialist countries like Cuba, life expectancy not only grows, but grows evenly across all communities. Recent innovations there in cancer vaccines mean hope for people suffering from lung and skin cancers.

Sufentanil: Big Pharma profits off of pain

By Princess Harmony

Dsuvia. That is the trade name of the latest high-powered opioid on the market. Its scientific name is sufentanil, and it’s an analogue of the infamously fatal opioid fentanyl. It’s approximately 5 to 10 times stronger than fentanyl and 1,000 times stronger than morphine. It’s given sublingually, takes 15 minutes to start working and provides pain relief for approximately 3 to 4 hours. It was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in a 10 to 3 vote.

Dsuvia, like other fentanyl products on the market, was intended to treat excruciating, unbearable pain. It is intended for people who don’t respond to normal pain medications. Other fentanyl products, such as Subsys, were intended to treat the excruciating pain of cancer, yet were diverted from their purpose and given to people who didn’t actually need them.

Although Dsuvia is designed to be a single-use medicine, there’s still the risk of diversion and abuse.

This irresponsible action on the part of both the pharmaceutical company AcelRx and the Food and Drug Administration will inevitably be the cause of many

Cuban treatment for gender dysphoria for trans and gender nonconforming people is both groundbreaking and lifesaving.

Cuba sends its doctors to work in underserved communities around the world and trains doctors free of charge from all over the world, including the U.S., if they are willing to use those skills back home in poor communities. It’s no surprise that Cuban life expectancy is higher than in the U.S. Despite the U.S. blockade and constant attacks on their sovereignty, Cubans born in 2018 can expect to live 79 years. (tinyurl.com/7q49mpl)

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and during the era of arch-clown and puppet Boris Yeltsin, life expectancy for formerly Soviet men fell an astonishing 9 years over the course of about a decade.

(tinyurl.com/yamxveug) Mass privatization, widespread unemployment and the harrowing reality of what life is like in the “free” capitalist world drove millions to an early death by alcohol and suicide. But despite the restoration of capitalism in Russia, there is a rising life expectancy rate of Russia under Vladimir Putin.

Global warming and the increasing inability for capital to find the profit it needs to sustain itself are time bombs that will need to be defused before they explode. Racism, sexism, homophobia and xenophobia are the tools used to control and terrorize the people, but they cannot save capitalism.

The CDC’s report isn’t widespread news to most people suffering under capitalism and U.S. imperialism. It’s just a somber affirmation of what a growing number of workers and oppressed peoples, especially young people, already know — we must abolish a for-profit system which seeks to kill us and emulate that which gives life. □

GM gets bailed out, workers get sold out

Continued from page 4

Profit motive behind the attacks

When Trump imposed new tariffs on imported products, including steel and auto parts, this was presented as a measure to protect U.S. jobs. This was a colossal falsehood. In fact, companies are stating the tariffs raise the cost of production so much that they have to move to work out of the country.

While demagogic boasts that protectionist measures create jobs are proving false, it would be equally wrong to blame tariffs alone for a company’s decision to cut jobs in the U.S.

True, when the cost of production goes up, profits go down. But a company makes a conscious decision to put its bottom line ahead of the interests of its workers, communities and the environment.

GM made the justification that it wants to funnel resources into the latest technology — electric and self-driving vehicles — yet the company’s only electric vehicle is being discontinued. What hypocrisy!

The capitalist drive for profit is behind GM’s decision to slash its workforce and eliminate vehicles with a lower profit margin. CEO Mary Barra stated in a Nov. 26 news release: “The actions we are taking today continue our transformation to be highly agile, resilient and profitable.”

Ford and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles have made similar decisions to cut or eliminate car production in favor of trucks and SUVs for the same profit motive.

Workers’ fightback needed to save jobs

After GM’s announcement, Trump staged a Twitterfit, saying he will make GM

keep the plants open by axing tax breaks tied to electric vehicle development. In fact, he has no legal power to do so.

Trump’s bluster is empty posturing and will not save a single job. However, some workers might be fooled by his tough talk, especially if they contrast it to the weak response of the UAW’s top leadership.

Nevertheless, it’s not right-wing demagogues but union workers at the point of production, in collaboration with community and environmental activists, who have the leverage to stay GM’s greedy hand and protect jobs.

Some union leaders have made stronger statements. Regional Director Rich Rankin, who leads UAW Region 2B which includes Lordstown, has called for publicly shaming GM. Unifor President Jerry Dias said, “We are not going away without a fight.” (CTV, Nov. 26)

Some union members hope this means their leaders will put up a real fight. But whatever happens or doesn’t happen at the top, rank-and-filers want to resist. When the Oshawa workers heard GM’s announcement of job cuts, they walked out and returned to work only after being directed to by union leaders. Poletown workers are discussing in-plant tactics to show GM they don’t accept the destruction of their jobs. UAW members in other plants are talking strike if the auto companies demand concessions in contract negotiations next fall.

Conversations are starting about demanding that eminent domain be used again — not to seize property for the benefit of GM but to seize property back from GM and keep the plants open under labor-community control. □

Dozens arrested in protest as Immigration officials trick migrant to leave sanctuary

By Zachary Richardson and Takiyah Thompson
Durham, N.C.

Vigils, pressure from religious communities, national outrage and the arrests of 28 protesters on Nov. 23 were met with callous indifference by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement as it deported



Samuel Oliver-Bruno.

an undocumented man who, for the past year, had sought sanctuary here in a church.

Samuel Oliver-Bruno, 47, had departed CityWell United Methodist Church, his home for the past 11 months, to visit a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office in neighboring Morrisville. Oliver-Bruno had been told to report to the office for fingerprinting, which he had been told was a precondition of delaying his deportation. Though a Mexican national, Oliver-Bruno has lived in the U.S. for more than 20 years.

Upon his arrival at the USCIS office, Oliver-Bruno was grabbed by plainclothes ICE agents and thrown in a van. Several dozen protesters, including im/migration and racial justice activists, members of faith communities and Workers World Party, and Oliver-Bruno's son, Daniel, 19, immediately surrounded the vehicle, linking arms and shouting "Shame" at ICE personnel and local police. Officers eventually arrested nearly 30 people. Oliver-Bruno was taken to a Wake County holding center, then an ICE facility in Georgia.

After a week of community action pressing for his release, supporters and family members were devastated to receive word that he had been deported late on Nov. 29.

"Samuel's family, church community and supporting neighbors are grieved at Samuel being ripped from his family, church and community," said a CityWell

statement. "Many among family and friends are traumatized by the violence employed by ICE in this detainment and deportation operation."

Though he had spent time in both the U.S. and Mexico over the past decades, Oliver-Bruno had most recently entered the U.S. to find better care for his wife, Julia, who suffers from the autoimmune disease lupus and had begun coughing up blood, CityWell Pastor Cleve May told the Washington Post.

Oliver-Bruno's U.S.-born son, Daniel, was also arrested in the Nov. 23 crowd. He flew to Mexico to meet his father following the deportation.

The North Carolina Council of United Methodist Churches issued a statement condemning Oliver-Bruno's detention and deportation: "We oppose immigration policies that separate family members from each other or that include detention of families with children, and we call on local churches to be in ministry with immigrant families."

In the face of public pressure, Congresspersons G.K. Price and David Butterfield condemned the treatment of Oliver-Bruno: "It appears ICE has acted in concert with officials at USCIS, who instructed Mr. Oliver-Bruno to appear at local USCIS offices to discuss his deferred deportation. ... At best, Mr. Oliver-Bruno was presented with a catch-22 dilemma; at worst, he was entrapped."

"Samuel's sudden and inappropriate arrest in the middle of the Thanksgiving

season reflects the callous and cruel approach we've come to expect from the Trump administration," they added. "For one immigration agency under [the U.S. Department of Homeland Security] to advise he follow a legal recourse, while another DHS agency plots to apprehend him in the process, is a miscarriage of justice."

