

World outrage grows to

Stop U.S. coup

against Venezuela!

By Sam Ordóñez

Bulletin, Jan. 29 — Yesterday the U.S. government announced new sanctions against PDVSA, Venezuela's nationalized oil company. These sanctions freeze Venezuela's funds. They are intended to force a transfer of control of the company to the right-wing opposition forces, led by Juan Guaidó. In the face of this aggression, and continued U.S. military threats, the peoples of the world are showing their support for the Bolivarian government and its President Nicolás Maduro. In the U.S., anti-imperialist forces and all progressive people are calling on the people to take to the streets to fight to prevent further U.S. intervention in Venezuela and to end the imperialist war threat.

Jan. 27 — After three days of mass demonstrations in defense of the government of Nicolás Maduro and the Bolivarian Revolution, Jan. 26 looked like a normal Saturday in Caracas. With these demonstrations, the Venezuelan people send a clear message of unity in the face of a coup attempt planned and directed from Washington, D.C.

Meanwhile, the geopolitical dimension of the coup attempt continued its course, as a special session of the U.N. Security Council took up Venezuela. Once again, the imperialist block tried to pass a resolution in an international body to recognize the coup government led by the lackey Juan Guaidó.

Economic sabotage is main internal threat

Despite opposition efforts to take the country by force, “Chavismo” — the movement inspired by late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez — has defended itself with massive mobilizations, beginning on Jan. 23 and continuing for several days after, including a large march in the northern state of Vargas on Jan. 25. Once again Chavismo has demonstrated that it is a movement of the people and not the dictatorship the opposition claims.

According to recent surveys, between



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Defending Venezuela in the streets of Philadelphia, Jan. 26.



WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

Buffalo, N.Y., Jan. 25: Cars honk support for banner.

37 percent and 41 percent of Venezuelans consider themselves “Chavista,” the term for supporters of the Bolivarian Revolution, and they are highly organized through a network of grassroots agricultural and production committees, community organizations, Bolivarian militias and national political organizations. After two decades of the revolutionary process, the Bolivarian movement can mobilize overnight and fill the major avenues of Caracas.

The popular strength of Chavismo is reflected in the loyalty of the armed forces, which have rejected Guaidó’s call for support. The vast majority of civil and legal authorities in the country have also come out in support of the Bolivarian government.

But the ongoing effects of U.S. economic sabotage and currency manipulation have not disappeared. U.S. sanctions are estimated to have cost the Venezuelan government \$20 billion in

2018 alone. (tinyurl.com/yb5wjuu2)

The Venezuelan government is introducing new policies intended to alleviate the economic crisis, including an increase in the minimum wage and laws targeting businesses that use illegal market exchange rates to justify exorbitant prices for necessities.

In addition to its support for the coup government, Washington threatens new and harsher sanctions against Venezuela.

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WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

U.S. HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!

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DETROIT

Worker solidarity with gov't workers

Members and allies of the American Federation of Government Employees rallied outside the federal building in downtown Detroit Jan. 25. Braving temperatures in the lower teens, the group chanted, “End the shutdown” and “No paycheck, no peace.” There was tremendous solidarity with these workers in their time of hardship, with Metro Detroit AFL-CIO organizing food drives and many Detroit restaurants offering federal workers free meals.

—Report and photo by Martha Grevatt



Honor Black History Month, Support WW

Fighting racism in February 2019, Black History Month, means starting at the top of the political ladder and denouncing the openly racist, white supremacist in the White House. It means opposing and exposing his administration’s racist policies, like shutting down the government for 35 days, which put 800,000 government workers, many of whom are African American, in dire financial straits because he demanded \$5.8 billion to build a racist wall on the Mexican border.

Workers World makes a big deal of Black History Month because racism pervades every aspect of life in this country. Everything from fighting for living-wage jobs to ending mass incarceration to having affordable housing and fully-funded public schools is rooted in the centuries-long struggle to end this vicious history of racism, rooted in slavery.

That’s why every month, not just Black History Month, the newspaper chronicles the struggles of African Americans to eradicate institutionalized, systemic racism. Case in point is our continuing coverage of the struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. The latest chapter involves calling out the Philadelphia



courts for hiding evidence about Abu-Jamal’s case that could lead to a new trial and eventually his freedom.

WW bases our weekly coverage of the Black struggle in the U.S., and in the African diaspora to throw off imperialist chains, on the principle of self-determination — that oppressed people have the right to fight to end all forms of inequality and injustice by any means necessary.

