Tell Philly DA not to obstruct
Mumia’s appeal for new trial

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Nearly 200 people, enduring steady rain, demonstrated outside the office of Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner on Jan. 5. It was the second protest there in just over a week after Common Pleas Court Judge Leon Tucker issued a ruling that gives political prisoner and journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal the chance to overturn his unjust 1982 conviction.

Activists held a brief rally celebrating Tucker’s Dec. 27 decision before taking to the streets with the message “Tell DA Krasner: Don’t stand in the way of justice for Mumia.”


Historic ruling opens way for broader appeals

Judge Tucker’s historic Dec. 27 ruling granted Abu-Jamal new rights to appeal convictions and rejected appeals between 1995 and 2012 and gave him 30 days to file his appeals. Krasner also has 30 days to appeal Tucker’s ruling.

Speakers at the rally called on Krasner to cease defending former Philadelphia DA and then Pennsylvania Supreme Court Judge Ronald Castille’s now discredited claim of impartiality.

Tucker, whose decision chastised Castille for his obvious bias and lack of impartiality, ruled that allowing Abu-Jamal to go forward with re-arguing his appeals “would best serve the appearance of justice.” The groundbreaking decision could impact many other prisoners whose appeals were denied by biased and pro-cop judges.

A march following the rally stopped at busy intersections, blocking traffic with brief speakouts, before ending at the William Way LGBTQ Community Center for an indoor speakout and organizing meeting. Attendees included a broad spectrum of activists, from many who knew Mumia and have fought for his freedom for decades, to newer and younger people, many of whom were born after Mumia was imprisoned.

Longtime activists Pam Africa and Ralph Poynter kicked off the indoor event. James Chisolm Jr. recounted being a high-school organizer with Mumia at Benjamin Franklin High School, fighting racism within the school system in the 1970s. Wayne Alexander Cook, Mumia’s nephew, marched and later spoke about the ways his Uncle Mumia and other family members helped guide him to become more politically aware. The rally was chaired by Johanna Fernández from the Campaign to Bring Mumia Home.

Philadelphia, Jan. 5

Megan Malachi, with Philadelphia REAL Justice, described Mumia’s struggle as a key part of the ongoing fight against racism and police brutality. REAL Justice has led a two-year campaign to take down a statue of former Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo from a prominent location near City Hall. Malachi noted that the appearance of this tribute to one of Philadelphia’s most notoriously racist politicians would not be just a symbolic victory.

Palestinian activist Susan AbuHawa brought messages of solidarity from Palestinians struggling against state repression and some of the highest rates of incarceration globally. She recounted attempts by Israeli supporters to label Black activists like Marc Lamont Hill, and more recently Alice Walker, as “anti-Semitic” because of their support for Palestine, while she and other Palestinian activists have been attacked for supporting Mumia.

Monica Moorehead, a leader of Millions for Mumia of IAC, urged younger activists to learn the lessons of the struggle to free Mumia and to make it their own. The group brought more than 25,000 people to Philadelphia in support of Abu-Jamal in the late 1990s.

The final hour of the indoor event was devoted to addressing necessary organizational tasks as the movement to free Mumia shifts into higher gear. Media work, social media networking, education, community labor outreach, and fundraising are needed. Plans for a rally in Philadelphia on April 20 were also discussed. There was clearly a buzz of excitement in the hall as nearly everyone participated in an organizational breakout group.

Still time to sign petition to Krasner

As DA Krasner is clearly under pressure from the Fraternal Order of Police to oppose Tucker’s decision and block efforts to free Mumia, Abu-Jamal supporters have bombarded his office with daily phone calls and emails, plus a Twitter storm on Jan. 4, the day before the rally.

Letters to Krasner in support of Abu-Jamal have come from labor unions, including the International Longshore and Warehouse Union in San Francisco; the Oakland Education Association; Philadelphia IWW; Doro-Chiba, the Japanese rail workers’ union; and the 100,000-member International Dockworkers Council based in Spain.

A petition to Krasner to “do the right thing” continues to gather signatures. More than 500 signed petitions were delivered to Krasner on Jan. 2. Since then, RootsAction has picked up on the petition initiated by Mobilization4Mumia via Actionnetwork.org. Collectively, over 4,000 more people have signed the online challenge; these names will be delivered to Krasner this week.

To sign the petition, visit tinyurl.com/mumiapetition.
Racism, sexism, Islamophobia—and double standards

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib made history Jan. 2 when she seized the oath of office with her hand on the Koran, wearing a traditional dress from Palestine. Representative Tlaib is the first Palestinian woman elected to the House of Representatives and, with Ilhan Omar, one of two first Muslim congresswomen.

Islamophobes were up in arms, posting outrageous claims that the congressperson from Michigan’s 13th District was disregarding an American tradition in violation of the US Constitution by choosing the Koran over the Christian Bible. These backward attitudes, however, do not reflect Tlaib’s constituency. The population of the 13th District is 66 percent African American and more than 70 percent people of color, with the largest Arab population outside of the Middle East. As state representative and Detroit councillor, Tlaib represented her Southwest Detroit neighborhood, the heart of the city’s Latinx community. She has a large Muslim constituency.