Oliver-Bruno's case has garnered national attention at a time when law enforcement faces increasing public opposition to participation in the 287(g) program, which allows local police to collaborate with ICE. Under 287(g), a subsection of immigration law codified in 1996, local authorities are deputized by ICE to enforce federal law, in violation of the traditional separation among local, state and federal agencies.

Several North Carolina sheriffs, including those in Durham and Wake counties, have cooperated with ICE under 287(g), but they lost elections to challengers who made ending county participation in the program a central plank of their platforms.

Oliver-Bruno's story adds to the growing number of cases illustrating the brutality of both the Trump administration and U.S. immigration policy. From mothers and fathers being torn from their families to asylum-seeking migrants and refugees being teargassed at the border, the reactionary nature of the U.S. state is on full, blatant display. □



Portland rally supports refugee caravan

Portland activists answered a call Nov. 25 from caravanistas and the Mexican Support Committee for nationwide actions in support of the Central American Caravan. A rally called by FIRE (Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere) was organized by four local activist groups and reported on by two major Portland television stations.

Speakers emphasized that, like im/migrants from all over the colonized world, the caravanistas are fleeing the brutal exploitation and violence of neo-colonial governments, which are backed by the U.S. government and ruling class.

Trump continues to play to the most

racist and right-wing elements in his electoral base, calling the struggling refugees "bad people," "invaders" and "criminals." He ordered 15,000 military troops to the border, at a cost of \$2 million, and gave them the go-ahead to use lethal force against the refugees.

The growing tide of international public support for the caravan, including in the U.S., opposes this bigotry, and more and more people are gathering at the border to welcome the caravanistas. The rally handed out educational leaflets and encouraged people to donate financial support or go to the border to help.

— Report and photo by Lyn Neeley

Solzhenitsyn and Fascism, white suprem

PART 3

By John Steffin

Last month, Penguin published a new edition of "Gulag Archipelago" by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. A quote on the back cover says that the book "helped make the world we live in today."

And what a hellish world that is. Fascist movements are on the rise globally as the gap between rich and poor grows wider and wider. But this may be just the home for someone like Solzhenitsyn, who from 1978 until his death in 2008 called for a patriarchal ethno-state in what was once the USSR and is presently Russia. Even Henry Kissinger admitted Solzhenitsyn was "to the right of the Czar."

In 2017, Steve Bannon's Breitbart News recommended the book to its readers in a list of "seven conservative classics every American should read." A year later, we have a new edition of this "conservative classic" with a forward by Jordan Peterson.

The far right has seized on Solzhenitsyn in this period. But why?

Solzhenitsyn's audience today

As explained in Part 1 of this series, Peterson and Solzhenitsyn hold similar views, but there's more to the story than ideological affinity. To understand the impact a new edition of "Gulag Archipelago" could have today, it's necessary to know who listens to Jordan Peterson and, by extension, who will listen to Solzhenitsyn.

Despite the scorn heaped on him by

the mainstream press, Peterson has developed a huge audience using the same communication channels that other far-right forces have organized through in the last decade.

To briefly give a sense of the numbers: Peterson's last two appearances on the Joe Rogan Experience, a popular right-wing podcast, have each garnered over 4 million views; his Twitter account has nearly a million followers; and his YouTube channel, where he uploads his bigoted lectures, has 1.6 million subscribers.

It's these numbers that propelled Peterson's recent book, "12 Rules for Life: An Antidote for Chaos," to the top of Amazon's best sellers list when it was first published in January 2018. Almost a year later, it remains number three on the list.

So who are these millions? As Peterson himself admitted, 91 percent are men. Other commentators have pointed out that a majority are young and white. This should come as no surprise, given that the author built his career advocating for enforced monogamy and attacking the concept that white privilege exists.

But it's also clear that Peterson is deliberately targeting these young white men. "12 Rules for Life" very consciously presents itself as a self-help book for this group. To what end?

Jordan Peterson, fascist recruiter

Despite efforts by the liberal media to blame Trump's election on the alleged backwardness of the white working

Riders say, ‘No fare hike, Bezos can pay!’

By Tony Murphy
New York

The New York Metropolitan Transit Authority is asking riders to pay more for a subway system that has become a daily exercise in frustration, with constant service disruptions, a shocking lack of elevators and harassment of riders of color.

At the same time, the city is rolling out a red carpet worth billions of dollars to lure Amazon to the borough of Queens — so that CEO Jeff Bezos, already the richest person on the planet, can get even richer.

You’d think subway leaders would be embarrassed to raise fares. It was MTA President Andy Byford who boasted to Amazon’s executives this summer that Queens, home to the already overburdened #7 train — whose riders will face even more overcrowding when the L train shuts down in April — was a “transit wonderland.”

Protest at fare hike hearing

That’s why on Nov. 27 people from the disability rights community and supporters protested the fare hike in front of a Manhattan fare hearing. Some had placards reading, “Make Bezos Pay for Accessible Subways!” Afterwards, some rally participants went inside to address the MTA board.

The protest was called by the People’s MTA and Rise & Resist. Six wheelchair users spoke, making it clear that the last thing the MTA should be doing is raising fares when three out of four stations lack elevators, and the elevators that do exist constantly break down. Some protesters held placards reading, “Elevators Are for Everyone,” making the point that accessibility is also needed by older riders, parents with strollers or anyone who can’t navigate stairs.

“Just yesterday, I was traveling from Fulton Street to Union Square,” rally speaker Dustin Jones said. Jones uses a wheelchair and is on the board of the Center for the Independence of the Disabled. “Byford goes on TV and YouTube videos and talks about station agents and station monitors. I took the A train from Fulton Street to

14th Street and 8th Avenue, trying to transfer to the L. There’s no elevators. There’s no signs. There’s no attendant. I looked and looked and looked, and nobody knew where any MTA official was.”

People of color targeted

Rally placards also demanded that riders of color should not have to pay more for racist harassment at the hands of the New York Police Department. The clearly racist pattern of subway summons and arrests for fare evasion — 90 percent of those arrested are Black or Latinx — is about to get worse with the MTA’s new blame-the-poor campaign.

Popping up in the subway are signs that read, “Fare Evasion Will Cost You.” That will likely accompany an increase in collaboration with the NYPD to arrest African-American and Latinx youth.

That is on top of incidents like the one that happened just last month, when an African-American woman at Brooklyn’s Atlantic Terminal was abused and arrested by four cops — not for fare evasion, but for speaking up when she was falsely accused of fare evasion.

That happened within days of a white supremacist assaulting and stabbing Anne Marie Washington. At a demonstration the next week, protesters noted how slowly the NYPD — which was hesitant to call the assault a hate crime and seemed to have no video footage of the incident — moved in contrast to its swift arrests of Black riders.

The pattern of racist profiling will only intensify as the MTA focuses on what it calls “fare-beaters.” Byford’s announcement on Dec. 3 of “fare evasion strike teams” is a signal that the reduction in arrests, won by anti-racist campaigns like Why Accountability and the Coalition to End Broken Windows, was a brief pause in an epidemic of arrests that is sure to spike again.

The response to this by Mary Kaessinger, a wheelchair user and leader of the People’s MTA, was: “Amazon paid no federal taxes in 2017. The biggest fare-beater is Jeff Bezos!”



Wall Street is the real looter

Even in the big business media there is already skepticism about the fare evasion figures claimed in a study by the MTA. “The MTA did not respond to a request asking for a list of the transit agencies used for its comparative analysis and did not provide exact details on which stations and bus routes were surveyed as the basis for the study,” reported the free daily amNewYork. “Having 208,000 daily turnstile jumpers would equate to roughly 18 fare evaders at every subway station each hour.”

In fact, the truly criminal looting of public transportation takes place on Wall Street. That helps explain why MTA heads are compelled to raise fares — whether it’s embarrassing or not. The banks are ordering them to.