If you appreciate our coverage, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program established 42 years ago so readers could help us publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build campaigns needed to make revolutionary change leading to socialism.

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MUMIA ABU-JAMAL CASE

“New” DA same as the old DA

By Betsey Piette

Any hope that Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner would hold to his campaign promise to investigate his predecessor's unjust convictions was shattered Jan. 25 when it was announced he would appeal the Dec. 27, 2018, decision by Common Pleas Court Judge Tucker to grant new appellant rights to political prisoner and journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal. It appears the new DA is the same as the old DAs.

The prosecutorial appeal of Tucker's historic ruling, which followed a nearly two-year court case, pushes back Abu-Jamal's access to new hearings over injustices in his 37-year-long case, but it won't stop the fight for his freedom.

Abu-Jamal's attorney Judith Ritter expressed her disappointment at Krasner's decision: “We believe that Judge Tucker's order will be upheld on appeal. The most fundamental right to due process guarantees that individuals are judged by fair and unbiased courts. We are very disappointed that DA Krasner has decided to challenge the conclusion of an objective judge that Mr. Abu-Jamal was denied this right. Krasner's appeal only risks delaying our opportunity to make our case to an appellate court untainted by bias.”

Abu-Jamal's attorneys have also notified the court of their intent to file appeals on at least four separate Post Conviction Relief Act challenges previously denied to Abu-Jamal, who has long maintained his innocence in connection with the 1981 murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner.

While Krasner has chosen to narrow his argument to Castille's role in the case, Abu-Jamal's appeals can address the underlying issues that Pennsylvania Supreme Court Judge Ron Castille presided over, including

the open bias of Judge Albert Sabo, a lifetime Fraternal Order of Police member, who not only sat during the original trial but was brought back to preside over Abu-Jamal's initial PCRA hearing.

There is evidence that witnesses were coerced, pressured into committing perjury or just plain lied on the stand. Evidence that witnesses reported seeing a man fleeing the crime scene was suppressed. Earlier PCRA challenges also addressed questionable ballistics evidence presented by the prosecution in the original trial.

Hundreds more buried boxes

On Jan. 18, just weeks after Krasner revealed the existence of six hidden boxes of files linked to Abu-Jamal's case, a “Supplemental Verification” from the DA's PCRA Unit revealed that the files from Abu-Jamal's case were among hundreds of other boxes hidden in the storage room. Whether these additional files were also not listed in the DA's database bears investigation.

Krasner's office followed up Jan. 22 with a misleading statement, asserting that a search of the newly discovered Abu-Jamal boxes proved that Castille had no personal involvement in the prosecution of Mumia as a Philadelphia district attorney. Krasner's statement glaringly made no mention of the other boxes, nor did he acknowledge that Tucker's Dec. 27 ruling granting relief to Abu-Jamal was based on Castille's public observable bias, not just his signature on papers.

The Philadelphia DA's office and police department have long histories of corruption and misconduct. Investigations of the Abu-Jamal case by journalists David Lindorff and Patrick J. O'Connor revealed that one-third of the police officers involved in collecting evidence in the 1981 case were subsequently convicted and

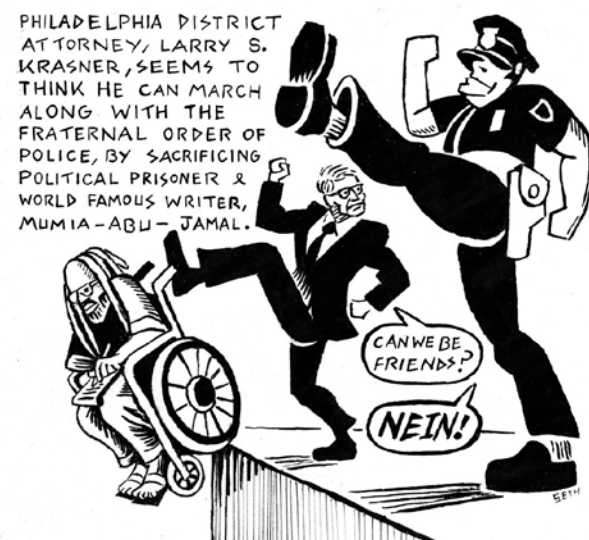
jailed for corruption and tampering with evidence to obtain convictions. Countless cases, including that of formerly imprisoned Hip-Hop artist Meek Mill show these practices continue to this day.

