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.

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

In Philadelphia, activities marking this day were sched-
uled during the week before the anniversary. Things kicked off on Dec. 3 with over 750 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 any time. They have established a telephone response net-
work that includes an online pledge to turn out for Mumia at MobilizationsMumia.com.

This week the court hearing on Mumia’s appeal was a demonstration that will be held in Philadelphia at 4-6 p.m. A regional action will start at noon the fol-
looming 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, sev-
eral demonstrators held a brief “Honk for Mumia” action at 35th 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 Center in the city’s Germantown section included updates on the legal case and strategies for building the emergency response network. A forum highlighted 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 del-
egation 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 coalition 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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sion and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved by capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else—unless they can pay for it. Workers work an average of 8.6 more hours per week than those in Asian countries, yet are making less money and with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans

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Join us in the fight for socialism!

By Betsy Piette

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Protest defends professor Hill, Palestine

By Betsy Piette

Chanting "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," over 100 activists took to north Philadelphia streets around Temple University’s Bell Tower 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 activist and author Susan Abulhawa kicked off the rally at Temple’s Bell Tower by speaking about millenium-long history of the Indigenous Palestinian population in the region now known as Israel. In November, Israeli officials announced plans to endorse 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

By Monica Moorehead

Cyntoia Brown, a 30-year-old African-American woman, has been imprisoned since the age of 16 for first-degree murderer 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 a 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 ‘cutthroat.’ After days of being repeatedly drugged and raped by different men, you were purchased and imprisoned by a man who you were forced to serve 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 campaign, and the number continues to grow. (For more information, go to “Free Cyntoia Brown” on Facebook and #FreeCyntoiaBrown 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 domest- 16, Inset, Cyntoia Brown today. Below, Lena Baker and Mariissa Alexander.

ic worker, who was the first woman executed in Georgia by electrocution in 1945 at age 45.

There was the case of Joann Little, a Black woman who killed her jailer with an icepick as retaliation for stop his ongoing domestic abuse, she pressed 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 abuser and to take control of her freedom, she will be 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

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 in as yet unnamed locations.

GM CEO Mary Barra, who earned $22 million last year, chose her words care- fully 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: “The 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 dou- blespeak. 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 members.” (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 acknowl- edge the attack on Canadian GM workers.

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

Wealthy companies routinely violate Wealthy companies routinely violate the right to organize unions, environmental rights in New York City or a celebration of rights in New York City or a celebration of workers and all oppressed people.

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We cover all major workers and all oppressed people.
By John Steffen
New York City

Against the odds, New York University students, in a campus coalition with faculty and graduate workers, successfully pushed a Boycott, Divest and Sanction (BDS) 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 demand for the university to divest and divest all financial ties with companies that profit from Israeli occupation of Palestine. The night of Dec. 3, at a hundred protests from the outraged UNC community. The night of Dec. 3, at a hundred protests from the outraged UNC community.

New York City

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 reerect Silent Sam. Last August a coalition of students, community members and activists toppled the statue to protest the University of North Carolina's proposal 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 “table” to build support for BDS resolution, Nov. 6.

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 administrators in the last several years.

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.

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

"Letter from Birmingham Jail."
Solidarity at the border

FIRE delegation brings supplies to caravan

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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 groups. Clearly, the 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 10,000 families had applied for asylum. Hundreds more have risked deportation, detention and death by crossing the border on foot. 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 United States.

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 by U.S. authorities automatically deny asylum claims to anyone who was previously deported from the U.S. 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 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, trying to assist caravanistas with legal assistance and counseling. They can pursue their right under international law to seek asylum in Mexico after being targeted by both the U.S. and Honduran governments for their resistance to U.S. imperialism.

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

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 taco cab with the words “Apooyamos Nuestro Alcaldé” (“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 colorfull 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 misinformaton that is spread to migrants and asylum seekers.

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 already 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.”
On International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Demands for equality, access and an end to police murder

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; Chinedu Valentine by police, Sept. 23, 2015; ... Magdiel Sanchez, killed Sept. 20, 2014.”

“Police Terror.”

Station Renovations Must Have Elevators!” and “Half of All People Killed By Police Have A Disability, End Racist Police Terror.”

Deborah Danner warned about police killings of people like her

“Accessibility is a right!”