Byford is claiming “fare-beaters” cost the transit agency \$215 million a year. That number pales in comparison to the debt service owed by the MTA to Wall Street: about \$40 billion. If you break that down, the transit authority pays interest at the rate of \$83 a second. That adds up to \$7.1 million a day, or \$2.6 billion a year. (“In the best of times, the worst of rides,” New York Times, Nov. 16, 2017)

Since then, the transit authority’s bond rating has been downgraded twice by Standard & Poor’s for “weaker debt-service coverage” — meaning the banks aren’t satisfied with the huge amount of debt the MTA is already paying.

At the fare hike hearing, protester Taryn Fivek took the microphone to make what she called a “modest proposal to the board.”

“I hear that Jeff Bezos has a lot of money, more than \$100 billion. So I thought we could make a giant net and catch him — like a rabbit — and take all his money to fund the MTA.

“If you think this sounds crazy, just think what it sounds like when the MTA is hiking fares while Albany gives Jeff Bezos and Amazon a \$1.5 billion handout. When only 20 percent of our subways are accessible. While people are being gentrified out of their neighborhoods. Tell me which sounds crazier.” □

Jordan Peterson acy and patriarchy

class, the truth is that Trump was elected by the white middle class, who constituted his largest voting bloc. Historically, it has always been the case that fascism grows out of the middle class in periods of crisis.

This, however, does not mean that the middle class can only be fascist. As Leon Trotsky assessed in the 1930s, the middle class is contradictory, one that aspires to be in the ranks of the bourgeoisie but is always at risk of being pushed into the ranks of the proletariat by the forces of capitalism.

Depending on a number of factors, its political views during a crisis can waver — sometimes toward fascism and sometimes toward socialism. For this reason, the right-wing can’t take for granted that the middle class will remain on its side. And in this period, they have reason to worry.

A recent survey showed that the majority of young people today prefer socialism to capitalism. For good reason. Studies have shown that downward mobility is nearly universal for young people. They make less money than their parents, work multiple jobs and have more debt. Capitalism isn’t working for them. This is particularly true for Black and Brown young people, but in this period it has also become increasingly true for young white people, for whom whiteness is less and less the guarantor of safety and comfort that it once seemed to be in the U.S.

Jordan Peterson’s objective, then, is to pull elements of this oscillating middle class rightward. Young people are targeted because they face a dead end and are desperate for a way out of the crisis. Of this group, white men are a prime target because the ruling class has age-old tools for luring them into acting against their own interests.

Those tools are patriarchy and white supremacy.

Below a veneer of individual rights and liberty (most likely sponsored by the Koch brothers), Peterson is, in essence, trying to sell young, white middle-class men the

narrative that they are miserable because their rightful place in the social order has been taken by people who are “biologically inferior” to them, who happen to be Black and Brown, and women who should be in the home, not the workplace.

Since it was first conjured up, white supremacy has always functioned as a tool to divide the working class by convincing white workers that they have more in common with their white bosses than they do with their fellow Black and Brown workers. Patriarchy, while serving many functions under capitalism, has also played a role in dividing the working class by enabling misogynistic behavior.

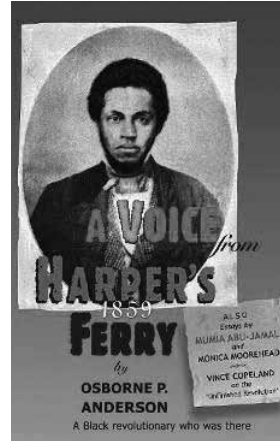
While neither patriarchy nor white supremacy actually addresses the economic impoverishment with which capitalism threatens the ranks of the middle class, the strength of this hatred in poisoning the mind should not be underestimated in a society organized on the basis of white supremacy and patriarchy.

The only way to disprove this ideological poison, and to pull the middle class away from these illusions, is a strong socialist movement of the working class and oppressed.

The far right knows this, especially today when fascist forces are being smashed in the streets by communists, socialists and anarchists. And so they turn to Solzhenitsyn to bolster their claims.

They roll out “Gulag Archipelago” — a book written by a man who refused to say one good word about socialism, who painted a picture of unrelenting horror and cruelty in the Soviet Union, and who apologized for Nazi collaborators — in order to eliminate socialism as a possibility within the minds of young people and create the illusion that the only solution to the crisis is the path laid out by Peterson.

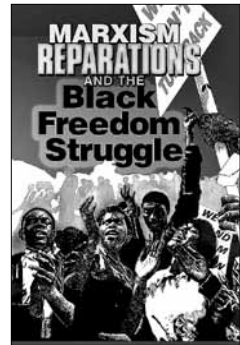
But Peterson and the far right are bound to fail. The only “antidote to chaos” is socialism. □



A Voice from Harper’s Ferry
written by
Osborne P. Anderson, a Black revolutionary who was there.

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Despite U.S. threats: Peace process continues in Korea

By Joshua Hanks

Over the past several months the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK or north Korea) and the Republic of Korea (ROK or south Korea) have taken historic, concrete steps toward peace and reunification — from removing landmines and guard towers in the Demilitarized Zone to reconnecting roads and railroads between the two countries.

In October, after several meetings over the summer between the leaders of the north and south, DPRK’s Ri Son Gwon, chair of the Committee for Peaceful Reunification, met with south Korea’s Unification Minister Cho Myung-gyon and signed a memorandum of understanding to reconnect roads and rails. China’s influential Global Times newspaper also endorsed the memorandum and together with Russia has called for easing sanctions as the DPRK continues to engage in goodwill measures aimed at peace and reunification. (eurasiafuture.com)

The U.S. government, however, opposes easing sanctions, instead arguing that the DPRK must immediately meet all its demands first, with nothing reciprocated by the U.S. It even opposes the ROK’s efforts to reconnect roads and rails. On Oct. 10 Trump said, “They won’t do it without our approval. They do nothing without our approval.”

Meanwhile, construction continues on the expansion of Camp Humphreys, 40 miles south of Seoul, which when completed in 2020 will become the largest U.S. overseas base in the world.

Process began almost five decades ago

Despite U.S. interference and its domineering, unilateral positions, the recent rapprochement between north and south possibly represents the most significant development between the divided states since the 1953 Armistice that officially ended hostilities but not the war. After being divided by the U.S. military in 1945, with zero consultation from the Korean people themselves, Korea’s peace and reunification process has been long and halting with years of no progress — especially during the many years the south was ruled by brutal military dictatorships backed by Washington.

While the Trump administration is quick to take credit for the recent progress, the actual events that led to this point began long before Trump took power and were in spite of the U.S., not because of it.

In 1971 DPRK President Kim Il Sung proposed opening a dialogue between the north and south for the first time since the war began. In 1972 Pyongyang received a high-level delegation from Seoul, leading to a joint statement based on Kim Il Sung’s three principles of reunification: “The three principles of realizing independent reunification without outside interference, achieving great national unity by transcending differences in ideas, ideals and systems, and reunifying the divided land by peaceful means without recourse to armed force, are the starting point of and the basis for the solution of our reunification question.” (korea-dpr.com)

In 1974 the Supreme People’s Assembly of the DPRK proposed a formal end to the war with the U.S., recognizing it as a crucial step toward ending hostilities and achieving peace and reunification. But the U.S. ignored it. Then in 1980 President



U.S. military installations in south Korea.

Kim Il Sung proposed the creation of a reunified Korean nation, the Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo, which would have kept the differing social systems in the north and south in place, while creating a common confederal government, with each side taking an equal part.

The DPRK has maintained a continuous position of dialogue and diplomacy with both Washington and Seoul, seeking to peacefully end the horrendous conflict that has divided the Korean people for over 70 years. Progress was made again in 1994 with the signing of the “Agreed Framework” between the DPRK and the U.S., but the U.S. Congress failed to meet its end of the deal. That would have included the U.S. helping the DPRK develop peaceful nuclear technology for electricity generation, lifting sanctions and normalizing diplomatic ties between the countries. In exchange the DPRK would dismantle its uranium enrichment capability, which it began to do.

But by 1999, with funding for the Agreed Framework tied up in a Congress hostile to the whole policy, the U.S. has still not lifted sanctions, normalized relations or provided a civilian nuclear power reactor. The DPRK warned it would resume uranium enrichment as a result.