As a congressional candidate, Tlaib—who was seated previously by John Conyers—appealed to progressive sentiment. She was arrested during the hotel workers strike here and ran on a record of supporting reproductive rights as a state legislator. Among her popular campaign promises were pledges to push for the impeachment of President Donald Trump and his ilk, two of moderate Democrats. (Detroit Free Press, Jan. 4)

“This is a person that I don’t know. I assume she’s new,” said Trump, revealing complete ignorance of Tlaib’s grassroots organizing, her community work, her advocacy for immigrant rights and her experience as a district attorney. Trump had accused her of “disrespect” and called her statement “disgraceful.” (Detroit News, Jan. 4)

Two trends in the Democratic Party

Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi criticized not only Tlaib’s use of curse words, but also the call for impeachment, saying it would divide the country. Congressional Democrats, including most from Michigan, distanced themselves from the congresswoman’s remarks. Liberal news columns are accusing Tlaib of hurting the Democrats, even making it harder for them to beat Trump in 2020.

More moderate Democrats argue that the Mueller Commission has to complete its investigation before impeachment can be considered. Tlaib’s campaign pledge, however, appealed to millions of working-class and oppressed voters, who have been saying “Not my president” since the 2016 election. This base sent a record number of women, people of color, younger candidates and out LGBTQQS+ people to Congress.

Many of these voters were activated by the Bernie Sanders campaign in 2016. In the midterms primaries they chose new candidates, such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of Queens, N.Y., over long incumbents favored by the party’s establishment. Ocasio-Cortez denounced Republicans’ “faux outrage” over the curse word.

There is clearly a biased double standard employed here against an Arab Muslim congressperson, who was speaking off the cuff at a reception and not in any official capacity. The backlash against Tlaib is a rightist reaction to the midterm elections. Revolutionaries should have no illusions that any real, dramatic changes can be made through the bourgeois parliamentary process. However, they should be prepared to oppose any racist, Islamophobic and otherwise bigoted attacks on the right of oppressed people to elect progressive candidates from their communities. ☐

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Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

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**Los Angeles teachers to strike**

In “a hail-Mary pass” to stop the projected Jan. 10 strike by over 35,000 Los Angeles public school teachers and professional staff represented by United Teachers Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Unified School District filed a lawsuit Jan. 3 requesting an injunction to stop special education teachers from joining the strike. A federal court swiftly dismissed it on Jan. 4.

A UTLA statement noted: “This sneaky maneuver — especially coming from a district that has repeatedly ignored UTLA’s contract demands for special education class-size caps to relieve the burden of overcrowded special education classrooms — is beyond cynical and counterproductive.”

After nearly two years without a contract, months of bad-faith bargaining and many unfair labor practice charges, the UTLA is set to strike unless the LAUSD comes to the Jan. 7 final negotiating session ready to meet union demands.

**Court affirms controversial pro-worker ruling**

The U.S. D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld one of the most significant pro-labor rulings of the Obama administration on Dec. 28. The National Labor Relations Board ruling in the Browning-Ferris decision held corporations could be responsible for issues like wage discrimination or illegal job termination if employees were hired by contractors or worked for a franchised company.

As the NLRB noted about its 2015 ruling: “With more than 3.87 million of the nation’s workers employed through temporary agencies in August 2014, the Board held that its previous joint-employers standard has failed to keep pace with changes in the workplace and economic circumstances.”

No wonder Browning-Ferris was supported by business groups and corporations like Microsoft, have loudly and fiercely fought the NLRB ruling. But because the appeals court ruled that the NLRB failed to properly define what constitutes “indirect control” for purposes of meeting the joint-employer test, it sent the issue back to the NLRB for clarification.

But that “throws a big wrench into the business group’s plans to overturn the joint-employer standard,” wrote The Intercept. “It also significantly constrains what the Republican-controlled NLRB can do to curtail labor rights going forward. The Trump administration, which has argued against expanding the meaning of joint-employers to include those who have indirect control over workers, will now have to comply with the court ruling.”

By contrast, the ruling has exciting implications for McDonald’s workers who initiated the struggle for $15 and a union. If this is eventually decided in their favor and McDonald’s is declared a joint employer, the road to unionization will be much easier. On with the struggle for justice for all franchise and temporary workers!

**19 states raise minimum wages Jan. 1**

Due to struggles by workers and their allies, minimum wages in 19 states rose this year, with raises due in 31 states later in 2019. The highest rate is in the District of Columbia at $13.25 an hour, with Massachusetts and Washington state at $12. The lowest rates are in Georgia and Wyoming at $5.25, though the $7.25 federal (poverty) wage may apply.

New York City instituted $15 an hour for workplaces with 11 or more employees and $13.50 for those with 10 or fewer. The minimum is $12 in three counties and $11.10 elsewhere in the state. The minimum will reach $13 by 2022. The hourly minimum wage in Oregon, effective July 1, depends on the region: metro Portland $12, rural areas $10.50 and elsewhere $9.75. For businesses in California with 26 workers the minimum is $12 ($12 by 2023); for those with less, it’s $11 ($15 by 2023).

The rate rose to $11 in Arkansas (thanks to ballot initiative) and Maine, while it’s $11 in Colorado. Vermont’s minimum is $10.75, with Rhode Island’s $10.50. Ranging between $9.89 in Alaska and $9.10 in South Dakota are rates in Arkansas, Michigan and Minnesota. Ranging between $8.85 in New Jersey and $8.80 in Montana are Delaware ($8.75 on Oct. 1) and Missouri (due to ballot initiative). Only Mississippi has no minimum wage, so the $7.25 federal rate applies.

**$15 an hour ‘Nothing is impossible’**

**By Deidre Griswold**

New York City

Spearheaded by a struggle of fast food workers that began more than six years ago, New York City has finally put into practice a $15-an-hour minimum wage.