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A great deal of U.S. strategy is focused on U.S. imperialism has long used blablabeautiful defense, by its very nature, an assault on the hope of Wall Street, the People's Republic of China, and the U.S. reveals, in the starkest light, a funnything whose very existence is a threat to U.S. prosperity. Its national sovereignty and continuing development are at stake. China seeks to create an "infrastructure corridor" linking China to Central Asia and Europe through rail and road networks as well as shipping routes. From the 1980s to 2015— 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 development, the People's Republic of China's development plans are increasingly more popular, because they have fewer strings attached. This has become a growing source of content 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, China and Cambodia. Meanwhile, according to CIA figures, 92 countries have received U.S. military aid as their largest export or import partner in 2015— far more than the 57 partnering with the U.S. China, the U.S. is more dependent on precarious Western imports. 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. 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 financing are especially helpful for the BRICS countries, creating terror threats, coups and civil wars. It's good for business. China's aid is based on war. It generates email, fear 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 invest- ment in developing countries. That amounts to only 6 percent of China's $1 trillion development project. U.S. humanitarian aid for famine, earthquakes and floods is less than $8 billion a year, or a measurer 14 percent of total U.S. aid. That includes State Department and Defense Department disaster relief efforts, as well as $8 billion in U.S. aid for the International Roads and funding for the International Red Cross. In fiscal year 2019, the total U.S. gov- ernment spending for defense is budgeted at $825 billion. It is clear what U.S. imperialism's priority is. The emerging policies of China and the U.S. 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. The U.S. infrastructure of bridges, roads, housing, sewage and sanitation is collapsing from neglect and lack of fund- ing. The U.S. infrastructure is not directed to development or planning infrastructure around the world. In the U.S. 20 million people a year besiege Capitol Hill to keep the subsidized funds and contracts flowing. Most of the lobbyists are well-connected retired military officers and professional contractors. The U.S. military aid, advisors and trainers further dislocate the economy and the social fabric of receiving countries. Military aid is designed to strengthen the military in countries that are the most repres- sive 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 professional contractors. The U.S. infrastructure of bridges, roads, housing, sewage and sanitation is collapsing from neglect and lack of fund- ing. The U.S. infrastructure is not directed to development or planning infrastructure around the world. In the U.S. 20 million people a year besiege Capitol Hill to keep the subsidized funds and contracts flowing. 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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 PACIGT, 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 Africans.

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, 15,335 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 opposition. The largest party in the opposition is the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), which is running its leader, Félix Tshisekedi. Vital Kamerhe of the Union for the Congolese Nation, who retired from the race, is supporting Tshisekedi. Together they founded the Tshisekedi Alliance.

Another candidate who retired from the race was Freddy Matungulu of the party Our Congo. Matungulu is supporting Martin Fayulu of the Promise 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 Fusions 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 democritically 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.” (eaux.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.

In the face of the Chinese government’s 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 base overseas 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, plus 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 ideology 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. 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 hard 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.


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 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.

Available for FREE at workers.org/books
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 know that at last it’s time to put oil on ice. But the story of why it’s been a fossil fuel, and the story of where it has gone, is the story of how corporate power has been able to control over oil and its profits could 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 place, and then expect everyone in the world to abide by them? Look for the profit motive. All the rest is a coverup for capitalism.

OPEC oversaw 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.

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 squads 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 in 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 “appeasement thugs (called casseurs or breakers).”

Over the past week, all this had been organized to reflect the government’s rhetoric that dramatized the events and the corporate media’s portrayal of violence in order to increase tension and fear. The new “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 Montélu-Jolies, 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 children to make them do what parents want. It’s 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 doubted!

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 Edouard 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 since the beginning of the 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 communication 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 11 p.m., there were 1,099 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
France – Yellow Vests

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. Out 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 recent months and years. Yet how often do these callous attacks on young people – from the police – occur?

By Rémy Herrera
Paris, France

Order imposed in Macron-land

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-Elysées — as the Ministry of the Interior itself had explicitly authorized. The question arises: Are public freedoms still respected in France? Are the attempts 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 assessment: “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-Denis, Nantes, 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.”

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

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 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.
La siguiente es la primera parte de un intercambio entre Fred Goldstein y Mundo Obrero, sobre los avances recientes del antiinmigrante en los Estados Unidos, que fue publicado en el periódico de izquierda y editor de la revista web Mudar de Vida ( jornalmundardevida.net).

**Por Fred Goldstein**

La situación en el sistema de inmigración en los Estados Unidos es encuadrada en el marco general de la crisis. 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 medidas antiinmigrantes más extremas, pero al final los patronos sólo 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 será derrotado en las elecciones de 2016. El marxismo no es una coincidencia, sino también en los grandes países capitalistas.

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**Mundo Obrero**

En segundo lugar, creo que la crisis general de inmigración en sus relaciones internacionales. Los imperialistas franceses tenían sus órganos de inmigración que se inició en agosto de 2007, marcó un punto de caída. Goldstein utiliza las leyes de la acumulación capitalista para financiarla. La democracia capitalista depende de la prosperidad imperialista. El régimen de Trump puede ser una forma distorsionada de ‘derrotan en las urnas. Pero a largo plazo, el marxismo considera el factor económico como el factor dominante. La crisis de la austeridad capitalista con el determinismo económico.

La reacción puede ser más lenta si la reacción subyacente que ha avivado y consolidado no desaparecerá en el corto plazo. Sin embargo, a largo plazo, el marxismo considera el factor económico como el factor dominante. La crisis de la austeridad capitalista con el determinismo económico.

En los Estados Unidos no hay una gran afluencia de inmigrantes. De hecho, ahora hay una salida neta de inmigrantes de la frontera sur militarizada. Creo que ahora hay una salida neta de migrantes en una gran afluencia de inmigrantes. De hecho, la reacción puede ser más lenta si la reacción subyacente que ha avivado y consolidado no desaparecerá en el corto plazo. Sin embargo, a largo plazo, el marxismo considera el factor económico como el factor dominante. La crisis de la austeridad capitalista con el determinismo económico.