After the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the NATO overthrow of the Libyan government in 2011, it became ever clearer that only the strongest of weapons could offer an effective deterrent to imperialist destruction. Even a small nuclear arsenal could be enough to make imperialist powers seriously reconsider an attack. Iraq and Libya both tried to work with the West, allowing outside inspectors to come in and verify the end of their weapons programs. Yet they were eventually betrayed, facing the full force of NATO’s immense firepower, resulting in over a million deaths in Iraq alone and the return of the open slave trade in Libya.

The DPRK knows all too well what that firepower can do. During the Korean War, about a quarter of the population was wiped out. Virtually every city in the north was reduced to ashes. Once all the urban targets had been hit, U.S. planes began bombing farmland and crops to deliberately starve the survivors, a genocidal act.

Unlike Iraq and Libya, the DPRK has successfully built a small nuclear deterrent. While just a fraction of the size of the U.S. arsenal, it is still enough to make

the U.S. think twice about making an attack. Even a “surgical” strike to take out a single target — like what Israel did to Iraq in 1981, when it bombed a French-built civilian research reactor that was unsuitable for making bombs — could trigger a devastating response.

U.S. brought nukes to Korea

It wasn’t the DPRK that introduced the first nuclear weapons to the Korean peninsula. The U.S. stationed nuclear missiles in the south decades ago, even as its nuclear-armed submarines and aircraft carriers prowl the surrounding waters. The Pentagon’s long-range intercontinental ballistic missiles can deliver thousands of nuclear strikes from the U.S. mainland to every part of the world in minutes. It continues to introduce more conventional weapons to Korea as well, such as the THAAD missile system, which was met with widespread protests in south Korea and around the world in recent years.

Once the DPRK achieved a functional nuclear arsenal — no small feat for a country roughly the size of Mississippi that is under heavy sanctions and constant interference from the main global superpower — Washington’s threats of a military solution to the conflict were greatly complicated, especially when the Korean People’s Army also developed missiles able to directly strike the U.S. mainland.

Increased sanctions by the U.S. and its allies could only do so much, as the country had already been under massive sanctions for decades and successfully learned how to become self-sufficient in

many areas as a result.

Despite the new sanctions, multiple new construction projects have been completed all over the country — from glimmering hi-rise districts in Pyongyang to new housing, schools and recreation facilities in smaller cities and towns. In Wonsan, on the country’s east coast, a new airport and coastal resort area with dozens of hotels and entertainment facilities are rapidly nearing completion. (exploredprk.com)

The position held by the DPRK for decades — of inter-Korean dialogue free from outside interference as the way to achieve peaceful reunification — became the only clearly viable option. Sanctions became less effective due to the DPRK’s self-reliance, and outright war became far more costly for the U.S., now facing the possibility of a nuclear exchange with the DPRK for the first time.

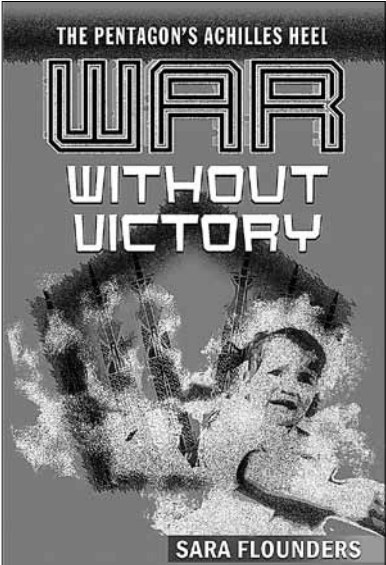
With the removal of corrupt, hawkish south Korean President Park Geun-hye, daughter of dictator Park Chung-hee, and the election of the reformist-minded Moon Jae-in in south Korea, the south is newly able to engage in the peaceful dialogue that the DPRK has long sought.

In his 2018 New Year’s address, Kim Jong Un expressed his desire for open dialogue with the new south Korean president just seven months after his election. Since then, the roots of a new era in relations between north and south have been planted, with prospects for peace and reunification brighter than they’ve been in decades.

Yet the U.S. has shown it will stand in the way if the process goes too far. With Democrats criticizing Trump for being “soft” on north Korea, they may use their new control of the House to block any more progress to spite Trump, much as Congressional Republicans did to Bill Clinton with the Agreed Framework over 20 years ago.

If a Democrat wins the presidency in 2020, the politician cannot be relied upon to be any more open to peaceful, constructive dialogue than Trump has been. Both parties are for war and imperialism.

The Korean people themselves must navigate this juncture, free from U.S. interference. The U.S. should stop construction of Camp Humphreys and remove all military personnel and equipment from the region. It should finally conclude a peace treaty with the DPRK to replace the 1953 Armistice. And it should engage in an open, fair and diplomatic relationship with Korea as a whole by establishing full diplomatic ties, instead of acting unilaterally as it has for decades, with little progress to show for it. □



WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

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President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009;
Foreign Minister of Nicaragua’s Sandinista government.

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Towards a convergence of struggles in France?

By Rémy Herrera
Paris

Nov. 29 — Television channels around the world had the pleasure of broadcasting street events that took place in Paris on Saturday, Nov. 24. Perhaps not all of them have taken care to provide their progressive viewers with the necessary elements to move beyond a sense of chaos and understand the current situation.

On Nov. 24, as was the case a week earlier, thousands of “Yellow Vests” [people wearing high-visibility yellow safety vests required by law in every vehicle in the country] easily overflowed the police lines and invaded the Champs-Élysées to shout their hostility to President Emmanuel Macron’s policies. But this time, the security forces (some 3,000 deployed for the occasion) managed to prevent anyone from reaching the Presidential Palace.

A shower of tear gas grenades and batons stopped the Yellow Vests’ successive attempts to advance toward the Élysée Palace. Without interruption, the battle lasted from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Throughout the day demonstrators erected dozens of barricades, which the CRS riot police then cleared.

Multiple fires lit up the capital, extinguished one after the other by fire brigades. New injuries on both sides, new arrests in large numbers.

The government’s propaganda machine tried to describe the rebellion as a far-right coup de force. This description is a skillful ploy, since it is clear that the extreme right was also there in the crowd of Yellow Vests.

But it is as likely that Emmanuel Macron hopes to nominate his future opponent (in the person of far-right-winger Marine Le Pen) for the next election. If he succeeds, this should give him a comfortable election victory as it did in 2017. But he would still have no legitimacy, if elected only to stop Le Pen.

President Macron claims he “does not back down” by giving in to the popular demands to lower the price of petrol and lower taxes. He knows that the French people will not want racists to lead them. Thus he can win by putting the voters in a bind: They must choose between him and the extreme right.

What he will have to accept quickly, however, is the evidence that the Yellow Vests have drawn much more than the extreme right into struggle. They express the weariness of an entire people who are fed up, including the impoverished middle classes.

The “movement” of Yellow Vests has no leaders and seems to prefer having none.

France concedes to ‘Yellow Vests’ anger

Continued from page 1

and looting the high-end clothing and liquor stores is a subject of great interest. Are the “casseurs” — the French word for people who attack stores and banks during demonstrations — from the ultra-right, the ultra-left or anarchists? Or might they be provocateurs working for the government?

One video on the internet showed plainclothes cops putting on Yellow Vests and participating in the revolt.

The French media on Dec. 2 were filled with stories about cars that were burned, along with some of the world’s fanciest stores being looted down to bare shelves. Prime Minister Édouard Philippe is trying to set up a meeting with seven Yellow Vests to begin a dialogue. At a previous meeting, one of the Yellow Vests



Yellow Vests march near Arc de Triomphe on Dec. 1. After months of protest, the French government has announced it is suspending a planned fuel tax hike.

This is true even if in the midst of confusion, “representatives” (appointed who knows how?) have been received urgently by the Minister of Ecology and Energy to discuss, at a corner of the table, ways of making the famous ecological transition “acceptable to the poorest.”

This is an absolutely fundamental and indispensable ecological transition — who doubts it, except Donald Trump and the crown prince of Saudi Arabia? But Prime Minister Édouard Philippe’s neoliberal government uses it as a pretext in the social war against the workers. It’s used to enforce a policy of wage limits that no one who works for wages wants any more

Will ‘red vests’ join ‘yellow vests’?

More broadly, the problem of leadership naturally also arises for left-wing organizations, especially trade unions. The leaders of the reformist unions — led by the CFDT — immediately surrendered to the government, which rewarded them by praising their “negotiating skills” (translation: their willingness to submit).

Much more important is what happens to the CGT union confederation.

Trade union elections on Nov. 26 put the CGT clearly at the top of the trade union organizations at the national railroads (SNCF) — and that is a happy result. Voices among the rank and file internally had expressed their ever louder, bitter disappointment that the leadership of the CGT was trying to slow the momentum of strikes and demonstrations in

he invited walked out when Philippe wouldn’t let him livestream.

The Yellow Vests are a mass movement organized basically on Facebook. Many of the people who have come out haven’t demonstrated before, but are having increasing problems making ends meet. Their growing anger is turning into rage, especially since the government has hardly budged on their demands, which have evolved from lowering taxes to increasing the minimum wage and improving pensions.

It is clear that Philippe is playing the “good” cop while letting Macron and his interior minister play the “tough” one. It’s not likely that this tactic will work. Macron is going to have to make concessions or up the ante and impose a state of emergency. □

April-May-June in anticipation of a return to calm — and a summer holiday.

But the workers’ struggles, although dispersed and less publicized, have in fact never ceased since the spring. During the May 2017 presidential election Secretary General Philippe Martinez of the CGT said, “Macron should get the highest possible vote” to beat the candidate of the National Front (which since then changed its name to the National Rally). Today, Martinez has decided to “distance himself” from the mobilization of Yellow Vests, and this has brought about a backlash from CGT members.

As of Nov. 29, the list of comrades who have gone on strike and are blocking their work units in the energy (oil depots, nuclear power plants, etc.), health (ambulance drivers) and mass distribution (Carrefour stores) sectors, in solidarity with the Yellow Vests, is already too long to be detailed here.

Thus the “red vests” of the CGT have announced that they should also be counted as part of the same struggle: They will support the Yellow Vests and will respond to the call of the latter to demonstrate again, throughout France, including in the capital, Paris, on Saturday, Dec. 1.

President Macron and the big money powers he diligently serves have a good reason to worry. It seems that a massive, deep-rooted, multifaceted, determined, unstoppable popular movement has been launched. And the “convergence of struggles” so sought after in the spring could perhaps begin to take shape before winter arrives. □

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

‘Escuchemos las voces indígenas’

Continúa de página 12

los mayas están protestando por el proyecto del Tren Maya al que no han dado su consentimiento.

Una forma de detener estos proyectos ha sido comenzar campañas contra los bancos e inversionistas que financian a las corporaciones detrás de estos proyectos destructivos. Ha crecido un movimiento para lograr que las ciudades, universidades y fondos de pensiones se desprendan de compañías destructivas, como Energy Transfer Partners.

La gente habla sobre el cambio climático, pero a menudo se siente impotente ante la inacción y negación del gobierno. Estar juntas/os en eventos como el Día Nacional del Luto es un ensayo general para salvar la Tierra. La Tierra no se salvará con todos estos esquemas que

escuchamos, como los créditos de carbono y poner un escudo sobre la Tierra para bloquear el sol. Se producirán cambios reales cuando las/os no nativos escuchan las voces indígenas.

Hoy, afirmamos nuestro derecho a cuidarnos unas/os a otras/os y descolonizar nuestras mentes, nuestras historias, nuestros lenguajes y nuestros sistemas. Hacemos valer nuestro derecho a defender nuestras vidas y nuestras familias, y las de nuestros familiares que han sido cruzados por la frontera. Debemos defender el derecho a nuestras tierras desde Mashpee hasta el territorio Mapuche en Chile. □

[Nota de traducción: *El pueblo indígena no celebra el “Día de acción de gracias”, sino que se reúnen para conmemorar el Día del Luto.*]

PERESTROIKA A Marxist Critique

By Sam Marcy

The Soviet economic reforms: their impact on wages and prices, agriculture, socialist planning, national minorities, foreign policy and the world progressive movement.

Read it at www.workers.org/marcy/cd/sampere/index.htm

George H.W. Bush: assassin and criminal

Every national politician, from top Republicans to Bernie Sanders, and every sector of the corporate media, is using George H.W. Bush's death to praise the 41st president as if he were a great leader of the people and a wonderful human being.

But Bush's sordid history shows he was a war criminal abroad and an enemy of the people at home.

We'll present the facts about that later. First we should answer this question: Why are the ruling-class politicians and media showering him with eulogies even beyond those usually thrown at dead presidents?

It's because Bush Sr. was both a member and a loyal servant of the U.S. ruling class, and a hardened Cold Warrior in office when the Soviet Union came apart. For this timing alone, the U.S. imperialist ruling class recognizes him as one of their heroes.

Bush Sr. was himself from an aristocratic ruling-class family, the son of a senator and of New England wealth, who added to his wealth by grabbing oil money in Texas. He then ran for office and served Republican presidents as both United Nations envoy and head of the CIA (1976-77), vice president when Ronald Reagan was president (1981-89) and elected president from 1989-93.

Bush Sr. shares responsibility for all the devastating crimes of U.S. imperialism in the post-World War II period. He shares guilt for the tens of millions of people killed in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and dozens of smaller U.S. military interventions and bloody coups of that period.

Bush Sr. is being lauded partly because his style contrasts with the current occupant of the White House, whose foul comments dirty the air and the internet and expose the ugly face of U.S. imperialism.

But while 41 didn't make the kind of openly misogynist comments the current president can't seem to repress, Bush Sr. was a serial sexist groper. Eight women who got within arms' reach recently exposed that habit. In politics, his misogyny took the form of support for Justice Clarence Thomas.

While he usually kept his ruling-class racism and bigotry off mic, Bush Sr. used an historically racist ad in his 1988 presidential campaign — the Willie Horton ad with its openly white supremacist rhetoric — to defeat Massachusetts Gov. Mike Dukakis.

As vice president in the 1980s and then president, Bush Sr. presided over the government's criminal negligence during the AIDS crisis. Basketball star Magic Johnson resigned from the National Commission on AIDS in September 1992, citing the Bush administration's refusal to act. AIDS activists consider Bush Sr. responsible for tens of thousands of deaths.

He also pursued the racist so-called War on Drugs, quadrupling the prison population by criminalizing millions of young men and women of color.

In December 1989, he ordered the bombing and invasion of Panama, killing 3,000 Panamanians and destroying that country's sovereignty.

WORKERS WORLD editorial

In January 1991, Bush Sr. ordered the bombing of Iraq. Forty-two days of war destroyed much of the civilian infrastructure in Baghdad and other cities. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis died.

With Bush Sr. as commander in chief, U.S. rockets purposely struck a civilian shelter in Amariyah on Feb. 13, 1991, killing many hundreds of civilians, including many children. Later, after the Iraqis had effectively surrendered, U.S. planes trapped thousands of troops fleeing from southern Iraq and wiped them out on what became known as the "Highway of Death."

Bush Sr. had earlier, in August 1990, begun sanctions against Iraq that in the years to come, under the Bill Clinton administration, would lead to the early death of half a million Iraqi children and twice that number of adults.

In the 1990s the Iraqis kept a portrait of Bush Sr. painted on the floor outside the entrance to the top Baghdad hotel, where his face would be regularly walked on. They hated him for good reason.

More crimes could be added to this list. What's here is enough, however, to expose the eulogies as lies and propaganda.

Bush Sr. was the epitome of the well-bred ruling-class assassin.

He and his entire class are war criminals and enemies of the people. □

Justice for Indigenous leader Berta Cáceres

By Sam Ordóñez

Honduran Indigenous environmental activist Berta Isabel Cáceres Flores (Lenca) received some measure of justice on Nov. 29, when seven men were finally convicted of her murder. Cáceres was killed on March 2, 2016, by agents associated with Desa, a company building Agua Zarca, a hydroelectric dam project. The dam was fiercely opposed by the Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) which Cáceres founded.

Though activists had delayed and even successfully relocated the project, Cáceres was assassinated soon after Desa resumed construction. The Agua Zarca project entailed privatization of natural resources and devastation of surrounding farmland.

The project, and resistance to it, is an example of the broader struggles in Honduras since the U.S.-backed 2009 right-wing coup. The coup government authorized energy projects, mines and other megaprojects in rural Indigenous territory without community consultation.

At least 49 projects have been destined for Lenca territories, and Cáceres had been a leader in many



struggles to stop land grabs for this exploitation. In 2013, COPINH activists blockaded roads leading to the Agua Zarca construction site, despite military forces deployed to evict protesters.

Cooperation between military and global capital

Of the seven men convicted in the murder, one was Desa's security chief, an ex-lieutenant in the military who was affiliated with the Honduran armed forces and who was one of the four who actually did the killing. Both the security chief and one of the other military men were U.S. trained. (tinyurl.com/ya39jdw5)

Three other Desa employees — including the so-called communities and environmental manager — were convicted for their role in managing a network of informants and helping with the planning and logistics of the murder.

The Honduran state has long been cooperating with Desa's efforts to repress popular resistance to the dam. In 2013, soldiers fired on peaceful protesters from inside company buildings, ultimately killing another Indigenous leader.

The Agua Zarca dam project was financed by FMO, the Dutch government's "development bank," and Finnfund, the Finnish "development bank." These and other funds were

invested heavily in Honduras ever since the coup ushered in a government favorable to international capitalism.

The close relationship among international finance capital, the Honduran military and local companies keeps wages and costs low and enables a transfer of the "savings" back to Europe and the U.S. as profit. Local oligarchs and foreign bankers get rich, while the working masses are faced with the choice of suffering at home or risking their lives to migrate to the U.S.

Lenca people play leading role

Just as Indigenous activists have led the struggle against pipelines in the U.S., the struggle against environmentally destructive megaprojects like mines and hydroelectric plants in Central America has been led primarily by Indigenous organizations.

In addition to opposition to projects being built on their traditional lands, the Lenca people have fought for justice for Cáceres and other murdered Indigenous leaders.

Laura Zúñiga Cáceres, the daughter of Berta Cáceres, has played an important role in attempts to convict her mother's killers. In her statement to the court she made clear her intention to continue fighting: "We are not passive victims. We will act because Berta Cáceres deserves it, because the Lenca people deserve it, because they keep persecuting us even now, because this criminal structure that killed Berta Cáceres is still active and we will also denounce that."

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An exchange of views on:

'Is Trumpism a temporary phenomenon?'

PART 1

By Fred Goldstein

The following is the first part of an exchange between Fred Goldstein and Manuel Raposo, a left-wing Portuguese communist and editor of the web magazine Mudar de Vida (jornalmudardevida.net).

Fred Goldstein: Your question goes to the heart of a very important issue. Is the Donald Trump presidency a temporary phenomenon, or is his regime a symptom of a deeper malady in the organism of imperialism? Will things go back to “normal” once he is gone?

I have been thinking about this very question a lot. I have also been trying to arrive at a method by which to answer it.

First, I put the Trump victory in the context of the rise of political reaction in Europe and its decidedly anti-immigrant, racist emphasis, similar to Trump's.

It cannot just be coincidental that the AfD in Germany, the Freedom Party in Austria, the Viktor Orbán regime in Hungary, the right-wing government in Poland, the Brexit forces in Britain, the new right-wing coalition in Italy, the National Rally (formerly National Front) in France are all on the rise at the same time. We also see the recent gains by the anti-immigrant Sweden Democratic Party, the rise of Golden Dawn in Greece (an advanced version of Hitler-like forces) and other right-wing political manifestations in Europe.

Second, I think that the general crisis of protracted capitalist stagnation has caused sections of the ruling class on both sides of the Atlantic to move toward adopting a strongly reactionary option: They will use “divide and conquer” because they see no way out of their own crisis; that is, they do not see any significant renewed growth or revived capitalist prosperity in the future. They are all struggling to just stay afloat.

This is true for sections of the U.S. ruling class which have relied on tax cuts, deregulation of environmental protections and stock market speculation to bolster their profits. This class is acting like its situation is precarious and its members anticipate an economic collapse.

Third, the working classes in all the European countries, like the workers and the oppressed in the U.S., have all been subjected to the trauma of austerity early on, BEFORE the immigrant crisis struck Europe in full force.

In the U.S. there is no large influx of immigrants. In fact, there is a net outflow of migrants on the militarized southern border now. I think that the demoralized,

alienated sections of the petty bourgeoisie and working class were predisposed to shift to the right after the failure of the Democratic Party and of European social democracy to come to their aid during the economic crisis of 2008, BEFORE the immigrant crisis.

The failure of social democracy and the historical communist parties to take an aggressive, class-conscious, class-struggle approach to fighting austerity left the masses open to a right-wing, anti-immigrant appeal.

Fourth, the right wing of the ruling classes which are growing stronger and richer are tempted to stoke the flames of anti-immigrant racism or are growing more comfortable with it. They mildly protest the more extreme anti-immigrant measures, but in the end the bosses are only truly concerned with the availability of a labor force and the impact of immigration policy on their international relations.

Finally, capitalism at a dead end forecloses the possibility of reviving capitalist prosperity. And capitalist democracy depends upon imperialist prosperity.

The bosses in the wealthy imperialist countries were able to afford a more developed form of capitalist democracy in the post-World War II period that is, to buy off the discontented workers with crumbs.

The British imperialists were able to have their “democracy” when they had a world empire. Once the empire was lost, the British working class was subjected to Thatcherite austerity and now they have the Brexit forces in charge.

The French imperialists had their republics based upon having a lesser empire in Southeast Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. Now they have the growing right-wing orientation of President Emmanuel Macron, with the National Rally party breathing down the necks of the so-called “moderate” bourgeoisie.

And U.S. imperialism constructed a bourgeois democracy on the basis of having established itself as a world power during and after World War I and having taken over large parts of the British and the French empires out of the ashes of WWII. The bosses attained world imperialist supremacy. On that basis they were able to make concessions.

Cannot revive imperialist prosperity

While Wall Street and the Pentagon are still the dominant imperialist power, they cannot revive imperialist prosperity, which is the economic foundation

of capitalist democracy. This is the fundamental point about the future after Trump. Capitalist democracy requires imperialist prosperity to finance it. Capitalist democracy in its more vigorous sense must be funded by concessions. This is true not only in the oppressed countries, but also in the big capitalist countries.

The Trump regime may be a distorted form of capitalist reaction, peculiarly shaped by Trump's style and personality. But whatever the peculiarities of the Trump regime, and there are many, the underlying reaction that he has stoked and consolidated is not going away anytime soon.

The reaction may be slowed down somewhat if the ruling class removes him. There may be a temporary respite if he is driven out or defeated at the polls. But in the long run, capitalism is in a stage of decline, stagnation and austerity.

The only thing that can push back the reaction in the U.S. is the awakening of the proletariat and the oppressed. No one knows when this will happen or how it will develop. But then no one knew that the tremendous teachers’ strikes were coming. These strikes spread like a wildfire from West Virginia to Kentucky, to Oklahoma, to Arizona, to Colorado, to North Carolina.

These strikes took everyone by surprise — the ruling class, the labor bureaucracy, the educational establishment and the educational workers, who were organized despite the resistance of the government and the union leadership. All the strikes were technically illegal, but the ruling class wisely decided not to enforce the law. This showed in a microcosm what the working class is capable of when pushed to the wall.

The teachers’ struggle has died down for now. But the resentment, the poverty and privation that drove it to burst the bounds of bourgeois legality and conventional subservience to the higher-ups is spreading below.

Marxism has nothing in common with economic determinism. It recognizes that many factors affect political outcomes. Leaders, parties, financial institutions, historical and cultural traditions, natural disasters, etc., all must be taken into consideration.

In the long run, however, Marxism regards the economic factor as the dominant factor. The crisis of capitalist austerity is determining the growth of political reaction, and this reaction must be fought tooth and nail by the workers and the oppressed. History is made by the inevitable awakening of the masses.

This is the hope to turn things around. □

NATO’s Jens Stoltenberg tells nuclear lies

By Manlio Dinucci

Dinucci is an anti-militarist expert whose article originally ran in the Italian newspaper Il Manifesto of Nov. 27. Translation by WW Managing Editor John Catalinotto.

"Russian missiles pose a danger," said NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, sounding the alarm in a Nov. 23 interview with Maurizio Caprara [Italian daily newspaper] of Corriere della Sera. Published just three days before an "incident" in the Azov Sea, the interview threw gasoline on already flaming tensions with Russia. "There are no new missiles in Europe. But Russian missiles, yes," claimed Stoltenberg while hiding two facts.

First of all, starting in March 2020, the United States will begin to deploy the first precision-guided nuclear bomb in its arsenal, the B61-12, in Italy, Germany, Belgium, Holland (where B-61 nuclear bombs are already deployed) and probably in other European countries. The new bomb, mainly targeting Russia, has the ability to penetrate and explode underground, so it can destroy command center bunkers in a first strike.

One can imagine how the United States would react if Russia deployed nuclear bombs in Mexico, close to U.S. territory.

Italy and the other countries, in violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, make bases, pilots and planes available to the U.S. for the deployment of nuclear weapons, thus exposing Europe to greater risk, as it is on the first line of the growing U.S. confrontation with Russia.

Secondly, a new U.S. missile system was installed in Romania in 2016, and a similar one is being installed in Poland. The same missile system is installed on four

warships stationed by the U.S. Navy at the Spanish base of Rota. These ships cross the Black Sea and Baltic Sea near Russian territory.

Both the ground installations and the ships are equipped with Lockheed Martin Mk 41 vertical launchers, which the manufacturer specifies can launch "missiles for all missions: both SM-3 for defense against ballistic missiles and long-range Tomahawk missiles for attacking ground targets." The latter can also be armed with a nuclear warhead.

Since Moscow cannot verify which missiles actually exist in launchers approaching Russian territory, it must assume that they include nuclear attack missiles. This violates the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which prohibits the installation of ground-based short-range and intermediate-range missiles.

In 2014, the Barack Obama administration accused Russia, without bringing any evidence, of having tested a cruise missile (SSC-8) of the category prohibited by the treaty, announcing that "the United States is considering the deployment of ground-based missiles in Europe" that means the U.S. would abandon the INF Treaty.

The plan, supported by NATO's European allies, was confirmed by the Donald Trump administration. In the current 2018 fiscal year, Congress has authorized the funds for a research and development program to introduce a cruise missile launched from a mobile platform on a highway.

Nuclear missiles such as the “Euromissiles” deployed by the U.S. in Europe in the 1980s, and eliminated by the INF Treaty, were able to reach Russia. Similar nuclear missiles deployed in Russia can reach Europe, but not the United States. Stoltenberg himself, referring to the

SSC-8 that Russia is supposed to have deployed on its territory, states that they are "able to reach much of Europe, but not the United States."

That's how the United States "defends" Europe.

Finally, what is really grotesque is Stoltenberg's statement that, attributing to Russia "the very dangerous idea of limited nuclear conflicts," warns, "All atomic weapons are risky, but those that can lower the threshold for their use are particularly risky."

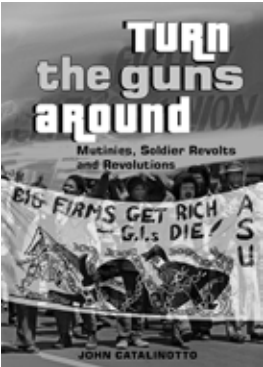
This is exactly the warning given by U.S. military experts and scientists about their B61-12s, which are about to be deployed in Europe: "Less powerful and more precise nuclear weapons increase the temptation to use them, even to use them first instead of in retaliation."

Why doesn't Maurizio Caprara interview these scientists? □

TURN THE GUNS AROUND

Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions

by John Catalinotto



Weaving together GI letters, interviews and first-hand narratives with historical research, the author brings to life GI resistance in the Vietnam War era, shows its relation to capitalist state power and highlights why breaking the military chain of command is an essential step to ending oppression around the globe.

Available at online booksellers

‘Escuchemos las voces indígenas’

Por Mahtowin Munro

Esta charla fue impartida por Mahtowin Munro en el 49º Día Nacional del Luto el 22 de noviembre en Plymouth, Massachusetts.*

Buenas tardes y saludos a todas/os los que vinieron aquí con buen espíritu desde las Cuatro Direcciones. Estamos aquí en el frío y recordamos a todos nuestros adultos mayores que pasaron al mundo espiritual este año. Recordamos a nuestras/os hermanos, incluidos los valientes protectores contra el agua que están en prisión y no pueden estar aquí hoy con nosotras/os.

Saludos a aquellas/os de ustedes que son Nipmuc, de Mashpee y Aquinnah y otras bandas de Wampanoag, Narragansett, Massachusetts, Pequot y las demás naciones de la región inmediata, ya sean reconocidas federalmente o no, a quienes les robaron sus tierras por primera vez en los 1600s y se enfrentan a la posibilidad de que ahora se las roben nuevamente.

Bienvenidas/os todos los pueblos indígenas que son de otras naciones de América, y de cualquier otro pueblo indígena de Australia, Nueva Zelanda y otras partes de la Tierra que puedan estar aquí hoy.

Damos la bienvenida a las/os representantes de nuestras/os muchos aliados no nativos, incluidos aquellas/os que representan luchas como el Movimiento por las Vidas Negras, Gaza, Haití, Filipinas y Puerto Rico. Gracias por estar aquí con nosotras/os. Muchas comunidades están sufriendo tragedias en este momento.

Recientemente, leí sobre una encuesta que muestra que dos tercios de las/os no nativos de este país no conocían personalmente a una persona indígena, y el 40 por ciento pensaba que estábamos extintas/os. Eso me hizo sentir como un unicornio. Pero todavía estamos aquí. No importa cuanto intenten borrarlos.

Al reunirnos en noviembre de 2018, nosotras/os, como pueblos indígenas, enfrentamos ataques generalizados contra nuestros cuerpos, nuestras familias, nuestras tierras y nuestra soberanía. Cada una/o de nosotros tiene nuestro cuerpo individual, nuestro cuerpo familiar y nuestro cuerpo de nación tribal. No podemos separar a ninguno de éstos de la tierra, el agua, la vida vegetal y animal que nos rodea y que también forman parte de nuestros cuerpos. Estamos completamente interconectadas/os.

¡Alto al robo de niñas/os indígenas!

Algunas/os de quienes estamos aquí hoy venimos de familias de las que nos separaron para ponernos en escuelas residenciales indias, en hogares sustitutos o para ser adoptadas/os. Entendemos todos los días el dolor y las rupturas de por vida causados por el robo de nuestras familias y, a menudo, resultando en ser abusadas/os.

Incluso si no pasamos por esto nosotras/os mismos, podemos tener miembros de la familia que fueron robados de sus comunidades. Algunas/os de nosotros pasamos por esto en nuestras familias por

varias generaciones. Continuamos experimentando un trauma intergeneracional dentro de nuestras familias y comunidades tribales debido a lo sucedido.

Lo planteo porque en octubre, un tribunal federal de Texas declaró inconstitucional la Ley de Bienestar de los Niños Indios, [ICWA por siglas en inglés]. La ICWA se aprobó en 1978 para impedir que las/os niños indígenas en EUA crecieran con familias no nativas, sin su cultura y conexiones tribales. Antes de que se aprobara esa ley, alrededor de un tercio de las/os niños indígenas eran removidos de sus familias y adoptados por familias blancas.

Pero ahora hay muchas fuerzas, que van desde agencias de colocación de adopción con fines de lucro a fundamentalistas religiosos y grupos de deliberación de derecha, como el Instituto Goldwater, que quieren regresar a esos tiempos destructivos. Los pueblos indígenas y otras personas que trabajan con nuestras/os niños y familias están luchando para enfrentar este golpe legal contra todas nuestras naciones.

Además, miles de nuestras/os niños son sacados de sus hogares y puestos en hogares de guarda, a veces denominados “nuevas escuelas residenciales”, porque muchas/os niños se están separando innecesariamente de sus familias. En EUA y Canadá, las/os niños indígenas tienen tasas desproporcionadamente altas de colocación en hogares de guarda. Industrias enteras han crecido alrededor de los servicios de adopción y cuidados de crianza. Se está haciendo dinero de las vidas destrozadas de nuestras/os hijos.

Cuando los medios de comunicación dicen que la separación de familias por parte de la Inmigración y Control de Aduanas (ICE) es un fenómeno nuevo, tenemos claro que esto no es algo que acaba de comenzar con Trump u Obama. Ha estado sucediendo durante siglos a las familias negras e indígenas. ¿No es así?

Hay 573 naciones tribales reconocidas por el gobierno federal en los EUA, con muchas más tribus reconocidas por el estado. Digo naciones porque somos miembros de naciones distintas, muchas de las cuales tienen un estatus de tratado de nación a nación con EUA o Canadá.

También hay millones de indígenas aquí de Canadá, México, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras y muchos otros países. ¡Las fronteras entre todos estos países no son nuestras fronteras! Muchas/os de los refugiados cuyos hijos están siendo robados por ICE ahora son familias mayas. En general, el pueblo indígena aquí está horrorizado al ver a niñas/os robados en jaulas y llevados a centros de detención, porque sentimos profundamente el dolor y el temor de que nos roben a nuestras/os hijos.

Cuando muchas/os de nosotros miramos a las/os niños refugiados robados y sus familias que están huyendo de sus países destruidos por las políticas de los EUA, también lamentamos su sufrimiento mientras intentan sobrevivir y mantener a sus familias unidas. Hoy estoy aquí para exigir a estos colonos que se sientan en el gobierno de EUA que le otorguen el asilo a estas/os refugiados. ¡Debemos exigir el

fin del robo de todos nuestras/os niños!

Los ataques no son solo contra nuestras/os hijos. Las mujeres indígenas han estado bajo ataque desde 1492. Eso nunca ha terminado. En los tiempos modernos, se estima que desde 1960 hasta la década de 1980, entre el 25 y el 60 por ciento de las mujeres nativas americanas en los EUA, se esterilizaron sin su consentimiento informado. Esto sucedió en Canadá, Perú y otros países, también.

Menciono esto hoy porque todavía está sucediendo en Canadá. Las mujeres indígenas están siendo obligadas a ser esterilizadas en Saskatchewan y otras provincias. Están surgiendo historias sobre madres indígenas que son presionadas mientras están en el parto para que les aten las trompas, o que no se les permita ver a sus bebés recién nacidos hasta que acepten ser esterilizadas. Una enorme franja de generaciones futuras de nuestra gente nunca ha nacido como resultado de políticas públicas anti-indígenas.

‘¡No más hermanas robadas!’

Les pedimos a las personas que usen algo rojo hoy para decir: “¡No más hermanas robadas!” Para honrar a las Mujeres, Niñas y Dos Espíritus Indígenas Desaparecidas y Asesinadas (MMIWG2S).

Una de las muchas razones por las que las naciones indígenas de todo el mundo están luchando contra los gasoductos, el fracking y la minería es que se han establecido campamentos de hombres para los trabajadores. Los hombres tienen grandes sumas de dinero y muchas drogas, como metanfetamina y heroína, para atraer a las mujeres indígenas, que a menudo terminan siendo adictas y traficadas. Algunas de estas hermanas desaparecen; algunas son asesinadas.

Los campamentos para hombres son uno de los muchos factores que llevan a MMIWG2S, que se considera un problema canadiense, pero también es un gran problema en EUA, México y otros países. Esto también ocurre en las ciudades, no solo en las zonas rurales.

El asesinato es la tercera causa de muerte de mujeres indígenas en EUA. En Canadá, varios miles de mujeres indígenas se consideran desaparecidas o asesinadas. En ciudades como Winnipeg, Manitoba, jóvenes indígenas - muchos de ellos en hogares sustitutos - mujeres y dos espíritus desaparecen todo el tiempo. En las ciudades fronterizas con México, las mujeres desaparecen todo el tiempo.

Uno de los problemas al hablar de MMIWG2S es que las mujeres indígenas a menudo no están contabilizadas, por lo que los números que tenemos son muy incompletos. Recientemente, a través de las solicitudes bajo la Ley de Libertad de Información, el Urban Indian Health Institute identificó 506 mujeres indígenas urbanas asesinadas o desaparecidas en 71 ciudades de los EUA de las cuales habían solicitado datos.

Pero eso es un recuento sustancial. Algunas ciudades, como Santa Fe, N.M., ni siquiera identifican a las personas indígenas por separado en sus estadísticas, a pesar de que hay una gran población indígena en esa área. En varias ciudades

y estados, las autoridades no intentan hacer un seguimiento de los pueblos indígenas y lo que nos sucede. No aparecemos en muchos tipos de estadísticas gubernamentales, ya sea aquí en Massachusetts o a nivel nacional. Este recuento es parte de nuestra supresión.

Las familias indígenas que informan sobre sus familiares desaparecidos a menudo se encuentran con la reticencia de las autoridades a investigar o presentar informes. A las familias se les dice cosas como: “Ah, ella va a aparecer. Probablemente se está emborrachando en alguna parte”.

La mayoría de los hombres que agreden y asesinan a mujeres indígenas en los EUA y Canadá son hombres blancos. A menudo no son procesados, incluso cuando son detenidos. O son absueltos por jurados totalmente blancos o se les da una palmadita en la muñeca.

Además, los pueblos indígenas continúan experimentando tasas desproporcionadamente altas de violencia policial y encarcelamiento. Personas indígenas sin techo son atacadas y asesinadas por pura diversión en lugares como Albuquerque, N.M.

La devaluación de las vidas y los cuerpos de personas indígenas, y la violencia contra las mujeres indígenas, en particular, están profundamente entrelazadas con el desprecio que los colonos y sus sistemas tienen por la tierra. No respetan nuestra soberanía como naciones indígenas, y no respetan la soberanía de nuestros cuerpos.

Pueblos indígenas luchan por defender sus tierras

Los pueblos indígenas siempre están en la primera línea de defensa del medio ambiente porque los gobiernos estatales y federales otorgan permisos y dan carta blanca a las corporaciones que quieren emprender acciones destructivas y extractivas en o cerca de nuestras tierras. En todo el continente americano, los oleo y gasoductos, el fracking y la minería se están llevando a cabo en tierras indígenas sin nuestro consentimiento.

Desde Chile hasta Nueva Escocia y desde Labrador hasta la Columbia Británica, las/os protectores de agua indígenas y las/os protectores de tierra están intentando detener estos proyectos. Muchas/os de ustedes aquí conocen las dificultades en Standing Rock para detener el Oleoducto Dakota. Pero ha habido más luchas de primera línea, en gran parte lideradas por pueblos indígenas, contra el oleoducto Keystone XL, el oleoducto de Bayou Bridge, Kinder Morgan en la Columbia Británica, el Telescopio TMT en Hawai y otros más. La resistencia ha continuado con los esfuerzos para detener el desarrollo de áreas sagradas, como Bears Ears y Grand Staircase Escalante en Utah y el área sagrada Apache Oak Flat en Arizona.

Nos sentimos honradas/os de tener un orador que ha viajado hasta aquí desde Labrador en Canadá, donde los inuit han estado tratando de detener el proyecto de mega represa de Muskrat Falls. En el área de Yucatán en México,

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