“Fifteen dollars an hour is catching on everywhere,” commented Jorel Ware, a McDonald’s worker from New York and member of Fight for $15. “When we first went on strike in New York in 2012, people said we had no chance, but we are showing the whole country that when workers stick together, there’s no such thing as impossible.”

When their struggle began, fast food and other low-paid workers in the city were getting only $7.25 an hour—if that. Since then, the cost of living in the city has soared, led by skyrocketing rents. Earning $15 an hour is a big improvement, but it still falls far short of what workers in this city need to have a stable existence.

This struggle has been led mainly by Black and Latino workers, a majority of them women, with the help of the Service Employees Union.

**After 100 years and 200 attempts Congress finally passes an anti-lynching bill**

Crawford family members bring soil from the Abbeville, Ala., location where Anthony Crawford was lynched—terror tool of white supremacy

By Dolores Cox

There’s a saying, “Better late than never.” In this case, “late” refers to the century-long attempt to pass anti-lynching legislation in the U.S. More than 200 anti-lynching bills had previously been introduced into Congress without any of them being passed. Southerners and other racist congresspeople resisted any anti-lynching legislation for over a hundred years.

The first anti-lynching bill was introduced in 1901, and then a wave of bills followed, starting with an attempt in 1917. This targeted Missouri state officials for “failing to provide equal protection under the laws to anyone victimized by a mob.” (Washington Post, Dec. 28; tinyurl.com/yuztcmf)

Finally, on Dec. 19, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed the Justice for lynching Act, making lynching a federal hate crime. The bill was introduced in June 2018 by Democratic Sens. Kamala Harris (Calif.); Cory Booker (N.J.) and Republican Tim Scott (S.C.). The bill classified lynching as the “ultimate expression of racism in the U.S. following Reconstruction.” (tinyurl.com/3y8a287y)

Lynching — terror tool of white supremacy

According to the Washington Post, between 1882 and 1968, at least 4,742 reported lynchings of African-American men, women and children took place at the hands of white mobs, predominantly in the South. Lynching of African Americans was used as a terrorist strategy and tool to maintain white dominance and supremacism throughout the U.S. Ninety-nine percent of perpetrators went unpunished by state and local officials, including those who admitted to and bragged about committing the act. (Dec. 28)

The 1895 Emancipation Proclamation was followed by the Reconstruction “experiment” period and then by close to 100 years of the Jim Crow/ apartheid system of legal segregation between white and Black citizens.

In 1892, journalist Ida B. Wells-Barnett publicly exposed the rape myth that justified lynchings and racist oppression with false accusations of Black men for supposedly raping white women. Wells-Barnett, born into slavery in 1862, provided the true facts in “Southern Horrors: The Lyncher’s Lynch Law in All Its Phases.”

The NAACP, founded in 1909, issued a report on 30 years of lynching between 1889-1919, denouncing the U.S. as “the only advanced country in the world not to have laws against lynching.” The NAACP, founded in 1909, issued a report on 30 years of lynching between 1889-1919, denouncing the U.S. as “the only advanced country in the world not to have laws against lynching.”

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In 1920, after every lynching the NAACP hung a mob. (Dec. 28)

**Continued on page 6**
Confrontations at the summits of power

Red Network has long focused its analysis of the new stage of capitalism precisely on the inter-imperialist contradictions between the European Union – above all the hegemonic power, Germany – and the United States. This interest stems from the need to know European imperialism coupled to U.S. interests and NATO were its tools for building a common purpose of destroying the first capitalist monster that can annihilate humanity. That conquest requires knowledge of the capitalist world in all its divisions and contradictions.

In the struggle for the conquest of political power, the decisive fact that defines the correlation of forces is the weakness of the enemy.

The strategic objective that has prevailed in all the plans of imperialism from the victory of the October Revolution in 1917 to the collapse of the USSR in 1991 has been the defeat of capitalism. The common purpose of destroying the first proletarian state made it possible for all the imperialist powers that had fought against each other in the two world wars to wage a joint struggle against the USSR.

After World War II, Washington’s interest as a great victorious power and heir to British imperialism was focused on controlling Europe. The Marshall Plan and NATO were the tools to build a Western Europe coupled to U.S. interests and totally dependent on the U.S. in the military arena.

The historic goal of the White House, its policy of containment, which started with the Continental Heartland, so that no country could emerge strong enough to become an obstacle to North American/ British hegemony.

The confrontation between the two great social powers, the USSR and China, the subsequent disappearance of the USSR and the placement of China inside the Nato orbit, the integration into the Atlantic Alliance of a good part of the countries of the extinct Warsaw Pact and the establishment of NATO as a common superstructure based on the main ones in Germany and Kosovo, after the liquidation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

‘And yet it moves’

The defeat of the communist movement, and the enormous general crisis affecting capitalism since the early 1970s – the latest shock of which began in 2007 – are having economic, political and social consequences. These, and the qualitative changes in the world order established after 1945.

The political and trade union organizations of social democracy in the Spanish state – Socialist Workers Party (PSOE), United Left-Communist Party (IU PCE), Workers Commissions (CCOO) – is control of the Union of Workers (UGT) and now United (Podemos), have always been ready to assist the capitalist system.

The inter-imperialist contradictions of analyses of this crisis have been to contrast “social and humane” European capitalism with “savage and inhuman” US capitalism. The course of a “return to the welfare state” has provided enormous advantages to the bourgeoisie here and abroad. (Because capitalism is in a systemic crisis – at a dead end – it is impossible to revert to the period of capitalist expansion when limited class struggle could win reformist demands; no other form of capitalism is possible now. – WW)

Now this attempt to give capitalism a human face is reaching its limits, unleashing a flood of different forces that grow more radical and occupy the institutional stage with increasing force. The exhaustion of capitalist superstructure is crumbling along with the discredit system.

The powerful eruption of Chinese industry and its occupation of major markets in virtually every sector has led to a sharp drop in the U.S. manufacturing economy. The White House’s response has been to impose significant tariffs on Chinese imports and to establish new bases for European companies in the US. This economic siege has been followed by a military siege – the expansion of U.S. military bases in Asia and greater NATO harassments of Russia along all its European borders.

A new inter-imperialist economic confrontation has been developing with the annexation in Syria against U.S. imperialism and the EU (especially France and Britain). This took place at the hands of the Axis of Resurgence – Russia, Iran, Syria, the Palestinian resistance and Iran – supported by Russia.

A nuclear agreement with Iran and the lifting of sanctions in 2015 had been painstakingly prepared by Germany. Immediately after that was signed, Berlin established trade relations with Tehran, where the EU and the US had until that time been the economic-technological partners of the United States. The White House was relegated to the sidelines in the competition to turn the territories like the “Shiite” enemy into a field of business.

In November 2018, pushed by its Israeli and Saudi Arabian cronies in the region and also by the open withdrawal from Syria and Iraq, Washington imposed new sanctions on Iran and any company or country that negotiates with Iran. This was a poorly conceal attempt to prevent EU competitors from taking commercial advantage of the powerful new Iranian market.

‘Insubordination’ from U.S. satellites

The outcome of this whole complex process could not fail to have consequences for the U.S. From Turkey to the Spanish state – to give the clearest examples of states historically under U.S. influence – the declarations have been emphatic and unusual.

Turkish President [Recep] Erdogan declared, “We do not accept orders from the U.S.”

Germany Chancellor [Angela] Merkel addressed France, saying bluntly: “Keep your commitments. We will keep ours.”

The threat of sanctions by the U.S. has resulted in a growing list of countries declaring themselves insubordinate to U.S. orders and refusing to pay their transactions in currencies other than the dollar. The repercussions for the United States, only just beginning to be evident, are serious and will affect its entire framework of domination.

Imperialism is a relationship of power that can be exercised as long as the subordinates accept it – a fact which indicates that the U.S. cocktail of sanctions, plus advancing de-dollarization, threatens the Yankee empire with a shot, not in the foot, but higher up.

The seeds of the new European arms race

This escalation of tension between the U.S. and the EU tends to grow because it is based on conflicting economic interests. These, in turn, favor the EU’s rapprochement with Russia. The latest episodes deepen the confrontation for the U.S. to use the EU and its attempt—condemned to failure —to prevent the EU from purchasing a Russian (or Chinese) missile system to cope with the nuclear threat from Iran. “The single largest tranche transport from Russia to the EU that avoids Ukraine – [WW].”

The long period in which Euro-American contradictions were reconciled under NATO’s umbrella seems to be coming to an end. The collapse of the USSR made it possible for the EU to turn its attention to the need for “protection from the communist threat.”

Now the general crisis of capitalism manifests itself as a fierce struggle for market space in Europe. ‘The crisis when we could trust the U.S. to protect us is over. Europe must take its destiny into its own hands.’

The PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation in Security and Defense) project [introduced in 2007] and in 2018 the EU’s decision to build a military response to the threat of an armed conflict against the EU with an initial budget of 12 billion euros. This initiates the creation of a strictly EU army and a base for the production of armaments and technological innovation based exclusively on European companies and explicitly independent of the U.S.

Class struggle and inter-imperialist relations

The relative economic decline of the U.S. may also have consequences for the maintenance of its enormous military structure with nearly 1,000 military bases on the planet. This does not mean, however, that Washington’s aggressive capacity will diminish.

The relative independence from the U.S. and NATO has not yet been achieved. But, if completed, that would mean that European imperialism is “good” or “adequate.”

The European rulers are guided by exactly the same objectives as the U.S. in the struggle to the death to compete under more favorable conditions in the jungle of capitalism. These objectives are built on the exploitation of the working class and imperialism within limits that are less than those imposed by the class struggle.

There is no other way out. The dilemma remains: socialism or barbarism. The consequence of the working class political power is the only possibility for destroying the capitalist monster that can annihilate humanity. That conquest requires knowl- edge of capitalism’s weaknesses and, above all, its divisions and contradictions. (1)
By Fred Goldstein

The late Sam Marcy, chairperson and founder of Workers World Party, in a very important book entitled “High Tech, Low Pay: A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class,” analyzed the early stages of the high-tech revolution and its effect on the working class in the United States. It was devoted to its impact on the unions, he traced the phases of develop- ment of the productive forces under capitalism, and foresaw the phase of simple cooperation to the industrial revolution and large-scale machinery to mass production — primarily assembly line production — in the early twentieth century. He then described the high-tech phase: “The [mass production] stage has now given way to another phase of technological development. The mass production period which began with Ford and continued for a period of time after the Second World War was characterized by expansion. But the current stage, the scientific-technical stage, while containing some of the earlier tendencies of development, contracts the workforce.

“Like all the previous stages of capital- ist development, the current phase is burdened by high unemployment. It employs more workers producing less output.”

Marcy pointed out, “automation does not create more jobs but simply shifts them to lower skill levels. It also destroys the collective power of the workers. It can no longer be generalized to the advantage of all workers. The working class is working with fewer people and more monotonous, increased the divi- sion of labor, and reduced the skills of the workers. The final result was to lower the wages of more and more work- ers by setting them in competition with one another, all to increase the profits of capital. The high-tech revolution, Marcy showed, has accorded completely with Marx’s analysis.

Marcy noted the decline of manufac- turing jobs and the growth of service jobs. Jobs have been lost to the point that workers forced into this change, a shift from high-wage jobs to low-wage jobs.

Chaged social composition of the working class

Marcy promoted various tactics and strategies to combat the anti-labor assault, many of which are completely applicable today. But also important were the sociological observa- tions he made and the political conclu- sions he drew.

“It is this highly significant shift from the higher paid to the lower paid which is dramatically changing the social com- position of the working class, greatly increasing the importance of the so-called ethnic composition of the working class, that is, the number of Black, Latin, Asian, women and other oppressed groups, particularly the millions of undocumented workers.”

Marcy’s central point was to explain the declining rate of profit because the market reflects a general law of capitalist development, the current phase of production is behind the present stock market turmoil and ruling class fears of an impending economic crisis. (Search for “The unfolding economic crisis” at workers.org.)

Marcy’s work was designed to show the destruction of work- ing-class living stan- dards wrought by the technical development of the productive forces, the subsequent change in the composition of the working class, and how these develop- ments formed the basis for the revolu- tionary revival of the class struggle.

His focus was on the spread of technol- ogy by the ruling class inside the United States. He analyzed the internal restruc- turing of U.S. capi- talism and charted the stages of the capitalist development to a widenering pauperization of the proletariat.

Marcy also gave a spotlight on new trends in the develop- ment of capitalism in the age of the scientif- ically-technical revolution. He explained the laws of its develop- ment, growing from the innermost fea- tures of capitalism, as they had existed since its inception — the struggle to increase surplus value and to reduce labor. And he catalogued their effects on the workers and the oppressed, with an emphasis on how this affected the labor unions.

In analyzing the decline of the labor unions and the rise of technology, Marcy invoked Marx’s laws on the decline in the rate of profit. “The bourgeois press is full of the wonders of high technology and the introduction of robots in almost fully automated factories. But they neglect to mention an extremely important element in the economic laws of motion governing capitalist society: Robots do not produce surplus value.”

“Despite this, the individual capitalists are driven to sub- stitute labor-saving machines for work- ers because it gives them a competitive advantage. For a certain period, the capitalist who is able to utilize the new technology can make a higher profit. But his product can actually enjoy a greater profit because the market reflects a gen- eralized cost still based on the old tech- nology. Eventually, however, the new technology itself becomes generalized and the rate of profit falls.

“The advantage to a higher composi- tion of constant capital [new technology — FG] is always temporary. It spurs on destructive competition, in which each capitalist is ever more constantly useful is made prematurely obsolete.

“In order to compensate for the fall- ing rate of profit, the owners are forced to increase the working day or can be done by further increasing production. This is what leads to capitalist over- production and economic crisis. As Marcy pointed out, “automation does not solve the problem of the capitalist con-ception of value.”

Marcy was writing before the new phase of global restructuring, but the essence of his Marxian analysis applies completely to the current worldwide wage competition generated by the capi- talists.
As gov't shutdown bites
Will Dems talk about the real crisis?

Jan. 8 – In the middle of a partial shutdown of the government which has already hurt millions of workers and shaken the economy, the U.S. president is scheduled to come before the airwaves this evening to talk about a “crisis.”

Which crisis?

The shutdown-induced crisis? The one about “borders of criminal immigrants” trying to enter the U.S., for which he is demanding more than $5 billion to build a wall along the border with Mexico? The shutdown is because Congress has so far won’t vote him the funds for his wall.

Seeing the tragedy of migrant children dying in custody after being brutally separated from their parents, most people in the U.S. seem to realize by now that the “immigrant crisis” is a lie. Although Trump’s demagogy will still appeal to the hopelessly racist and xenophobic elements in his right-wing base.

But what needs to be said, loud and clear in answer to Trump is that YES, workers in the U.S. ARE facing a crisis. Will the Democratic Party leaders who take to the airwaves to answer him tonight talk about the real crisis?

A deep crisis exists that has nothing to do with immigration. In the early decades of the 20th century, the percentage of new immigrants in this country was much higher than now. That didn’t stop the economy from surging, creating that period of capitalist expansion.

But things are different now, and will only grow worse as long as the capitalist system, in its dying monopoly stage, prevents rational economic development.

Crisis for workers

Now, even as the fortunes of the super-rich have skyrocketed, and even as the official figures report a low unemployment rate, conditions for a large section of the working class are critical. This includes those with jobs.

Recently, after much struggle, a number of states and cities have raised the minimum wage to as much as $15 per hour. But the federal minimum remains at $7.25 per hour. Here’s what economists wrote about the minimum wage just last summer:

“The minimum wage does not provide a living wage for most [U.S.] American families. A typical family of four (two working adults, two children) needs to work nearly four full-time minimum-wage jobs (a 76-hour work week per working adult) to earn a living wage. Single-parent families need to work almost twice as hard as families with two working adults to earn the living wage. A single mother with two children earning the federal minimum wage of $7.25 per hour needs to work 38 hours per week, nearly the equivalent of working 24 hours per day for 6 days, to earn a living wage.”

(Bare Facts About the Living Wage in America 2017-2018 by Carey Anne Nadeau and Dr. Amy K. Glasmeier, Aug. 30)

Is it any wonder that millions of people need some form of welfare or food supplements just to survive? Is it any wonder that millions will hustle and/or fall into despair, addiction and other attempts to dull their pain?

But consciousness is growing.

After years with fewer and fewer strikes, the number of workers on strike spiked last year. Many who withheld their labor had to break existing anti-labor laws to fight for better pay and working conditions. From teachers to nurses to airline and fast food workers, they knew they couldn’t just hope things would get better. They had to organize, unite and act.

This comes even as the U.S. economy is poised on the brink of another downturn. While the stock market has its ups and downs, long-term trends are far from rosy.

Crude oil prices hover around $50 a barrel, after predictions just a few months ago that it could climb to more than $100. The demand for oil is a basic index of economic growth in the world’s food-driven capitalist world. Generally, oil prices go up after competitors are driven out of the market (think Iran and Venezuela) or when OPEC, dominated by Saudi Arabia, agrees to cut production. But that didn’t happen. Instead, as Markets Insider wrote on Dec. 20: “The oil market is yet another signal in a long line of indicators that global growth is slowing.”

Global trade is slowing, as seen in the sagging profits of Moller-Maersk, the world’s biggest operator of container ships. Trump’s trade war against China is an attempt to bend that socialist country to Wall Street’s demands. But, said one Wall Street voice, Business Insider: “Trade tariffs may end up stifling global container shipping by as much as 2 percent in the next two years.”

If Trump’s trade war against China also bites the capital- ists here in the ass, workers have to be warned that their necks will be on the chopping block.

CORRECTION

In the front-page article titled “Education Secretary DeVos attacks abuse survivors” in the Dec. 20 issue, the deadline for submitting public comments about Title IX revisions is Jan. 10 (not Jan. 20).

Congress finally passes an anti-lynching bill

Continued from page 3

In 1935, the Communist Party USA exhibited anti-lynching art in New York to confront the horrors of lynching. Showing grotesque mangled and burned bodies, the art also displayed crowds of white onlookers, including children, celebrating these atrocities.

In 1939, singer Billie Holiday recorded a historic song about lynching, “Strange Fruit.” The words were written by Abel Meeropol, a Jewish poet and high school teacher, after he saw photographs of Black victims dangling from trees. These photos were lynching “souvenirs,” often made into postcards for racists to send to friends. A member of the Communist Party, Meeropol adopted the sons of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were executed in 1953 after a bogus conspiracy conviction by the U.S. government for allegedly giving or selling secrets to the Soviet Union.

The death penalty as lynching

Today, the fight against lynching continues in the South with efforts sparked by Bryan Stevenson, who founded the Equal Justice Initiative based in Montgomery, Ala., in 1994. Stevenson holds that fighting racial injustice is critical to advancing equal justice for all, and racism must be challenged in order to protect basic human rights.

Stevenson also stresses the link of enslavement and lynching to the modern-day prison-industrial complex and death penalty. Stevenson said in a May 1 interview with Democracy Now!: “I think the death penalty is lynching’s stepson.” (tinyurl.com/y7yw3w馞)

The EJI has opened the “Legacy Museum: from Enslavement to Mass Incarceration” in Montgomery, as well as the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, pay- ing tribute to airline and fast food workers. The memorial includes hundreds of jars of soil collected from lynching sites as well as iron rectangles dangling in the air, engraved with the names of those murdered. (museumandalmemorial.org)

The power of institutional racism and the uncheked violence of hatred still permeate all aspects of politics, laws, culture and U.S. society. The civil and human rights of African Americans have been violated since the first forced arrival of enslaved Africans in 1619. Domestic terrorism targeting Black people continues to this day.

The year 2019 marks 400 years of inequality and oppression of Black people in the U.S. Let it also mark renewed struggle against white supremacy.

10 years later
Oakland remembers Oscar Grant

By Workers World Bay Area bureau

Jan. 1 – Over 200 people gathered at the Fruitvale BART Station in East Oakland to commemorate Oscar Grant, and condemn his murder by police.

Family members, clergy and community activists loudly proclaimed, “We remember that the death of the 22-year-old African-American man and also the movement against police murders that developed in its aftermath. Wanda Johnson, the mother of Oscar Grant, said: “People know Oscar all around the world. I believe that Oscar’s life was a catalyst to something that brought an awareness, and it has caused us to examine what has happened.”

Johnson has helped organize a national movement involving mothers of Black and Brown men and women who have suffered “deaths in custody.”

Cephus Johnson, Grant’s uncle (known by all as “Uncle Bobby”), recalled that Grant’s case made history when he brought an awareness to the social history of lynching.

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By Workers World Bay Area bureau

Cephus Johnson and other family members, Jan. 1.
Guatemala

MLP holds first multinational assembly

By Sam Ordóñez

On Dec. 29, representatives from Guatemalan Indigenous peoples and social movements gathered in Santo Domingo in the Suchitpéquez department of Guatemala for the first “plurinational assembly” of the Movement for the Liberation of the Peoples (MLP). The assembly elected an executive committee.

MLP is an initiative begun by the Peasant Development Committee (CODECA) and backed by the Indigenous communities where CODECA and other social movements have been active. The MLP was registered for the 2019 presidential elections. However, CODECA has insisted, “What’s being built is not another party, but a political instrument called #MLP, to propel the plurinational STATE and good living.” (tinyurl.com/bhggphq)

The proposals from the plurinational assembly will be taken back to regional meetings for further debate.

Objectives and methods of the MLP

In the nearly two months between MLP’s registration and the first plurinational assembly, there were a series of regional assemblies to determine MLP’s priorities. In addition to the regional assemblies, there was a national meeting of MLP youth.

The MLP’s proposals include lowering public officials’ salaries and renouncing parliamentary immunity, a practice which has been at the center of the recent anti-corruption struggle. MLP is also proposing the nationalization of the miners of precious metals and palladium, precious metals and palladium from lands, territories and water for human consumption; and the creation of a Popular and Plurinational Constituent Assembly where the MLP will vote for a plurinational state with autonomous Indigenous regions.

Migration and the pluralinational state

In recent weeks at least two Guatemalan children have died in detention centers on the U.S.-Mexico border. Last May, a Border Patrol agent fatally shot another Guatemalan, Claudia Patricia Gómez González. All three, just like many Central Americans who are terrorized by the border, are from Indigenous communities. In Guatemala, Indigenous peoples have always suffered the worst poverty and violence, from genocide during the civil war to the ongoing killings of defenders of the land and of human rights.

Today, the foreign funds that come into Guatemala, supposedly for economic development, are used to build new mines and other environment-destroying projects. The movement intends to build these projects and criminalize any communities that protest. In this sense, the “development” imposed by foreign imperialism is worse than the continuation of colonialism.

The same starvation wages in the plantations and in the foreign-backed export industries are a reality. The MLP opposes these projects. The Guatemalan oligarchy promotes racism against Indigenous peoples. This racism and the corruption of the traditional imperialist puppet politicians block any solution to the migration crisis. At the same time President Donald Trump threatens to halt U.S. aid to the country.

The only solution for Guatemala is to “break the fences of the CACIF plantation state.” (CACIF is the acronym for the Guatemalan businesses) and empower the communities and peoples of the country.

China’s moon landing: a giant leap for space science

By Lyn Neeley

The People’s Republic of China success- fully landed the first spacecraft, called the Chang-e-4, on the far side of the moon on Jan. 2. It is the first moon landing by any country since 2013. The probe was sent to search for rare earth metals and helium-3, used to make safer, more pro- ductive energy. Scientists hope to find answers about the evolution of our solar system and the origins of the universe. This landing could also change plans.

The landing of Chang-e-4 is just part of China’s overall space program that is centered on improving living conditions for the country’s centrally planned society. China is developing a lunar space station and plans on sending a crew to the moon as soon as 2030.

In contrast to China, the U.S. space pro- gram is driven by capitalist competition and the development of military weap- ons. Trump called on the Department of Defense and the Pentagon to develop a “Space Force,” a sixth branch of the mili- tary, as part of a larger effort to protect U.S. assets in space and attacking its enemies during wars.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s International Space Station will soon be decommissioned. There are no plans for a replacement. NASA’s budget has been stalled.

Contributions of China’s space program

China now produces 90 percent of the world’s solar panels. China’s moon landing is searching for new sources of valuable materials like copper, alumi- num, iron and rare earth metals essen- tial for emerging technologies like cell phones, computers and other electronics and medical equipment.

Next year, the second generation of nuclear power, will someday replace nuclear fission, which is now used to fuel nuclear power plants. Fusion can gener- ate four times as much energy as fission without hazardous environmental prob- lems like radioactive waste.

Helium-3, an ideal fuel for nuclear fusion, is an isotope of the element helium. There are an estimated 1 to 5 million tons of it on the moon, compared to only 15 tons on Earth. Once nuclear fusion technology matures, it will take 100 tons of helium-3 each year to meet global energy demands.

Ouyang Ziyang, a prominent Chinese space scientist, predicted 13 years ago: “Each year three space shuttle missions could bring enough fuel for all human beings for 10 years.” (China Daily, July 26, 2006) For now it is too expensive to haul helium-3 back to Earth, but it may be the most useful as fuel for future spacecraft to explore deeper into space.

Because the moon rotates just once each time it circles the Earth, only one side is visible from Earth. The far side of the moon is shielded from noise caused by radio waves, cell phones, power lines, GPS satellites and Wi-Fi.

Scientists stationed on the moon’s far side will be able to look more deeply into space. In so doing, more will be learned about the evolution of the universe, the birth of the first stars and the formation of our solar system.

Photographs from a Soviet spacecraft used in the Chang-e-4 mission. The Swedish Institute of Space Physics developed some of the eight scientific instruments used in the Chang-e-4 mission. The Chang-e-4 lander inside the oldest, deepest and most cratered part of the far side will be able to look more deeply into space. In so doing, more will be learned about the evolution of the universe, the birth of the first stars and the formation of our solar system.

Scientists from Sweden and Germany collaborated with China on designs for some of the eight scientific instruments used in the Chang-e-4 mission. The German Institute of Aerospace Technology developed an instrument that will investigate how solar wind interacts with the lunar surface.

Instead of working with China, President Donald Trump argued that the Chinese and Russian space programs are an “existential threat” to his Space Force. This is US imperialist saber rattling.

China provides four times as many college degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) as the United States. Federal grants for education have decreased in the U.S., where a college degree is very expen- sive—and does not ensure better jobs for graduates. The U.S. is falling behind in space exploration and in other areas of scientific development.

Spending about students in China, U.S. astronaut and professor Chris Impy said, “They have very young engineers in their space program—very keen, very well trained, very ambitious.” He said China’s space program, like its economy, is growing explosively, at roughly 10 per- cent a year for the past decade. (NPR, May 11, 2013)

China’s impressive space program

In other areas of science and technol- ogy, like artificial intelligence and quan- tum computing, China is developing more quickly than the U.S. China recently launched a quantum satellite into space that physicists say can lead to a super- secure and fast quantum internet sys- tem for China.

The first Chinese satellite launch, which happened in 1970, focused on com- mercial applications. Since 2003, China has launched two space labs and sent six crews, including 12 taikonauts (Chinese astronauts), into low orbit.

In 2016, China completed the world’s largest telescope built to detect radio sig- nals, potential signs of life, from distant planets. That year, the country launched the Tiangong 2 space lab, which has been orbiting Earth since then.

Last year China sent 38 launches into space, more than any other country. Many of them carried GPS-type systems that already cover China and much of Asia. China may launch a mobile satellite in the near future, which would add to a constellation of 300 satellites.

China annually spends about $2 billion on its space budget, compared to NASA’s $18 billion budget—and its space pro- gram is growing at a faster rate. If China, a still-developing country, can make these profound advances with less money, then it is no coincidence.

Deirdre Griswold, editor of Workers World newspaper, answered this question in a WW Commentary on Dec. 27: “The US space infrastruc- ture is publicly owned, not in the hands of a profit-seeking, parasitic ruling class.”

El 29 de diciembre de 1958 se reunió en Santa Domingo, Suecoguay repre- sentantes de los pueblos originarios y movimientos sociales de Guatemala para celebrar la primera “assemblea plurinacional” para debatir sobre el futuro de la resistencia de los Pueblos (MLP). En la asamblea se eli- gió un comité ejecutivo. FMLP es una iniciativa impulsada por el Comité de Desarrollo Campesino (CODECA) y apoyado por las comu- nidades originarias donde CODECA y otros movimientos sociales operan. En noviembre, el MLP fue inscrito en las elecciones presidenciales que se celebrara- ron en 1989, pero el CODECA “No se está construyendo un partido más, sino un instrumento político llamado “FMLP”, para impulsar el ESTADO plurinacional y el buen vivir.” (tynyurl.com/y7ggkx4d)

Las propuestas planteadas en la asam- blea plurinacional se debatirán en nuevos programas de los departamentos antes de finalizarse.

Objetivos y métodos del MLP
En los dos meses entre la inscripción del MLP y su primera asamblea plurinacional hubieron asambleas regionales para determinar las prioridades del instrumento político. Además de las asambleas a nivel regional, hubo una asamblea nacional de la invasión a través.

Entre las propuestas del MLP se incluy- en bajar los salarios de los diputados y cuba en la inmunidad parlamentaria, algo que ha sido el enfoque de la lucha contra la corrupción en los últimos años. También se propone la nacionalización de los servicios privatizados, recuperar las tierras, territorios, y el agua para con- sumo humano, e impulsar un proceso de asamblea constituyente popular y plurinacional, para construir un estado plurinacional con autonomías indígenas. El estado plurinacional se notifica por la experiencia de los pueblos originarios en los casi 200 años de la República de Guatemala. Según Thelma Cabrera, defensora de derechos humanos de Guatemala. Segun Thelma Cabrera, “nos tienen como esclavos, nos tienen de rodillas, nos tienen en contra, lejos de nuestros derechos, nos humilla, nos difama, como un pequeño pueblo, y en esta situación, ellos que todavía abrigan actitudes...” (tynyurl.com/y7ggkx4d)

El liderazgo y su metodología

Los asesinatos de líderes indígenas y campesinos fue otro tema de la asam- blea, y es una de las razones por la que MLP cree tan necesario la construcción de un estado plurinacional. Como dijo Vicenta Jeronimo, los acuerdos de paz en Guatemala solo se firmaron en pape- les, “nos siguen matando de hambre, nos hacen en las tierras, nuestros niños son muertos y nos huyen para la pobreza.” (tynyurl.com/y7ggkx4d)

Se reiteró durante toda la asamblea que el estado plurinacional y los cambios sociales tenían que venir desde las mismas comunidades que se unieron para formar el MLP.

El estado plurinacional y la migración

En las últimas semanas han muerto por lo menos dos niños Guatemaltecos en centros de detención en la frontera de los Estados Unidos. Según Patrici Gómez González por disparo de un agente de la patrulla fronteriza. “Nosotros, como muchos de los migrantes que cruzan esa frontera, eran de pueblos originarios. En Guatemala siempre han sido los pueblos originarios quienes han sufrido lo peor de la pobreza y de la violencia, desde el genocidio durante la guerra civil hasta los asesinatos de defensores de la tierra y los derechos humanos.

Hoy en día los fondos que entran a Guatemala desde el extranjero no son suficientes para supuestamente desarrollar la economía del país se use para construir nuevas minas y otros proyectos que destruyen el medio ambiente. Los grandes empresa- rios roban las aguas para construir estos proyectos, y las comunidades son crimi- nalizadas si protestan. En este sentido, el proceso de “desarrollo” que impone las inmigración extranjera no va más que una continuación de la colonización.

Los mismos salarios de hambre en las grandes fincas y en estos proyectos extranjeros que denuncia MLP son lo que impulsa a los migrantes. El racismo de la oligarquía contra los pueblos originarios y la corrupción de los políticos tradicio- nales titulares del imperialismo bloquean cualquier solución a la crisis migratoria, incluso cuando Trump amenaza con ter- minar la ayuda a los pueblos indígenas.

La única solución para Guatemala es “romper el alambre de la finca CACIFER A” (CACIF es la organización de los grandes empresarios) y empoderar a las comunidades y los pueblos.