“Upon taking office Krasner was subpoenaed to release a ‘Do Not Call’ list of 29 cops too tainted to testify in court trials,” said Mumia supporter, professor/filmmaker Johanna Fernandez in a Jan. 25 press release. “Former DA Seth Williams had a list of 77 dirty cops. The list of police scandals that disproportionately impact Black and brown communities goes back decades. In 1979, the Department of Justice investigation concluded that the level of tampering with evidence and homicidal violence against Black and brown detainees by Philly Police ‘shocks the conscience.’ Additionally, Prosecutor Joe McGill hid evidence in the original Abu-Jamal trial—the presence of a fourth person at the crime scene.”

The DA's office reported that the six boxes in Abu-Jamal's case contained “police paperwork, discovery materials, cassette tapes, trial preparations and jury selection notes, Internal Affairs files, PCRA preparation notes and materials, etc.”

This is evidence potentially favorable to the defendant that could reveal the extent of the police, judicial and prosecutorial frame-up. A court order from Judge Tucker issued Jan. 14 gave Abu-Jamal's attorneys access to review the contents of the six boxes.

Justice demands that the contents of all the hidden boxes be fully disclosed to respective defendants. These discoveries cry out for an independent people's investigation into decades of improper practices by the Philadelphia DA's office.



SETH TOBACHMAN

Pam Africa, spokesperson for the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, said in the same press release: “Mumia has been inside 37 years for a crime he didn't commit, 28 of those were spent caged on death row — a sentence obtained unconstitutionally, which is why he's in general population today. We are demanding that the charges be dismissed and he be set free. What is happening to Mumia is happening to thousands of people in Pennsylvania prisons.”

The nearly two-year-long appeal, the unending protests, calls and letters about the case, and recent revelations of hidden files have served to greatly increase public awareness of this case. News of the possibility that the current appeals could result in his freedom even reached primetime television Jan. 22 on the popular sitcom “Black-ish.” Someone asks Dre, the character played by Anthony Anderson, “Why so happy? Did they just free Mumia?” Dre responds: “No, but I'm doing my part to make it better.”

The current legal battle in Abu-Jamal's case has now opened the pursuit of justice in his case and that of many others. The genie is out of the bottle, and no amount of legal maneuvering by Krasner will put it back! □



WW Commentary

Humanitarian aid for migrants is not a crime!

By Kathy Durkin

Federal Magistrate Judge Bernardo Velasco convicted four humanitarian aid volunteers on Jan. 18 in Tucson, Ariz., of misdemeanor charges, including entering a national wildlife reserve without a permit and abandoning property. Their real “crimes”: Natalie Hoffman, Oona Holcomb, Madeline Huse and Zaachila Orozco left life-saving jugs of water and beans for desperate refugees crossing the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge in southwestern Arizona along the U.S.-Mexico border.

This is the first time in 10 years that such aid workers have been found guilty. They face up to six months in jail and a fine. Five others who also work with No More Deaths, a coalition of community and faith-based activists, are slated for trial this winter on similar charges. Dr. Scott Warren, one of the nine, is also charged separately with three felony counts of “harboring and conspiracy” for providing food, water, clothing and housing to two undocumented refugees for three days. He goes on trial in May and faces up to 20 years imprisonment.

The group's press release explains that 155 migrants have died crossing this “trail of death,” a 860,000-acre refuge, since 2001. Many more have disappeared. Catherine Gaffney emphasized: “The verdict challenges... [all] people of conscience throughout the country. If giving

water to someone dying of thirst is illegal, what humanity is left in the law of this country?” (nomoredeaths.org., Jan. 18)

Border agents 'condemn migrants to death'

The Guardian newspaper reported on Jan. 24, 2018, that some charges against Dr. Warren were filed soon after NMD released a document “accusing border patrol agents of condemning migrants to death by sabotaging water containers” and harassing volunteers. Citing video evidence, the same report noted, “[W]ater containers were vandalized 415 times, on average twice a week” in a three-year period, and “border patrol agents were the main culprits.”

This attack on NMD comes as the Trump administration is intensifying its repression of refugees and immigrant rights organizations. The Guardian article said agents removed migrants receiving medical care at an NMD encampment in June 2017.

Cabeza Prieta's permitting process changed on July 1, 2017, to require visitors to sign agreements not to leave food or water on the refuge. The revision “involved input from the Interior and Defense Department officials,” noted the Jan. 17 Intercept. It was particularly meant to stop NMD volunteers from leaving food and water there. Government officials argued they enabled migrants to continue traveling through the desert further into the U.S. The refuge's staff compiled a list of these individuals to ban them from the premises.

The government's crackdown on NMD continues. Dr. Warren's attorneys revealed that Trump administration prosecutors held one-sided private talks with Judge Velasco. (Intercept, Dec. 21) If Dr. Warren is convicted, it will have a chilling effect on all volunteers who aid migrants in the borderlands.

Stop the war on refugees!

Clearly, the Trump administration's war on asylum seekers continues unabated: Two more anti-im/migrant policies were announced on Jan. 25. Only 20 asylum seekers a day — down from 100 — will be allowed to cross the San Ysidro, Calif., port of entry from the southern border. Also, migrants awaiting U.S. immigration court hearings must remain in Mexico and cannot cross into the U.S.

Isn't the U.S. government's heinous war on im/migrants the real injustice?

Isn't it criminal that thousands of desperate im/migrants have died trying to cross the southern border fleeing countries impoverished by the U.S. in order to find a job and a safer life? Isn't it a human rights violation that thousands of migrant children have been separated from their parents? That children have been confined in cages? That youngsters died in U.S. Border Patrol custody? That the Trump administration held hostage 800,000 unpaid federal workers to pressure Congress to fund a racist border wall?

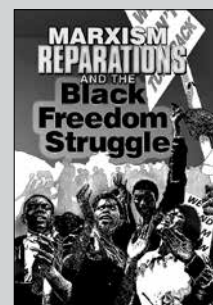
In capitalist society, morality is turned inside out. The workers, oppressed, humanitarians and people's heroes are prosecuted, while the real criminals — the billionaires, rich politicians and their enforcers — enjoy wealth and privilege with impunity. Someday the masses of people will hold them all responsible for their crimes against humanity. □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.

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WW Commentary

Nathan Phillips and the face of fascism

By Stephanie Tromblay

Thousands of Indigenous peoples from across the U.S. and Canada, from Guatemala and the Caribbean to Australia and Papua New Guinea, gathered on Jan. 18, for the first-ever Indigenous Peoples March in Washington, D.C. Starting outside the Bureau of Indian Affairs, people then marched to the National Mall for a rally.

The march was called to raise awareness of issues affecting Indigenous nations and communities around the world, including border control, police brutality, protecting Native lands and especially the epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirits. Toward the end of the rally, some of the marchers proceeded toward the Lincoln Monument for a closing. (tinyurl.com/y8bozpxb)

Among the group approaching the monument was Vietnam-era veteran and Omaha elder Nathan Phillips. This elder was drumming and singing when they entered the area where there was a crowd of MAGA-hat-wearing white male students from Covington Catholic High School in northern Kentucky. The white students began to whoop and taunt the Native marchers. They chanted and gestured with the racist Atlanta baseball fans' "tomahawk chop" to harass and intimidate Phillips and the other Native people coming into the monument area.

One of the students, Nick Sandmann, moved to confront 64-year-old Native elder Phillips, blocked him from moving and stared, inches away, in his face.

Phillips reacted in the situation responsibly, as he began to sing and play the American Indian Movement song into the face of hatred. Phillips is a former director of the Native Youth Alliance; he also holds an annual ceremony honoring Indigenous veterans in Arlington National Cemetery.

Covington Catholic, an expensive male-only prep school, had sent the students to D.C. to participate in the annual march against women's reproductive rights. There were priest chaperones at the scene. According to witnesses, the priest at the monument had apparently approved of the students launching into racist anti-Native chanting.

The face of a fascist

Covington High has a history of racist and bigoted behavior in its student body. It has allowed students to put on "black-face" to harass Black players on opposing school teams. A young woman broadcast a video of being aggressively and threateningly harassed on the street while walking past of group of Covington students. Another video recorded the students as "looking for a fight."

Covington Diocese made the news May 2018 when student Christian Bales was banned from giving the valedictorian speech at Holy Cross high school because he is gay. (tinyurl.com/y8zx854m) Current Trump-appointed White House counsel Pat Cipollone is a Covington graduate.

Native people have a history of genocide and a long memory of what genocide looks like—similar to the knowledge in the Black community of lynch mobs and slavery.



Nathan Phillips.

Indigenous people face racist incidents every day. What was different this time?

This footage went viral and everyone saw it. The face of the white student who got in Nathan Phillips' face and blocked him from walking away from the monument was the face of genocide and hatred. Most of the faces in his crowd held that same grinning sneer — that is the face of a fascist.

But this time the world was watching. Black people saw a look on a white face which is "all too familiar." Poor whites saw rich boys acting as a public menace in D.C. and knew they'd get away with it. Antifascists saw the hate-filled faces they had seen in Charlottesville, Va., in August 2017.

Everyone saw the hate-filled eyes and smirk of someone who wants to hurt or kill you — the look of a racist, a woman-hater, a homophobe or a transphobe. Once you have seen that look, that face, you don't forget it.

So non-Native communities got, for once, a close-up look at that face in a near-mob attack on a Native veteran elder. And conversations erupted online about racism against Native people—among African Americans, Latinxs, Asians, Arabs, as well as whites who oppose fascism but have no consciousness about Native lives.

An education about Indigenous life

This was an education about Indigenous life for millions. The last time this happened was briefly during the struggle against the Dakota Pipeline at Standing Rock reservation. The footage of North Dakota sheriffs using water cannons, rubber bullets and stun grenades to attack Native water protectors and land defenders at Standing Rock in freezing winter weather was rare and hard-fought-for media coverage.

Native erasure (the across-the-board exclusion of Indigenous peoples and nations in the media, education and consciousness) kicked back in rapidly after the Lincoln monument incident as Covington student Nick Sandmann was coached by the Runswitch PR firm, run by a longtime Republican operative, and provided with talking points. The corporate media rushed to whitewash the racist mob and paint them as "innocent," just as if the networks had been handed a State Dept. press release. And the well-known excuse dredged up whenever rich white youth have done crimes of havoc began to echo through the media—but "they're good boys."

Dallas Goldtooth, spokesperson for Indigenous Environmental Network, stated, "The behavior ... that the kids enacted is utterly inexcusable — the longer videos show a deeply rooted sense of superiority and privilege that white people feel toward Indigenous people. Let's call it out for what it is — white supremacy." (msnbc.com, Jan. 27)

Trump invited Sandmann to the White House — an act like many of his public events designed to encourage racist attacks. Native media and spokespeople — see #NativeTwitter — have received hundreds of hate mails and threats this past week. (tinyurl.com/y97stnwy)

But the window was open for a short while. Stop Native erasure. Smash white supremacy. Build Black and Brown solidarity. □

Angela Davis

'Indivisible justice' for Palestine

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

In recent months the struggle for the rights of the Palestinian people has seen an increase in Zionist attacks on Black activists who support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. The goal of BDS is to stop the Israeli state's genocidal policies and actions toward Palestinians, including putting pressure on corporate entities to cease doing business with Israel.

On Jan. 4, the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute rescinded a prestigious human rights award it had previously announced would go to legendary Black activist Angela Davis. When Davis pressed for a reason for the reversal, her staunch and vocal support for BDS and Palestine was ultimately named.

This attack on Davis is very similar to the recent firing of Black commentator, Marc Lamont Hill — fired from CNN for publicly supporting the Palestinian people's right to return to their own homeland.

On Jan. 7, Davis issued a statement reading in part: "I have devoted much of my own activism to international solidarity and, specifically, to linking struggles in other parts of the world to U.S. grassroots campaigns against police violence, the prison industrial complex, and racism more broadly. The rescinding of this invitation ... was thus not primarily an attack against me but rather against the very spirit of the indivisibility of justice." (Guardian, Jan. 8)

Davis, born and raised in Birmingham, Ala., is a historic figure internationally in the struggle for human rights and justice. The city was once known as "Bombingham" because of the Ku Klux Klan campaign of terror against the Black Civil Rights Movement. The church Davis attended, the 16th Street Baptist Church, was bombed on Sept. 15, 1963; of the four young Black girls killed that day, two were friends of Angela Davis.

As a prisoner abolitionist, she defended the martyred Black Panther member George Jackson before he was executed in San Quentin Prison in 1971. Also a member of the Communist Party USA, she became a political prisoner herself when she was falsely arrested by the state of California and charged with three capital felonies and conspiracy to murder, related to an attempt to free Jackson from prison in 1970. A worldwide campaign freed her in 1972.

Defending Palestine

The award Davis was originally to receive from the BCRI was the Fred L. