

Solidarity at the border

FIRE delegation brings supplies to caravan

By Ted Kelly
Tijuana, Mexico

A solidarity delegation organized by Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere (FIRE) went to Mexico from Dec. 6 to 9 to meet with caravanista organizers and provide humanitarian aid to some of the thousands of Central American families who find themselves stranded on the U.S. border.

The FIRE delegation joined activists from Border Veterans, an organization for U.S. military veterans who have been deported, U.S. Veterans for Peace, and local church groups and community members to bring much needed supplies to the migrant families both in Tijuana and in nearby Barretal, the largest refugee camp for asylum seekers in Mexico.

FIRE met with caravanistas in Barretal just days after torrential rains hit the camp, which flooded bathrooms and soaked the residents' tents, blankets and clothes. Temperatures plummet at night, so the dampness, combined with bitter cold, made conditions even more difficult for the 4,000 to 5,000 migrants in Barretal.

However, by the time the FIRE delegation arrived at the camp on Dec. 6 to bring clean socks, washcloths, body wash and other toiletries, spirits in the camp had improved. Music blared from a karaoke machine while migrants sang along, some youths danced and played soccer, and preparations were made for a small festival for the kids. The caravan is comprised almost entirely of young families, with many young children and infants among them.

"You're looking at an entire generation of displaced people," one Honduran organizer named Dani told the FIRE delegation. "And it is a great generation. I have met here so many future singers, musicians, artisans and activists.

"I want to thank those in the United States who have helped us. I know that North Americans have a big heart and are a people who stand in solidarity with us. Thank you for your support and for your noble hearts. The Mexican people, as well."

"I didn't believe that there could exist so much empathy, so much devotion, that you [United States and Mexican activists] have shown."

"But," Dani continues, "we know there are some people everywhere in the world who lack awareness of what is the origin of these problems. Therefore they defend causes that are a lie, causes that are murderous. In doing so, they think they fight for good things, but they fight for bad things. You can be murdering entire populations, innocent peoples."

Continued on page 6



A view from Tijuana of the U.S.-Mexico border.

WW PHOTO: TED KELLY



PHOTO: GERRY CONDON

FIRE delegates and activists working with deported U.S. veterans were in solidarity at the border in Tijuana. From left to right, Lupita Cibrian, Rosa Maria de la Torre, Gloria Rubac, Sara Flounders and Blanca of Border Veterans.

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MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

Next steps after 37 years

By Betsey Piette

Political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal has now been incarcerated for 37 years. December 9 marks the anniversary of his imprisonment and of the people’s determined struggle to liberate him from Pennsylvania jails.

In Philadelphia, activities marking this day were scheduled during the week before the anniversary. Things kicked off on Dec. 3 with over 75 people rallying outside the Criminal Justice Center as the in-court hearing on Abu-Jamal’s nearly two-year appeals process wrapped up inside.

The court hearing was brief. Abu-Jamal’s attorneys reported that they have not exhausted their search for a missing document requested under the Pennsylvania Freedom of Information Act. They stated they would not request an extension, but asked for a provision that the document could be submitted if located at a later date. Then both sides agreed they had no additional evidence to submit, and Judge Leon Tucker closed the hearing. He stated that he would make a ruling after reviewing “the tremendous amount of documents.”

Abu-Jamal’s supporters immediately sprang into action in preparation for a court decision that could come down at any time. They have created an emergency response network that includes an online pledge to turn out for Mumia at Mobilization4Mumia.com.

On the day after Tucker issues a decision on Mumia’s appeal, a demonstration will be held in Philadelphia at 4-6 p.m. A regional action will start at noon the following Saturday. Both will be held outside the District Attorney’s office at 3 South Penn Circle, across from City Hall. Regardless of which side is favored by the judge’s decision, appeals are expected.

More actions for Mumia

The week before the appeal hearing also saw Mumia’s supporters engaging in a slew of actions. On Dec. 7, several demonstrators held a brief “Honk for Mumia” action at 13th and Locust, the site of the 1981 shootings of police officer Daniel Faulkner and Abu-Jamal, resulting in his unjust incarceration.

On Dec. 8, a community forum at the People’s Sanctuary



WWPHOTO: JOE PIETTE

In Philadelphia, Gabriel Bryant spoke for Mumia and for solidarity between oppressed peoples and the Palestinian struggle at the Dec. 8 forum, and also on Dec. 3, when this photo was taken.

Center in the city’s Germantown section included updates on the legal case and strategies for building the emergency response network. A forum highlight was the video of a Nov. 28 talk by Temple professor Marc Lamont Hill at the annual convening of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People at the U.N. Hill, well respected in Philadelphia’s activist communities, also co-authored a book with Abu-Jamal, titled “The Classroom and the Cell.”

After the film showing, Gabriel Bryant with the Campaign to Bring Mumia Home, and a member of the delegation who traveled with Hill to Palestine in November, addressed the gathering with details of their experience in occupied Palestine.

Bryant said that as a Black man in Philadelphia, he can be constantly subjected to stop-and-frisk by police, but noted his experience paled in comparison to the constant harassment and Israel Defense Forces intimidation of Palestinians and African-Arab people at checkpoints in Israel and the occupied territories. Much of the discussion following Bryant’s talk dealt with building solidarity between Palestinians and oppressed communities in the U.S.

A collection taken at the forum raised \$135 for the Mamas Bail Out program for women incarcerated in the State Road prison, so they can come home and be with their children for the holidays. □

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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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PHILADELPHIA

Protest defends professor Hill, Palestine

By Betsey Piette

Chanting “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” over 100 activists took to north Philadelphia streets around Temple University campus on Dec. 6 to demand that university officials stop their attacks on professor Marc Lamont Hill for his political activism in solidarity with Palestine.

Palestinian author and activist Susan Abulhawa kicked off the rally at Temple’s Bell Tower by speaking on the millennia-long history of the Indigenous Palestinian population in the region now known as Israel. In November, Israeli officials denied Abulhawa entry to attend a conference of Palestinian writers in the West Bank.

A second mini-rally took place outside the offices of the Temple Board of Trustees. The demonstration for professor Hill, initiated by Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and endorsed by over a dozen community organizations, was called to denounce Board chair Patrick O’Connor’s push to fire the professor. Hill was under attack for a speech he gave on Nov. 28 at the U.N.’s International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Dr. Hill’s record supporting freedom

Dr. Hill, a tenured professor at Temple, author, community activist and media commentator, had just returned from a trip to Palestine. At the U.N. meeting, Hill spoke at length about Israel’s systematic stripping away of freedoms for Palestinians, including passage of more than 60 laws that deny Palestinians access to housing, education, family reunification and other freedoms maintained for Jewish citizens of Israel.

Hill addressed the growing “relationship of resistance” between Palestinians and Black Americans. “Palestine will be free from the river to the sea,” Hill said.

Claiming that this amounted to “hate speech” and a call for “the destruction of Israel,” Zionist forces in the U.S. launched an attack against Hill that resulted in CNN firing him Nov. 29 from his position as an occasional commentator.

O’Connor, a white lawyer, said Hill’s talk at the U.N. “blackens” [Temple’s] name unnecessarily,” which is insulting language when used against Hill, a Black professor. O’Connor — one of Bill Cosby’s defense lawyers in Cosby’s sexual assault case — was himself asked to step down as Board chair by the Feminist Alliance.

In January 2015, Hill was part of a delegation of Dream Defenders, Black Lives Matter and Ferguson organizers who traveled to Palestine. In July 2018, Hill organized a forum on Palestine in Philadelphia that included a significant panel addressing solidarity between Black communities in the U.S. and the Palestinian struggle.

In November 2018, Hill led a delegation of Black activists to Palestine where they witnessed firsthand the oppression of Palestinians. Having just returned from Palestine, Hill advocated equal rights for all people in historic Palestine and the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland. He spoke out against apartheid conditions for millions of Palestinians in both Israel and the occupied territories in the West Bank and Gaza.

Gabriel Bryant, from the Campaign to Bring Mumia Home, was part of the November delegation. Speaking at the Dec. 6 rally, Bryant compared his experience as a Black man in Philadelphia confronting stop-and-frisk to the daily, repeated checkpoints to which every Palestinian is subject.

Students for Justice in Palestine’s call

In its protest call, SJP said, “Painting freedom, secular democracy and equality as an incitement to violence or even genocide is ahistorical and an argument made in bad faith. Dr. Hill’s statements ... cannot be classified as ‘hate speech’ against Jewish people. We reject the sentiment that anti-Zionism is equivalent to anti-Semitism, because denouncing a settler-colonialist, white supremacist state does not make one anti-Semitic.”

Their statement continued, “Because we recognize that the Zionist entity is an apartheid state, we know that genuine democracy does not — cannot — exist in Israel. We know that the imperialist Western powers have manufactured an artificial idea of peace and democracy in order to pursue profit at the expense of colonized peoples. Finally, we know that to advocate for a free Palestine is to advocate for freedom from apartheid, for liberation from siege, for basic access to

water and safety for ALL people living in Palestine.”

The students demand that Temple University rescind their unprofessional, inappropriate and anti-academic statement conflating Dr. Hill’s words with “hate speech” and that Temple pledge support for courses and open discussion about Palestine on campus.

As the rally ended at North Broad and Cecil B. Moore, several speakers connected the attack against Hill with other efforts to silence Black voices, including the voice of journalist and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Pam Africa, just returning from a visit with



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Palestinian activists in solidarity with African-American people lead protest in Philadelphia in support of Marc Lamont Hill.

Abu-Jamal, spoke on the need for solidarity between prisoners in Palestine and those in the U.S. and shared Abu-Jamal’s message of solidarity with the student demonstrators. □

WW COMMENTARY

Why Cyntoia Brown deserves our support

By Monica Moorehead

Cyntoia Brown, a 30-year-old African-American woman, has been imprisoned since the age of 16 for first-degree murder in Nashville, Tenn. She was tried as an adult and convicted in 2004 for killing a 43-year-old man who attempted to rape her at his home. She killed him with his own gun.

Brown was sentenced to life in prison despite her plea of self-defense and even though she was a juvenile at the time of her trial. She won’t be eligible for parole until the age of 69!

In response to the 2012 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that juveniles being given mandatory life sentences is unconstitutional, the Tennessee Supreme Court stated in reference to Brown, “Under state law, a life sentence is a determinate sentence of 60 years. However, the sixty-year sentence can be reduced by up to 15 percent, or 9 years, by earning various sentence credits.” (thehill.com, Dec. 7)

The five justices on this court went on to say that anyone convicted of first-degree murder after July 1, 1995, must serve at least 50 years of their sentence before parole is considered.

The immensely popular singer, Rihanna, has focused global attention on Cyntoia Brown’s case on social media. She shared the following post on Instagram: “Imagine at the age of 16 being sex-trafficked by a pimp named ‘cut-throat.’ After days of being repeatedly drugged and raped by different men, you were purchased by a 43-year-old child predator who took you to his home to use you for sex. You end up finding enough courage to fight back and shoot and kill him.”

Rihanna added, “Something is horribly wrong when the system enables these rapists, and the victim is thrown away for life.”

Free Cyntoia Brown!

The case of Cyntoia Brown continues to gain tremendous attention on social media, including a mushrooming campaign demanding her release. Moveon.org reported that at least 500,000 people have signed its petition supporting this



Left, Cyntoia Brown at 16. Inset, Cyntoia Brown today. Below, Lena Baker and Marissa Alexander.



campaign, and the number continues to grow. (For more information, go to “Free Cyntoia Brown” on Facebook and #FreeCyntoiaBrown on Twitter.)

Brown’s case is the norm, not the exception. As long as U.S. capitalism has existed throughout its various stages of development, so has its by-products — racism and sexual violence and their intersection. An untold number of Black women have had to bear the brunt of rape and sexual assaults, beginning under the lash of horrific slavery up until the present day.

There was the case of Lena Baker, a daughter of Black sharecroppers and a domestic worker, who was the first woman executed in Georgia by electrocution in 1945 at age 45. Her “crime”? Killing her white boss who imprisoned her in his house while he repeatedly sexually assaulted her. The state of Georgia pardoned her in 2005.

There was the case of Joann Little, a Black woman who killed her jailer with an icepick as he attempted to rape her in a Beaufort County jail in Washington, N.C., in 1974. Activists from all over the country rallied together in a grassroots campaign around her right to self-defense against her attacker. She eventually won her freedom in 1979.

Marissa Alexander was freed after five years of detention for “standing her ground” when she dared to defend herself from an abusive spouse in Jacksonville, Fla. in 2012, just days after giving birth to

her third child.

While her spouse was unharmed when Alexander shot bullets into the ceiling to stop his ongoing domestic abuse, she was the one put on trial and sentenced to 20 years. Her prosecutor was the same one who hardly bothered to make a case against George Zimmerman, the wannabe cop who murdered the unarmed Black teen Trayvon Martin. Alexander was eventually released in 2017 as a result of a mass campaign supporting her.

Cyntoia Brown is one of countless victims forced into the global sex trade market as children and adults. Her outrageously inhumane sentence and imprisonment is a blatant warning on the part of the repressive state — that is, the police, the courts, the prisons — to every woman and gender-oppressed person that you could suffer the same fate as Cyntoia Brown if you dare try to defend yourself against your abuser.

This is the same racist, male-biased state that merely gave a slap on the wrist to a sexual predator like Brock Allen Turner, a white Stanford University swimmer, who was found guilty of three counts of sexual assault and only spent three months in jail.

Because Brown dared to say no to her assault, building a campaign to demand her freedom will bring us a step closer to getting rid of this racist, misogynist, homophobic, exploitative system that has destroyed so many lives and threatens many more. □



GM cuts jobs Auto workers fight back



Autoworker Caravan members protest outside 2016 Detroit auto show.

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

General Motors announced Nov. 26 that it plans to slash over 14,000 jobs and close four plants in the U.S., one in Canada and two more in as yet unnamed locations.

GM CEO Mary Barra, who earned \$22 million last year, chose her words carefully when she revealed the plan. She said that at various times next year the plants would become “unallocated.” That meant the products currently built at the plant will be discontinued, and no new products will be allocated to the plants named in the announcement.

Barra avoided saying the words “closed” or “idled.” The current contract between GM and the United Auto Workers states: “[T]he Company will not close, idle, nor partially or wholly sell, spin-off, split-off, consolidate or otherwise dispose of in any form, any plant, asset, or business unit of any type.”

The UAW has rejected GM’s doublespeak. Any plant closing or idling — regardless of word choice — violates the current contract, which does not expire until September 2019.

UAW International President Gary Jones blasted GM’s “callous decision,” stating: “The UAW and our members will confront this decision by GM through every legal, contractual and collective bargaining avenue open to our membership.” (The Hill, Dec. 6) Members, allies and other unions are being asked to write letters to the company opposing the closings.

GM claims the cuts are essential because there are more plants than the company needs for the current vehicle market and many plants are only running one shift of production. UAW President Jones says this is due to the company’s decisions to shift more and more production to Mexico and other low-wage countries.

However, Jones is taking a limited, nationalistic position on the fight for decent union jobs by demanding “tax and trade laws that reward U.S. investment.” Jones’ statement does not even acknowledge the attack on Canadian GM workers.

The union officialdom is pursuing a narrow, legalistic strategy, combined with a tame tactic of letter writing. What is needed is militant activism.

Wealthy companies routinely violate all kinds of laws — anti-discrimination, the right to organize unions, environmental protections. Only a mass struggle will hold them accountable.

Grassroots activists plan labor-community fightback

The rank-and-file autoworker group Autoworker Caravan held a meeting Dec. 8 in Detroit to strategize against the

closings. The meeting opened with a video created by Sean Crawford, who works at the GM Detroit-Hamtramck plant, which is on the chopping block.

Crawford charged that the Michigan cities of Flint, Pontiac and Saginaw had been “used up and spit out” by GM. He added, “We all know what GM is really after, the only thing they’ve ever been after, more money.” His video ended with a call to “unite across borders to build a movement of working-class people.”

This set the tone for hearing a series of speakers and a lively discussion on why the plant closings are unacceptable and what actions a real fightback might take. Addressing the gathering were Detroit City Council President Emeritus JoAnn Watson; State Representative and State Senator-elect Stephanie Chang; Andy Gooderis, a representative of Congresswoman-elect Rashida Tlaib; UAW Local 909 President Ghana Goodwin-Dye, whose plant in Warren is slated to close; and Jerry Goldberg, representing Moratorium Now! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs.

The meeting was co-chaired by former Local 909 President and Shop Chair Frank Hammer and UAW Local 869 Trustee Martha Grevatt.

The speakers brought out the fact that the plant closings not only violated the contract, but violated terms of state and federal tax breaks that had tied the give-aways to job creation by GM.

There are many alternatives to closing the plants, including retooling them to combat the climate change emergency. Instead of building gas-guzzling trucks, auto workers could be building clean electric vehicles, buses and trains for mass transit as well as solar panels and wind turbines.

The eminent domain laws, which were used in the 1980s to seize and destroy a whole neighborhood so GM could build the Detroit-Hamtramck plant, could be used instead to seize the plant and run it under union-community control.

The group decided to demonstrate outside the annual Detroit auto show in January and to form a contingent in the annual Martin Luther King Day march. The workers also discussed the need to build fightback committees inside the plants.

A solidarity collection netted over \$125 for fired, injured GM workers in Colombia who have been fighting for justice since 2011.

The meeting also celebrated the tenth anniversary of Auto Caravan’s inaugural action. The group was founded when it sent a car caravan to Washington, D.C., in 2009 to demand no contract concessions be attached to the terms of the GM and Chrysler bailouts by the U.S. government. □

SPECTRUM STRIKE CONTINUES

Strong response to union busting

By G. Dunkel
New York City

International Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 3, with 1,800 workers out on strike for more than a year, thought they were so close to a contract, they had stopped picketing Charter/Spectrum.

Then this \$41 billion company, one of the largest multichannel cable service providers in the U.S., walked away from the bargaining table Nov. 30 because IBEW refused to accept major punishing takeaways.

The union picket lines started up again Dec. 3, and the New York Central Labor Council called a mass rally Dec. 5.

The rally drew a solid thousand workers to protest at the Spectrum office on East 23rd Street. There a number of labor union leaders spoke in support of IBEW Local 3. Also present was Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who pointed out that Spectrum is in

violation of the license agreement which allows it to operate in New York.

Daily picketing continues. (For locations see tinyurl.com/yapqthzu.) Supporters are needed to attend rallies as they are in a better legal position than union members to speak out against scabbing and for boycotting the company. The statewide AFL-CIO has launched a boycott campaign, Cut the Cord Spectrum. (tinyurl.com/y88nk3o5)

Meanwhile, cable technicians are leading campaigns to promote a publicly owned cable option (tinyurl.com/y8hm-jgnz) and to get actor Ellen DeGeneres to stop being in Spectrum commercials.

Sara Catalinotto also contributed to this report. □

A thousand union members and supporters showed up Dec. 5 for IBEW Local 3, on strike against Spectrum for over a year.



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NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Support surges for Palestinian struggle

By John Steffen
New York City

Against all odds, New York University students, in a campus coalition with faculty and graduate workers, successfully pushed a Boycott, Divest and Sanctions resolution through the Student Government on Dec. 6. The victory comes after nearly four years of campaigning for BDS on campus, despite death threats and growing hostility against the movement in the last several years.

The BDS movement began in 2005 when organizations in Palestine called for boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israeli state institutions and companies that profit from Israeli occupation of Palestine. The movement is modeled after the 1980s divestment campaign against apartheid South Africa and seeks to pressure Israel to comply with international law.

Currently more than 30 student governments in the U.S. have voted to support BDS and demanded their universities investigate their investments and cut financial ties to companies and institutions complicit in the occupation of Palestine. Targeting universities is an important part of the movement, since many universities have been turned into billion-dollar, for-profit institutions and use the money made from the obscene cost of tuition to invest in all sorts of



PHOTO: NYU SJR FACEBOOK

NYU Students for Justice in Palestine “table” to build support for BDS resolution, Nov. 6.

nefarious multinational corporations.

As the largest private university in the U.S., NYU is a significant addition to the BDS movement. If NYU were to divest, it would be a huge blow to the Israeli occupation.

The three main corporations NYU coalition students target for divestment are Caterpillar, whose bulldozers Israel uses to demolish Palestinian homes and businesses in the West Bank and Gaza; and Lockheed Martin and General Electric, who have major contracts with the Israeli military.

And the struggle continues: After the resolution was passed by the Student Government, it moves on to consideration

by the University Senate, composed of faculty, staff, students and deans; and then on up to the Board of Trustees.

This new stage will undoubtedly be an uphill battle if the difficulties of the last few weeks are any indication. Not only did Zionist groups show up in full force to protest the recent vote, but the recent illegal detainment of a BDS organizer at Ben Gurion Airport in October signaled an alarming escalation of repression against BDS supporters.

NYU president Andrew Hamilton made his opposition to BDS clear in 2016 — the same year New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed an executive order against BDS. The sentiment of NYU

trustees, a body composed almost entirely of elements from the bourgeoisie (as is the case with most major universities), will depend not on their moral concern for human well-being but on their company’s own material relationship with the occupation.

All this could change with enough pressure. Solidarity was key to the recent successful struggle, as many organizations, including the Black Student Union, connected their struggles with that of the Palestinian people. In the end, over half of the voting members of the Student Government voted in favor of the resolution. The remaining half was evenly split between abstentions and no votes.

United Auto Workers Local 2110, based in the Technical, Office and Professional (TOP) department of the UAW, passed a 2016 resolution in support of BDS. Local 2110 is an amalgamated union with 30 contracts covering over 3,000 workers in universities, publishing, museums, law firms and other offices. The local represents teachers, secretaries, administrators, editors, computer operators, librarians, museum curators, typesetters, graphic artists and others.

With NYU’s success, the campus coalition organizing for BDS has added to a number of victories giving continuing momentum to the struggle for the Palestinian people. □

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

TAs hold grades, protest move to save racist statue

By Zack Richardson
Chapel Hill, N.C.

The struggle surrounding Silent Sam, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill monument to the white supremacist Confederacy, sharpened intensely last week as administration plans to re-erect the statue on campus prompted a strike by university teaching assistants.

The UNC Board of Trustees approved a plan Dec. 3 to rehouse Silent Sam. Last August a coalition of students, community members and activists toppled the statue. As presented by UNC Chancellor Carol Folt, the “restoration” plan calls for the construction of a \$5.3 million building to serve as a “history and education center” contextualizing the statue.

The reactionary project will also cost \$2 million a year to create a 40-person mobile police force to respond to protests on campus, costing roughly \$800,000 a year in operating expenses.

Folt’s announcement prompted immediate protests from the outraged UNC community. The night of Dec. 3, at a hundreds-strong community march against the administration’s proposed move, UNC grad student Maya Little called for grad students to strike and withhold final grades until the university abandons its plans.

“The university works because we do,” said Little. “If we don’t get it, shut it down.” Little is a leader in the anti-Sam movement. She was recently found guilty of defacing the statue with a mixture of paint and blood earlier this year.

Little was arrested later that day and charged with inciting a riot. Word of the strike quickly began to spread and garner support. According to the activist

group Strike Down Sam, at least 79 TAs and instructors have pledged to withhold nearly 2,200 final grades until Sam is permanently removed from campus.

Teaching assistants issue demands

Silence Sam, a website associated with the striking TAs, released a set of demands Dec. 6 aimed at university officials. The TAs insist the administration withdraw its proposal for the new building and the new police force, commit to keeping the statue off campus in perpetuity and hold listening sessions with the local community.

Should those demands be met, they said, TAs will release the grades currently being held.

The Sam monument was originally erected in 1913 to memorialize UNC students who fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War. Concerned students have criticized university officials’ approach of trying to resurrect the statue. The students cite the statue’s role in a white supremacist cause as contributing to a hostile campus environment for Black students.

Black faculty and student groups, graduate student associations, the School of Education and library workers, among others, have called for the statue’s permanent removal.

At a packed Faculty Council meeting Dec. 6, UNC junior and Black Congress co-chair Angum Check confronted Chancellor Folt and Arts & Sciences Provost Robert Blouin. Check held a sign referencing Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”

“Carol Folt is the moderate MLK warned us about — more devoted to order



University of North Carolina students and teachers protest on campus and in the streets of Chapel Hill on Dec. 3.



than justice,” the sign read.

Check and other students commanded the meeting and read from King’s letter, criticizing the hypocrisy and cowardice of Folt and other university officials.

“You want to further militarize the police to squash us and to brutalize us,” Check told Folt. “You handed me the MLK Award this year, and I want to tell you, you are a disgrace. Never hand out an MLK Award ever again.”

The proposed new facility, which would be completed by 2022, sits near an area where many Black students live and near a Jewish synagogue. Officials admitted they had not considered the potential danger to these communities that might come from placing an object venerated by white supremacists and Confederate sympathizers nearby.

“There seems to be a fundamental failure here to understand the pain, the suffering, the affront, the assault on people

that has been perpetrated by the statue, that has been perpetrated by the actions that the statue sought to justify,” Edwin Fisher, a School of Public Health professor, told the Dec. 7 Raleigh News & Observer. “Unfortunately, it is still being perpetrated by the business-as-usual of the proposal that has been brought forward.”

University representatives, for their part, claim their hands are tied by a 2015 law prohibiting the relocation of public monuments without express approval by the General Assembly.

The Faculty Council, for its part, found Folt’s logic unconvincing and asked that the university reject the plan to rehouse Sam. “We have a desperate need for moral leadership from the top that will have the courage to break an unjust law and say [enough], and take the risks that that involves,” said council member Harry Watson, a professor of Southern history. □

Solidarity at the border

FIRE delegation brings supplies to caravan

continued from page 1

The majority of these young families, who are exercising their right under international law to seek asylum in the United States, come from Honduras, where a U.S.-backed coup in 2009 has led to the collapse of civil society, political repression and widespread violence from criminal and fascist gangs. Clearly, the 13 U.S. military bases currently active in Honduras are not being used to protect the people.

“How much do you think it costs to maintain 13 bases?” Dani asks. “At a fraction of that price, could you not build 13 hospitals? Or 13 universities?”

Resisting obstacles

It’s difficult to determine exactly how many migrants have come through Tijuana in recent months seeking refuge in the United States. As of this weekend, over 2,000 families had applied for asylum. Hundreds more have risked deportation, detention and death by crossing the border without documents. That requires getting around “the Wall” that, contrary to the narrative promoted by the corporate media and racist Trump, has already been built and runs like a deep scar across occupied Mexico.

All told, it’s likely that as many as 10,000 to 15,000 caravanistas have embarked on the harrowing trek from Central America to the U.S.

Asylum seekers have few options once they arrive in Tijuana in hopes of making it across the largest U.S. border checkpoint to San Diego. Immigration authorities on both sides of the border have coordinated a ticket system, wherein families may register their asylum claim in order to be granted a claim number. Then they must wait until that number is called, at which point they are interviewed and the U.S. makes a determination on whether they have a valid claim.

Thousands of families have so far registered and many must wait several months for their number to be called. If they are not at the Tijuana border when their number is called, their registration is voided and they must start the process all over.

If the asylum seekers’ initial claim is accepted, they are allowed to cross into the United States. However, they must either pay a several-thousand-dollar bond or submit to wearing an ankle bracelet so they can be tracked by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

U.S. authorities automatically deny asylum claims to anyone who was previously deported from the U.S. as well as those convicted of certain crimes in their home country. If a person who was previously deported attempts to apply for asylum status with their children, the children will most likely be taken into U.S. custody while the adults are summarily “removed” once again. According to current U.S. law, individuals whose claims are denied will not be sent across the border to Mexico, but back to the home country they are fleeing.

Families are therefore faced with an impossible set of circumstances. They can linger near the Tijuana border, subsisting on charity, or they can turn back further into Mexico to stay at some of the better supplied refugee camps and risk missing their turn for an asylum interview. While the workers in Mexico have been welcoming their Central American neighbors, tensions between migrants and border communities are increasing due to the desperate conditions and the lack of health and sanitary facilities in the encampment.

Tijuana’s Trump-like mayor, Juan Manuel Gastelum, has said the situation has already become a “humanitarian crisis” but refuses to commit public resources to assisting the refugees and migrants. Gastelum, of the National Action Party, has called for the arrest of the caravan organizers and has taken to wearing a red baseball cap that reads “Make Tijuana Great Again,” mirroring Trump’s 2016 campaign slogan “Make America Great Again.”

Gastelum also popularized a slogan that’s been adopted by far-right, anti-migrant mobs: “Mexico First.”

Heartfelt support

Near the Tijuana border on the morning of Dec. 6, members of the FIRE delegation noticed a taxi cab with the words “Apoyamos Nuestro Alcalde” (“We Support Our Mayor”) painted on the back windshield. It was parked just around the corner from a small encampment of asylum seekers who had decided to wait their turn just a 100 yards or so from the border.

There were 25 to 30 young parents and children, including infants, living in this encampment, and they had all fled violence in Honduras. One of the asylum seekers at this encampment, Julio, explained that they are hungry and low on supplies. When asked if the local government was providing any assistance, he said that the Mexican authorities are simply other arms of the U.S. government and cooperate completely with U.S. Customs and Border Patrol.

In a small plaza immediately outside the border were a dozen or so young Mexican men who had just been deported. Only weeks before, the plaza was crammed with caravanistas and crates of supplies stacked 10 feet high.

The city of Tijuana then ordered the plaza to be vacated in order to build a new, friendly looking and colorful barricade that reads, “Tijuana, Mexico” in big letters. Police cleared the square of migrants and left the supplies on the street for anyone to take.

Hector Lopez and his spouse Lupita were members of the community who had been cooking hot meals for the migrants in the plaza shortly before it was cleared by police; they later scrambled to rescue as many supplies as they could. Lopez is a U.S. military veteran who was deported to Mexico in 2006.

“I was only born here. Ninety-five percent of my life I was in the United States, so I’m an American. I was just born in Mexico,” Hector told the FIRE delegation in the Tijuana office of Border Veterans, while wearing a sweatshirt that reads *Veteranos Por La Paz* (Veterans for Peace).

He went on to say, “If we are good enough to die for the United States, and good enough to kill for the United States, then we are damn well good enough to live in the United States.”

Apart from providing humanitarian aid and much needed supplies, Hector and Lupita Lopez, along with their colleague Robert, another deported veteran, and his spouse work tirelessly to combat the rampant misinformation that is spread to migrants and asylum seekers.



PHOTO: GERRY CONDON

Rosa Maria de la Torre of FIRE and Lupita Cibriano of Border Veterans say “Stop the war on migrants!”

Deported veterans also work with local church groups to assist caravanistas with legal assistance and counseling and psychological services. They’re the sort of first responders who assist both migrants and deportees. In general, they discourage families from attempting to cross the border “illegally,” especially since Trump signed an executive order that makes it more likely parents can be separated from their children for doing so.

But the longer the families wait, the more they require assistance. Many families are being encouraged to find work and settle in Mexico, as their safety and wellbeing is not necessarily secure once they cross into the United States.

“People are not sure when their next meal will be. It’s clear the authorities are purposefully restricting food so families are worn down and more likely to sign their own deportation documents,” Lupita Lopez explains.

For now, these several thousand families are waiting, displaced from their home by U.S. imperialism.

A week of action has been called in solidarity with the migrant caravan, culminating on Dec. 18, International Migrants Day. FIRE and Workers World Party are co-sponsoring events in many cities across the United States.

“The people know they are not alone. The people have faith that you are the only ones who can break down this wall, no one else,” says Alfonso Guerrero Ulloa, a Honduran activist who was granted permanent asylum in Mexico after being targeted by both the U.S. and Honduran governments for his resistance to imperialism.

Ulloa has helped coordinate with the caravanistas and has been instrumental in the supply lines and safety in Barretal.

As he says this, Ulloa is greeted by a young woman who is carrying her 2- month-old daughter.

“Ah!” says Ulloa. “And here is our youngest freedom fighter.”□



A sign at the Tijuana border says: “No obstacle can stop us from reaching our dreams; we are Mexicanos, we are unstoppable.”



The sign at the Honduran refugee and migrant encampment in Tijuana says “Get out, Joh,” a reference to the violently repressive right-wing president put in place in their country by a U.S.-backed coup.

WW PHOTO: TED KELLY

On International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Demands for equality, access and an end to police murder



International
Day of
Persons with
Disabilities
3 DECEMBER

By Workers World New York City Disabilities bureau

New York — For the fourth consecutive year, the People’s Power Assemblies organized a rally to commemorate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities with the support of the People’s MTA, Black Lives Matter, Shut It Down and Workers World Party.

This year’s Dec. 3 protest targeted the recently renovated 23rd Street and 6th Avenue subway station. There the Metropolitan Transit Authority has continued its "tradition" of spending money on cosmetic renovations, such as adding artwork in stations, without spending a penny on accessibility for desperately needed elevators and more "economical" use of wheelchair ramps.

People’s Power Assemblies signs at the rally and posted inside the station included: "This Newly Renovated Station Has No Elevators!" "We Demand All Station Renovations Must Have Elevators!" and "Half of All People Killed By Police Have A Disability, End Racist Police Terror."

Stop murders of disabled people

The PPA distributed a flyer at the protest about the widespread killing of disabled people by police in the U.S.: "Jeremy McDole, a paraplegic man, was murdered by police, Sept. 23, 2015; ... Magdiel Sanchez, killed Sept. 19, 2017, was deaf; Eric Garner, who had medical disabilities, was murdered July 17, 2014; Chinedu Valentine Okobi, 36; Jontell Reedom, 27; Shukri Said, 36; Danny Ray Thomas, 34; Saheed Vassell, 34 all had mental disabilities, and all were executed by the police."

Another country currently violating the rights of disabled people is Israel. According to Mondoweiss.net, Israel supposedly commemorated the Dec. 3 International Day of Persons with Disabilities promising greater “integration” of the country’s 1.5 million disabled citizens. On the same day, Israeli forces shot and killed a disabled Palestinian man, Muhammad Ihbali.

Ihbali’s killing occurred in the northern occupied West Bank city of Tulkarem, near the coffee shop where the

22-year-old worked. Videos published on social media show the unarmed Ihbali walking, his back turned to soldiers, when he suddenly falls down face first onto the pavement. His family, who says he had a mental disability, told the Middle East Eye that he was shot in the head and died shortly after arrival at the hospital. Ihbali was one of at least five Palestinians with mental or physical disabilities killed by Israel over the past year. (tinyurl.com/yanop75t)

Human rights groups have accused Israeli forces of intentionally disabling Palestinian youth by shooting them in the knees. Since April nearly 70 Palestinians in Gaza have had one or both their legs amputated and face little hope of acquiring prosthetic limbs, which are too expensive for the average Gazan family. (tinyurl.com/yataldfp)

In fact, Israel and U.S. cops have something else in common — the use of hollow-point, dum-dum or expanding exploding bullets designed to maim, permanently disable or be a more certain "quick kill."

The New York Police Department has sadistically used these bullets since 1998 in violation of international law in warfare, based on the Declaration of St. Petersburg of 1868 and the Hague Convention of 1899. The Pentagon actually maintains that the use of expanding bullets can be legal when there is a clear "military necessity," and it has sabotaged restrictions on their use in the Geneva Convention protocols.

Black Lives Matter and NYC Shut It Down speakers also alerted the Dec. 3 crowd to the epidemic of U.S. police murders of disabled people of color. Participants held and read aloud signs telling the story of the police killing of Deborah Danner, a 66-year-old African-American woman, fatally shot by NYPD Sgt. Hugh Barry on Oct. 18, 2016, in her home in the Bronx.

According to police sources, Danner was armed first with a pair of scissors and then a baseball bat. But according to court testimony by Brittney Mullings, an emergency medical technician, Danner had put down the scissors and was not holding anything in her hands.

Mullings had arrived first at the apartment and explained to Danner why the cops had come. The police interrupted their conversation, Danner retreated into her bedroom and six police officers followed her. A minute later, Mullings heard two shots.

Danner had a mental illness diagnosis and had written an inspiring 2012 essay about her disability, "Living With Schizophrenia."

‘Accessibility is a right!’

The People’s Power Assemblies flier stated: "Only 20 percent of New York City's MTA transit system is

accessible for riders who are disabled. That's 94 out of 472 subway stops. Just imagine if the MTA closed 378 (80 percent) of its stations, and you are only able to use 94. We demand elevators now."

MTA’s current fare-hike proposal discriminates against disabled people. According to the Nov. 25 NY Daily News, "Commuters with disabilities may get socked with a fare increase that’s twice what able-bodied MetroCard users would pay under an MTA fare hike proposal."

Access-A-Ride fares could rise 25 cents to \$3, a 9.1 percent jump, note accessibility advocates. Most other commuters would see hikes of around 4 percent. The fare hikes “would negatively and disproportionately harm people with disabilities who use New York City’s Access-A-Ride system,” according to a letter from 11 directors of advocacy organizations sent to Gov. Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio.”

Solidarity in protest

At the rally, a wheelchair- user and spokesperson for the People’s MTA described her struggle to get aboard most trains, as the floor of a subway car is often 4 inches higher than the platform. Other speakers explained how a job interviewer may often assume a person who cannot see is incapable of performing basic tasks. But they don’t realize that a visually impaired person could create a flawless resume or dress appropriately when such a person sits right before them.

The Chelsea rush hour crowd responded to the rally with support and solidarity; some even joined and assisted in handing out leaflets and holding signs. One passerby, a teacher of blind people, promised to attend future PPA meetings to help its disability rights work.

Even after 27 years of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the U.S. still refuses to ratify the international U.N. treaty, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This treaty requires signatory countries to promote, protect and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights for people with disabilities, including full equality under the law.

In solidarity, it is the duty of all who claim to advocate for justice, human rights, solidarity with workers on the job and liberation of oppressed peoples to include people with disabilities in their actions and in the great slogan of the labor movement: "An Injury to One Is an Injury to All."□

Deborah Danner warned about police killings of people like her with schizophrenia four years before a New York cop killed her.



PHOTO: DANNERS FACEBOOK

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Development vs. destruction: China and the U.S. PART 2

By Sara Flounders

Escalating U.S. military confrontations, political threats, extreme tariffs and an ominous trade war against China are having global repercussions. These provocations impact the economy and the political alliances of every country, not only China.

The emerging policies of China and the U.S. reveal, in the starkest light, a fundamental difference in the form of each state. The two countries are all too often lumped together as “superpowers.” This hides the underlying struggle.

The current threats against China are an extension of the U.S. military policy called the “Pivot to Asia.” This is an overarching strategy to rebalance and realign U.S. military power to focus on China as a rising power. It was initiated by the Obama administration in 2012 by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

It was recognition that, counter to the hopes of Wall Street, the People’s Republic of China had not collapsed in chaos under the weight of U.S. capitalist investment and political pressure.

Now 400 of the U.S.’s 800 overseas military bases encircle China. The goal, in the terminology of military planners, is to create a “ring of steel,” a “perfect noose” around the large developing country whose very existence is a threat to U.S. global domination.

Aircraft carriers, destroyers, nuclear submarines, jet aircraft, Terminal High Altitude Area Defense missile batteries and satellite surveillance infrastructures are being moved into place across the Pacific region. The U.S. military presence is, by its very nature, an assault on the sovereignty of the host countries.

On existing U.S. bases, building is underway for additional aircraft parking, hangars, fuel storage tanks and ammunition storage facilities.

Chokehold threat

The realignment of U.S. policy is more than a vast construction project. It also involves constant military operations to demonstrate U.S. power in so-called “freedom of navigation” (FON) operations by aggressively sailing warships, overflights by combat aircraft and positioning troops in China’s territorial waters in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait.

U.S. imperialism has long used blatant and open military threats, economic destabilization and strangulation, along with sanctions and blockades, to impose concessions on targeted countries.

Along with high-tech equipment of death and destruction comes the media barrage of demonization and blatant propaganda. This, in turn, is picked up by politicians, think tanks, social media and well-funded nongovernmental organizations.

A great deal of U.S. strategy is focused on how the Pentagon’s vast military capacity can be used to strangle China by cutting off shipping routes for its export industries as well as blockading its access to needed imports of oil and raw materials.

More than 80 percent of the materials essential for China’s economy come into the South China Sea through the Straits of Malacca, a narrow waterway running between Malaysia and Indonesia that also passes the strategic city-state of Singapore. One U.S. aircraft carrier battle group could choke the Straits closed.

Each FON operation by the U.S. Navy in the South China Sea is a threatening reminder to the Chinese government of its vulnerability.

In what was formerly an impoverished, semicolonized country with uneven development, the People’s Republic of China is still in an intense struggle for survival. Its national sovereignty and continuing development are at stake.

In response to U.S. military threats, China is building its military capability and reinforcing islands it claims in the South China Sea.

But it is also doing something that the U.S. government and its corporate rulers are incapable of doing: conducting vast, unfolding construction and economic integration projects that benefit China as well as many other countries. This coordinated loan and aid program is known as the Belt and Road Project.

Cooperation, not competition

Following the U.S. Pivot to Asia, President Xi Jinping announced China’s Belt and Road Initiative in 2013 as a plan to create an infrastructure corridor linking China to Central Asia and Europe through new rail and road networks as well as shipping routes.

Four years later, at the 2017 Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, Xi described its goal: to build “land, maritime, air and cyberspace connectivity” and create “networks of highways, railways and sea ports.”

Securing sea lanes and developing ports and refueling stations will help China’s exporters reach overseas markets and give China uninterrupted access to energy imports. Establishing overland connections, pipelines, warehouses and roads to the Indian Ocean through Pakistan, Thailand and Myanmar will make China less vulnerable to chokepoints.

This global project is an opportunity for China to put to more active use its large but vulnerable currency reserves, most of which are in U.S. Treasury notes.

Some of China’s currency reserves have been used in the creation of the New Development Bank, which provides funds for the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), as well as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the proposed Shanghai Cooperation Organization Bank.

The construction projects and trade being financed are especially helpful in furthering China’s predominance of state-owned industries. This makes China less dependent on precarious Western investments.

The scale and scope of these initiatives are staggering. Estimates vary, but more than \$300 billion has already been spent, and China plans to spend \$1 trillion more in the next decade or so.

The vast network of new road, rail and pipeline projects is also a huge boon to development throughout a vast region.

In addition to infrastructure development, the initiative now includes efforts at “financial integration,” “cooperation in science and technology,” “cultural and academic exchanges” and the establishment of trade “cooperation mechanisms.”

Larger than the World Bank

Many developing countries in Africa, Central Asia and Latin America are embracing conscious planning for connective infrastructure as a way to stimulate economic activity in their most remote and rural areas.

Within a few decades, China has gone from being an aid recipient to a donor, following its emergence as the world’s second-largest economy. In the 1980s and 1990s, China was the world’s largest recipient of World Bank and Asian Development Bank loans. Now it makes more loans to developing countries than does the World Bank.

This undermines the ability of U.S. and European banks to impose onerous conditions on developing countries’ financial dealings. China’s loans and development plans are increasingly more popular, because they have fewer strings attached. This has become a growing source of contention with U.S. imperialism, which has had unrivaled dominance over the world’s financial system since World War II.

The top 10 recipients of official Chinese development aid are eight African countries, Cuba and Cambodia. Meanwhile, according to CIA figures, 92 countries counted China as their largest export or import partner in 2015 — far more than the 57 partnering with the U.S.

A fundamental struggle

What should be the attitude of the progressive and working-class movement to this growing confrontation? Is it just a rivalry between two superpowers? Or is there a more fundamental struggle at the root of the confrontation?

Compared to U.S. imperialism’s vast construction projects — which number hundreds of military bases — China’s response to U.S. military encirclement shows a fundamental difference in the character of the two states.

The U.S. capitalist economy is dominated by “defense” contractors and oil industries. These giant corporations have enjoyed the highest rates of profit for decades. They predominate in the U.S. economy.

Lockheed Martin, Boeing, General Dynamics, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman,

United Technologies and the banks behind them are assured a guaranteed multibillion-dollar subsidy on military contracts. War is profitable. Arms sales and weapon transfers predominate in U.S. foreign aid.

Trump recently signed legislation establishing the International Development Finance Corporation, with \$60 billion in funds to finance investments in developing countries. That amounts to only 6 percent of China’s \$1 trillion development project.

U.S. humanitarian aid for famine, earthquakes and other disasters is a meager 14 percent of total U.S. aid. That includes State Department and Defense Department disaster relief efforts, as well as purchases of U.S. agricultural goods and funding for the International Red Cross.

In fiscal year 2019, the total U.S. government spending for defense is budgeted at \$952 billion. It is clear what U.S. imperialism’s priority is.

The big problem

U.S. aid is based on war. It generates war and military confrontations, which in turn lead to the sale of more U.S. weapons.

U.S. intelligence agencies and military contractors have a material interest in antagonizing relations with neighboring countries, creating terror threats, coups and civil wars. It’s good for business.

Military aid, advisors and trainers further dislocate the economy and the social fabric of receiving countries. Military aid is designed to strengthen the military and police apparatus and all the most repressive institutions of the receiving country. It enriches the most corrupt individuals and ruling families.

The arms industry invests heavily in an army of well-paid lobbyists. Some 700 to 1,000 each year besiege Capitol Hill to keep the subsidized funds and contracts flowing. Most of the lobbyists are well-connected retired military officers and congressional staffers.

The U.S. infrastructure of bridges, roads, housing, sewage and sanitation is collapsing from neglect and lack of funding for the same reason that U.S. aid is not directed to development or planning infrastructure around the world.

In the U.S. 20 million people a year get sick from contaminated water. Life expectancy is declining. But it is more profitable to bomb sanitation, sewage and irrigation structures than it is to build or repair them, whether in the U.S. or around the world.

Aid and development projects are based on maximizing profits for the largest U.S. corporations. As we have noted, these happen to be military corporations, military services and base support services.

In fiscal year 2016, the Pentagon issued \$304 billion in contract awards to corporations. The top five firms grabbed \$100 billion in government funds, or about one-third of all contracts. But military spending is also good for lots of other small capitalists. More than 600,000 private contractors receive funds from the military budget.

Korea: Bases or reunification?

Looking beyond the confrontation with China, U.S. imperialism is facing similar problems in Korea.

After 70 years of a state of war, the U.S. military occupation that divides Korea is now confronted by the enormous enthusiasm shown by Koreans,

Continued on page 9



The geography of China’s One Belt, One Road plan.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Elections bring imperialist interference

By Carlos Lopes Pereira

This article was first published in Avante, the weekly newspaper of the Portuguese Communist Party, on Nov. 29. Its author was formerly a member of the Secretariat of the PAIGC, the party leading the struggle for the liberation of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. Translation by WW Managing Editor John Catalinotto.

Nov. 19 — The U.S. and the European Union see Africa through the prism of colonialism. Statements by EU Commissioner Federica Mogherini are a crude example of insults and attempted interference in the upcoming elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Until they defeat the current version of colonialism, there will be no future for African peoples.

In the Congo, the electoral campaign for the presidential, legislative and provincial elections is set for Dec. 23. The president of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), Corneille Nangaa, expressed hope that the campaign, which lasts until the day before the election, will continue without violence, as it has so far.

More than 40 million Congolese are registered in the electoral rolls. They will choose from among 19 candidates for the presidency of the country, 15,355 candidates for the 500 seats in parliament and 19,640 candidates for the 26 provincial assemblies.

The current president, Joseph Kabila, is not running for office due to constitutional rules that prohibit his candidacy for a third term. The candidate of the Common Front for the Congo, supported by Kabila, is Emmanuel Shadary, former minister of the Interior; he is the favorite.



The Congolese opposition is divided on the presidential election.

The largest party in the opposition is the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), which is running its leader, Felix Tshisekedi. Vital Kamerhe of the Union for the Congolese Nation, who retired from the race, is supporting Tshisekedi. Together they founded the Towards Change Alliance.

Another candidate who retired from the race was Freddy Matungulu of the party Our Congo. Matungulu is supporting Martin Fayulu of the Compromise for Citizenship and Development movement.

Fayulu is also supported by two influential politicians, both of whom have been excluded from the election due to legal problems: Pierre Bemba of the Congo Liberation Movement and Moise Katumbi of the Juntos party.

CENI invited observers from the African Union, the Southern African Development Community and the International Organization of Francophone countries to monitor the electoral process. Unlike what happened in previous elections, observers from the European Union and the U.S. Carter Foundation were not invited to observe this one.

A CENI official told the Jeune Afrique magazine that the Carter Foundation's report on the 2011 elections almost caused a war in the country and that the U.S. organization had shown a lack of professionalism.

As for the European Union, it imposed sanctions against 15 Congolese figures for "human rights abuses" after the end of Kabila's second term in December 2016 and the postponement of elections.

Last week, EU Foreign Minister Federica Mogherini said in Brussels that the future commitment to the new democratically elected Congolese authorities will depend on the "quality of the elections" next month.

"The European Union will closely monitor the conduct of the elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which must be inclusive, transparent, credible and peaceful, and its future engagement in the development of that African country will depend upon this." (eeas.europa.eu, Nov. 22)

It is a clear indication that, regardless of the electoral results — and especially if they are antagonistic to the interests of Washington and Brussels — the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a country with enormous natural resources, will continue to experience pressure, interference and even military aggression from imperialist powers. This has been a constant since the Congo's independence in 1960. □

Development vs. destruction: China and the U.S.

Continued from page 8

north and south, for trade, exchanges and mutual cooperation. Reunification is the aspiration of millions of Koreans. The last right-wing, pro-U.S. government in South Korea was literally overwhelmed by millions of Koreans who demonstrated every week for a year in order to bring it down and move the country in a new direction. An opening to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north was unstoppable.

Despite the meeting between President Trump and President Kim Jong Un of the DPRK, the real response of the U.S. to the people of South Korea has been the construction of the largest overseas U.S. military base in the world — Camp Humphreys, just a few miles from Seoul.

The U.S. Army calls Camp Humphreys "the largest power projection platform in the Pacific." It has the busiest U.S. Army airfield in Asia and a 8,124-foot runway.

More than 650 buildings are being built or renovated across a land area the size of Washington, D.C.

The decade-long expansion project is costing \$10.8 billion. When fully operational, the base is expected to house

45,000 troops, contractors and family members.

How to spend \$1 trillion

While China plans to spend \$1 trillion in the coming years on its Belt and Road development program, the Pentagon's plan is to spend more than \$1 trillion on a whole new generation of nuclear-armed bombers, submarines, and land- and air-based missiles.

The United States has more than 4,000 nuclear warheads in its active stockpile, with 1,700 deployed and ready to be launched at a moment's notice.

That is a danger to the whole planet.

U.S. imperialism can dump surplus agricultural products or equipment, or it can plunk down factories to take advantage of cheap labor if this is profitable for individual corporations. But the capitalist economy in the U.S. is not geared to developing economic competitors.

The United States today is the world's largest capitalist economy, but its predatory practices around the world are suddenly being challenged in a wholly unexpected way. New programs coming from China are radically different from the alliances and aid programs coming

from the U.S.

In a capitalist economy investment money will overwhelmingly go into producing what will earn the highest rate of profit. This is an inexorable pull. The entire system is based on maximizing profit, not on producing what is needed by society.

While it justifies interventions and sanctions with claims of counterterrorism or just being at odds with the West, the U.S. ruling class will find it harder to impose its will. Because there is now a clear alternative.

State-owned enterprises

China has 150,000 state-owned enterprises, of which 50,000, or one third, are owned by the central government; the remainder are owned by local and state governments. They account for 30 to 40 percent of the gross domestic product, and that is growing.

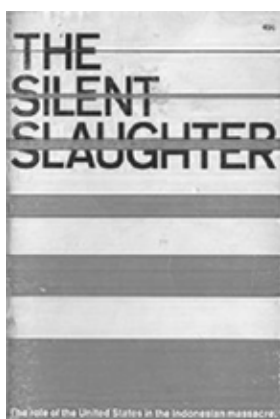
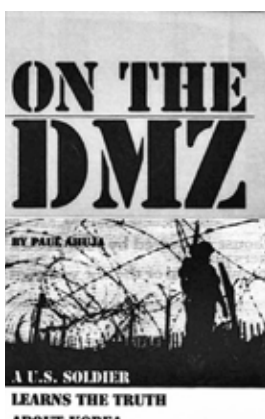
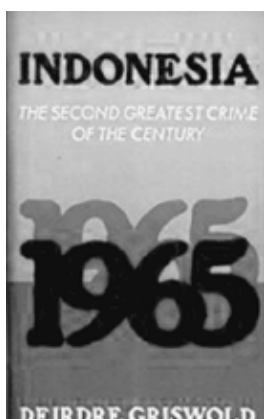
Twelve of the largest Chinese firms listed on the Fortune 500 are state-owned industries. ("Top Ranks of China's Fortune 500 Still Dominated by State-Owned Enterprises," chinabankingnews.com, Aug. 1, 2017)

Nevertheless, it is very obvious that

the capitalist market has made enormous inroads into China. China has a mixed economy, which the government calls "market socialism." But central planning has been maintained under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Based on this reality, such leadership is able to make far more rational and planned decisions. The state is able to consciously subsidize the state sector and plan development. This has dramatically improved the lives of hundreds of millions of working people.

China's foreign loans and infrastructure development are not mainly based on revolutionary solidarity, although Cuba is the largest recipient of Chinese aid. For the most part, economic decisions are pragmatic, spurred by the need to break out of the hostile imperialist encirclement and imposed isolation.

Nevertheless, the development of roads, industries, ports, telecommunications, sanitation and health as interconnected infrastructure across wide regions will enlarge and strengthen the working class both in China and the other countries. This will also break down competition and aid cooperation. □



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Look for the motive

Oil!

A Chinese business woman sits in a Canadian jail cell, arrested at the behest of the U.S. government. It's all about oil.

The stock market gyrates up and down on news about Saudi Arabia and OPEC. It's all about oil.

Both environmentalists and working people tear their hair out as glaciers melt and coral reefs die. It's all about oil.

Since opening their first well in Titusville, Pa., in 1859, the Rockefellers have built a dynasty based on oil. It has spawned world-straddling banks like Chase Manhattan and Citigroup. The Rockefellers have picked every U.S. secretary of state for a century, right up to Rex Tillerson, CEO of Exxon/Mobil, in 2017.

The crimes committed in the struggle for control over oil and its profits could fill a library.

The Black residents of oil-rich Tulsa, Okla., were burned out of their homes in a murderous "race riot" in 1921 by whites who wanted to grab this precious resource.

The electric trolleys in Buffalo, N.Y., that ran on cheap, clean Niagara Falls energy were mothballed in the 1940s and

their tracks ripped up to make way for gas-guzzling, polluting buses and cars. And that happened all over the country.

The Indigenous peoples of the Dakotas braved bone-chilling weather and shotgun-wielding deputies in 2016-17, trying to stop an oil pipeline from polluting their rivers and land.

World wars have been fought over oil. So have hundreds of regional battles that scorched the earth and left millions dead.

Modern capitalism is built upon oil. It's still inextricably linked to oil, and despite all the dire warnings that use of fossil fuels is destroying the planet, capitalism will do anything to get its next gush of profits.

Iran and Meng Wangzhou

Why has the U.S. government gone to the extraordinary lengths of demanding that Canada arrest and hand over Meng Wangzhou, a top executive at Huawei Technologies Co.? Because it claims she found ways to get around U.S. sanctions on Iran — which she denies.

But what gives Washington the right to impose sanctions on Iran in the first place, and then expect everyone in the world to abide by them?

Iran used to be a cash cow for U.S. oil companies and banks. In 1953, the U.S. CIA overthrew a progressive government in Iran that had nationalized the oil industry there. The CIA then installed the Shah to head a puppet regime that brought the U.S. oil billionaires back in control. They stole massive profits from Iran to enrich their already enormous fortunes.

But a militant, popular uprising in 1979 overthrew the Shah and broke U.S. control over Iran's oil. U.S. sanctions on Iran are just another form of economic warfare against the Iranian people for refusing to accept U.S. domination.

Oil market ups and downs

The price of oil has been driving many political struggles in the world. Just a few months ago, analysts were predicting oil could go to \$100 a barrel. This was welcome news to U.S. producers of shale oil, which costs about \$50 a barrel to extract — much more than oil pumped from wells. But the analysts were wrong. Oil prices began sinking, and just a week ago the same analysts were talking about prices going as low as \$50 per barrel — which could mean little or no profits for U.S. shale oil companies.

Oil prices reflect both supply and demand. The more oil produced, the lower the price. The higher the demand, the higher the price. But demand has been slowing. Until last week, supply was high. Both these factors contributed to lower prices. The stock market got wobbly and started to tank.

The big question was: What would Saudi Arabia do?

As head of OPEC, and one of the three largest suppliers of oil in the world, it was pressured by the U.S. to keep the price of oil high. (Trump, however, claims he wants low oil prices. It's a demagogic move to pacify his political base.)

The U.S. media have said little about Saudi Arabia's vicious war against the small country of Yemen that has brought a million people to the brink of starvation. But then the media suddenly got really indignant over the Saudis' murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

The Saudis got the message. They announced that OPEC would cut its oil production. The next day the stock markets bounced back as oil prices rose.

The lesson in all this?

Look for the profit motive. All the rest is a coverup for capitalism. □

Yellow Vests, 'Act IV'

Order imposed in Macron-land

By Rémy Herrera
Paris

Dec. 9 — The French government deployed 89,000 law enforcement personnel throughout France to confront "Act IV" of the national mobilization of the "Yellow Vests" on Saturday, Dec. 8. There were some 8,000 police officers and gendarmes in Paris alone, equipped with armored personnel carriers to protect "government buildings" and to break down street barricades. This is more than what was put in place during the revolutionary events of May 1968 when student rebellions sparked a general strike of 10 million workers.

Almost all the country's squadrons of gendarmes (military personnel responsible for police missions) and dozens of CRS companies (special riot police forces), supported by security and intervention brigades of the Police Prefectures (local police), were present, while most of the remaining personnel on leave were recalled to service, or "de-neutralized."

The repressive strategy, which was visibly ineffective during the confrontations on previous Saturdays, had been modified. It was no longer a question for these cops remaining stationary but of being mobile to "get in contact" with the demonstrators and "apprehend the thugs (called casseurs or breakers)."

Over the past week, all this had been organized to reflect the government's rhetoric, which dramatized the events and the corporate media's portrayal of violence in order to increase tension and fear. The goal was to discourage Yellow Vests from demonstrating both in the capital, Paris, and anywhere else in France.

For several days, the police, acting like an athletic team, were sent on practice missions to warm up on "training grounds" — the streets around high schools — before their Dec. 8 "match."



They made use of the opportunity to hit students with all their force, indiscriminately. On Thursday evening, Dec. 6, no fewer than 760 adolescents aged 12 to 18 were arrested throughout the country.

In Mantes-la-Jolie, a working-class town in the Paris suburbs known for its impoverished slums, more than 150 young people were filmed near their school, where zealous CRS cops forced them to kneel, hands on their heads, in tears. The cops were clearly proud of their haul. Dozens of the youth — almost all traumatized minors — had to spend the night of Dec. 6-7 in police custody, crammed into cells.

A week ago, the deputies of the presidential party, La République En Marche, who have a majority in the National Assembly, passed a law prohibiting children from being spanked. This means that thanks to President Emmanuel Macron, parents no longer need to slap their rebellious offspring — the police do it harder! We already knew that the kids of this "France that wins" (France won the soccer world cup, but what else?) have no future. We now know that their present is to be clubbed!

On Dec. 6, when the government announced a moratorium on the fuel tax increase and then canceled it (as if that

were enough to stop the struggle!), the main labor union leaders were called on to save the Republic by a completely lost and still silent President Macron.

What did our union leaders, including those of the CGT, do? In a joint statement, they welcomed the government's "actions" in the direction of "social dialogue"! They condemned the violent forms of demands made by the Yellow Vests — without a single word about police violence.

And for those who called for a strike by truck drivers starting on Dec. 9 (the CGT and FO unions), they canceled the strike notice and abandoned the decision to set up blockades! The reason? Prime Minister Édouard Philippe is said to have "given satisfaction by exempting the payment of overtime from social security contributions." Impossible to believe!

At the very moment when the massive mobilization of the people, for the first time, was able to stop the government's social war machine, and when nearly 80 percent of the French people support the Yellow Vest revolt — and when a general strike of workers is more than ever necessary to amplify and especially organize the movement — the union leaders are holding back the struggles!

Rank-and-file unionists angry

Immediately, subsections of the CGT federation of unionists, first and foremost in the chemical industry, grew angry and called on their members to mobilize. This had the effect of pushing back their top leadership, who finally issued a new communiqué to try to make the members forget the leaders' total confusion and their reformist abdication. At the same time they still distanced themselves from the Yellow Vests.

What "reforms" can be expected from a regime that is, at its last gasp, directing a capitalist system in systemic crisis? All that can be expected is the continued destruction of social gains and the lies of a discredited government.

On Dec. 8, police had already arrested 200 people throughout the country by 7 a.m. By 11 p.m., there were 1,939 arrests — including 1,709 people in police custody and 278 referred to the prosecutor's office.

Many people were arrested in train stations or other public places during the approximately 5,000 police checks carried out even **before** the mobilization began. Dozens of Parisian metro stations were closed, with scores of streets in the

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France – Yellow Vests

High school students at the front

By Rémy Herrera
Paris, France

Dec. 6 — A scene of ordinary life in France, in these times of conflict: On Thursday, Dec. 6, late morning, in front of the gates of a secondary school in a very peaceful town in the Paris suburbs, about 100 students aged 15-17 are strolling from their high school to go to lunch, chatting, joking and relieved that the half-day classes are over.

Strange: In front of the school buildings, a group of police block access to the street that these young people usually take to get home. So without any fuss, the students take another street.

Then a troop of about 20 riot cops (CRS), equipped with helmets, breastplates and shields, suddenly appears and charges. Faced with bewildered and terrified teenagers, the CRS stop and line up; three of them step forward and arm their tear gas cannons. A youth screams: “Let’s get out of here, they’re going to shoot! They’re going to shoot!”

They shot. Those students who do not remain frozen in shocked terror flee with all their strength; the others suddenly find themselves assaulted, brutally beaten, insulted. One of them, who fell to the ground, was beaten by two CRSs who yelled at him: “Dirty bastard!”; a girl, beaten, her mouth bloody, hears another CRS screaming: “Little shit!”

Under the assault by what are called, even in cases like this one, “peacekeepers,” young people manage to escape, running into the school to take refuge or rushing into adjacent alleys.

What had these youths done? Nothing. They had done absolutely nothing. They were leaving school, going home, and the CRS brutalized them. For no reason.

Incomprehensible. Unacceptable. Worrisome. There have been dozens and dozens of events like this in

France in the last few days. In this France that President Emmanuel Macron has “reformed” with blows from police batons.

The day before this assault, Dec. 5, several high school students had been seriously injured by Flash-Balls fired by cops. One, 16 years old, hit in the forehead, in the Pays de la Loire region in western France; the other, same age, hit in the face, in Ile-de-France, the region that includes Paris.

Videos of these events were immediately posted on social networks. In the two schools, general assemblies of teachers voted their solidarity with their students and called for the general closing of high schools.

That day more than 200 high schools were blockaded throughout the country, and many others were disrupted. The mobilization of “Yellow Vests” is spreading like oil on water, and the protest has now reached the world of students.

High school unions protest ‘reform’

At the call of high school unions, or sometimes more spontaneously, many young people are demonstrating against the neoliberal reform of the national education system. This “reform” is aimed at increasing school fees and tightening university entrance selection in order to further exclude children from low-income families.

The government’s response: Send in the troops and have them fire tear gas canisters and Flash-Balls — at random or as soon as one garbage can burns.

Throughout the country, more than 150 teenagers were arrested on Dec. 5 alone. In the most working-class town in the Paris region, Seine-Saint-Denis, anger and protests are already spreading to middle schools for children aged 11-14.

On the same day students approved and carried out



A video recording went viral that showed police brutality to high school students during the recent Yellow Vest protests in France.

the occupation of several sites at the Sorbonne (on the Tolbiac campus at Paris I, Paris III Censier). So the student protest movement that was broken up last April 20 when the CRS evacuated the “Free Commune of Tolbiac” by force could start all over again.

Young people are already frightened by the risks of unemployment, precariousness, and multiple and continuous socioeconomic difficulties. One thing is very clear: A regime that mistreats its youth by brutalizing them has no future. It is condemned.

Before change happens, however, the regime will use the means of violence (which it calls “legitimate”) at its disposal to try to maintain its own order — an evil, cynical and ultimately untenable order. □

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.

Order imposed in Macron-land

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capital blocked by armed CRS. The regime called this “preventive measures.”

But, above all, it amounts to terrorizing the population and de facto banning Yellow Vests from demonstrating in peace on the Champs-Élysées — as the Ministry of the Interior itself had explicitly authorized. The question arises: Are public freedoms still respected in France? Are the rights to express one’s opinion freely and to demonstrate in peace (which are constitutional rights here) still guaranteed in President Macron’s “democracy”?

Is this how the government plans to calm down an angry people, who are rightfully crying out against social injustice? By bombarding them with (15,000!) tear gas grenades and tons of cold water to keep them quiet? By having them charged by brigades of dog handlers, mounted policemen, armored vehicles driven by mobile cops, as was the case this Dec. 8 in Paris?

Enthused and excited by the outstanding performance of the police, the “journalists” from 24-hour news channels — kept on a leash by big money and reassured by the presence of uniformed officers and security experts to comment on the events of the long-awaited day when the Yellow Vests were to be crushed — exclaimed: “How beautiful the police are!” “Everything is going well in France today.” “Finally a recovery in hand!” They insisted that order must have prevailed.

Media propaganda told us that order reigned — against a backdrop of street fires and violent arrests. However, in the late evening, Paris City Hall issued a catastrophic statement, indicating: “The damage was much greater than on Saturday, Dec. 1” (the last Yellow Vest protest).

In many provincial cities, demonstrations went further than in the capital. In Bordeaux, Lyon, Toulouse, Saint-Étienne, Nantes, Marseille, etc. — “We had never seen such things before” — there were countless clashes with the police, street barricades, street furniture fires, raids on bank branches, window breaking and looting of shops, all under the recurring slogan, which seemed unifying, of “Macron resign!”

Meanwhile, at hospitals, doctors reported treating “war wounds.” □

Macron offers crumbs to satisfy Yellow Vest rage

By G. Dunkel

Give a little, admit a few errors of tone, but maintain a policy of imposing austerity to make France “lean and mean” — that was the essence of French President Emmanuel Macron’s discourse to a country in turmoil on Dec. 10.

France has gone through a month of intense political struggle against the very essence of Macron’s policies. These have been challenged by hundreds of thousands of people all throughout the country. They have come out into the streets to confront the cops in thousands of demonstrations. They have turned their anger into rage.

The Yellow Vests leading the protests are demanding

a real increase in their income. Macron’s concession is hardly that. The crumbs offered are only an increase of 100 euros (around \$115) in the monthly minimum wage (currently just below 1,500 euros) beginning in January; not taxing overtime pay and year-end bonuses; and excusing households with an income of less than 2,000 euros (around \$2,270) a month from paying a hike in social security taxes.

Clearly, Macron is going to keep the huge tax cuts for the rich, worth billions of euros to the ruling class. He’s going to try to keep his austerity program in place, squeezing money out of the poor and working class — the same program that roused the rage of the Yellow Vests in the first place. □



Paris, Nov. 24.



WW PHOTO: TED KELLY

La frontera en Tijuana, Mexico, 6 de diciembre.

1ª PARTE

Un intercambio de opiniones sobre

‘¿Es el Trumpismo un fenómeno temporal?’

Por Fred Goldstein

La siguiente es la primera parte de un intercambio entre Fred Goldstein y Manuel Raposo, un comunista portugués de izquierda y editor de la revista web Mudar de Vida (jornalmudardevida.net).

Fred Goldstein: Su pregunta va al corazón de un tema muy importante. ¿Es la presidencia de Donald Trump un fenómeno temporal, o su régimen es un síntoma de una enfermedad más profunda en el organismo del imperialismo? ¿Volverán las cosas a lo “normal” una vez que se haya ido?

He estado pensando mucho en esta misma pregunta. También he estado tratando de llegar a un método para responderlo.

Primero, puse la victoria de Trump en el contexto del aumento de la reacción política en Europa y su énfasis decididamente antiinmigrante y racista, similar al de Trump.

No puede ser una coincidencia que la AfD (Alternativa para Alemania) en Alemania, el Partido de la Libertad en Austria, el régimen de Viktor Orbán en Hungría, el gobierno de derecha en Polonia, las fuerzas de Brexit en Bretaña, la nueva coalición de derecha en Italia y la Agrupación Nacional (anteriormente Frente Nacional) en Francia estén en aumento al mismo tiempo. También vemos los avances recientes del antiinmigrante Partido Demócrata de Suecia, el ascenso de la Golden Dawn en Grecia (una versión avanzada de las fuerzas similares a Hitler) y otras manifestaciones políticas de derecha en Europa.

En segundo lugar, creo que la crisis general del prolongado estancamiento capitalista ha provocado que sectores de la clase dominante en ambos lados del Atlántico se muevan hacia la adopción de una opción fuertemente reaccionaria: usarán el “dividir y conquistar” porque no ven una salida de su propia crisis, es decir, no ven un crecimiento renovado significativo ni una prosperidad capitalista revivida en el futuro. Todos están luchando para mantenerse a flote.

Esto es cierto para las secciones de la clase dominante de Estados Unidos que se han basado en recortes de impuestos, la desregulación de las protecciones ambientales y la especulación del mercado de valores para reforzar sus ganancias. Esta clase está actuando como si su situación fuera precaria y sus miembros anticipan un colapso económico.

Tercero, las clases trabajadoras en todos los países europeos, como las/os trabajadoras y las/os oprimidos en los Estados Unidos, han sido sometidas al trauma de la austeridad desde el principio, ANTES de que la crisis migratoria golpeará a Europa con toda su fuerza.

En los Estados Unidos no hay una gran afluencia de inmigrantes. De hecho, ahora hay una salida neta de migrantes en la frontera sur militarizada. Creo que

los sectores desmoralizados y alienados de la pequeña burguesía y la clase trabajadora estaban predispuestos a cambiarse a la derecha después de que el Partido Demócrata en los Estados Unidos y la socialdemocracia europea no acudieran en su ayuda durante la crisis económica de 2008, ANTES de la crisis migratoria.

El fracaso de la socialdemocracia y de los partidos comunistas históricos para adoptar un enfoque agresivo y clasista para luchar contra la austeridad dejó a las masas abiertas a un llamado antiinmigrante de derecha.

Cuarto, el ala derecha de las clases dominantes, que se está haciendo más fuerte y más rica, está tentada a avivar

construyó una democracia burguesa sobre la base de haberse establecido como una potencia mundial durante y después de la Primera Guerra Mundial y haber tomado gran parte de los imperios británico y francés de las cenizas de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Los patronos alcanzaron la supremacía imperialista mundial. Sobre esa base pudieron hacer concesiones.

No se puede revivir la prosperidad imperialista

Mientras Wall Street y el Pentágono siguen siendo la potencia imperialista dominante, no pueden revivir la prosperidad imperialista, que es la base



Mexicanas/os salieron a las calles para protestar contra Trump en febrero de 2017.

las llamas del racismo antiinmigrante o se está sintiendo más cómoda con él. Protestan levemente contra las medidas antiinmigrantes más extremas, pero al final los patronos solo están realmente preocupados por la disponibilidad de mano de obra y el impacto de la política de inmigración en sus relaciones internacionales.

Finalmente, el capitalismo en un callejón sin salida excluye la posibilidad de revivir la prosperidad capitalista. Y la democracia capitalista depende de la prosperidad imperialista.

Los patronos en los países imperialistas ricos pudieron permitirse una forma más desarrollada de democracia capitalista en el período posterior a la Segunda Guerra Mundial, es decir, comprar a las/os trabajadores descontentos con migajas.

Los imperialistas británicos pudieron tener su “democracia” cuando tenían un imperio mundial. Una vez que se perdió el imperio, la clase obrera británica fue sometida a la austeridad thatcherista y ahora tienen a cargo a las fuerzas del Brexit.

Los imperialistas franceses tenían sus repúblicas basadas en tener un imperio menor en el sudeste asiático, África y el Caribe. Ahora tienen la creciente orientación derechista del presidente Emmanuel Macron, con el Partido Agrupación Nacional vigilando encima de la llamada burguesía “moderada”.

Y el imperialismo estadounidense

económica de la democracia capitalista. Este es el punto fundamental sobre el futuro después de Trump. La democracia capitalista requiere de la prosperidad imperialista para financiarla. La democracia capitalista en su sentido más vigoroso debe ser financiada por concesiones. Esto es verdad no sólo en los países oprimidos, sino también en los grandes países capitalistas.

El régimen de Trump puede ser una forma distorsionada de reacción capitalista, peculiarmente moldeada por el estilo y la personalidad de Trump. Pero cualesquiera que sean las peculiaridades del régimen de Trump, y hay muchas, la reacción subyacente que ha avivado y consolidado no desaparecerá en el corto plazo.

La reacción puede ser más lenta si la clase dominante lo elimina. Puede haber un respiro temporal si lo expulsan o lo derrotan en las urnas. Pero a largo plazo, el capitalismo se encuentra en una etapa de declive, estancamiento y austeridad.

Lo único que puede hacer retroceder la reacción en los Estados Unidos es el despertar del proletariado y las/os oprimidos. Nadie sabe cuándo sucederá esto o cómo se desarrollará. Pero por otro lado, nadie sabía que las tremendas huelgas de las/os maestras se desencadenarían. Estas huelgas se extendieron como un incendio forestal desde West Virginia a Kentucky, a Oklahoma, a Arizona, a Colorado, a Carolina del Norte.

Estas huelgas sorprendieron a todos (la clase dominante, la burocracia laboral, el establecimiento educativo) y las/os trabajadoras de la educación, que se organizaron a pesar de la resistencia del gobierno y de los líderes sindicales. Todas las huelgas eran técnicamente ilegales, pero la clase dominante decidió sabiamente no hacer cumplir la ley. Esto mostró en un microcosmos de lo que es capaz la clase trabajadora cuando es empujada contra la pared.

La lucha de las/os maestras ha cesado por ahora. Pero el resentimiento, la pobreza y la privación que la impulsaron a romper los límites de la legalidad burguesa y la sumisión convencional a los altos mandos se están extendiendo hacia abajo.

El marxismo no tiene nada en común con el determinismo económico. Reconoce que muchos factores afectan los resultados políticos. Líderes, partidos, instituciones financieras, tradiciones históricas y culturales, desastres naturales, etc., todos deben ser tomados en consideración.

Sin embargo, a largo plazo, el marxismo considera el factor económico como el factor dominante. La crisis de la austeridad capitalista está determinando el crecimiento de la reacción política, y esta reacción debe ser combatida con uñas y dientes por las/os trabajadoras y las/os oprimidos. La historia se hace por el inevitable despertar de las masas.

Esta es la esperanza de cambiar las cosas. □

El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida Por Fred Goldstein

La tesis de este libro es que la crisis económica, que se inició en agosto de 2007, marcó un punto de inflexión en la historia del capitalismo. El autor sostiene que el sistema no se recuperará, no volverá al ciclo capitalista normal de auge y caída. Goldstein utiliza las leyes de la acumulación capitalista de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué el capitalismo global ha llegado finalmente a un punto de inflexión. El continuo estancamiento y el desempleo generalizado provocarán inevitablemente un resurgimiento de la lucha de clases.

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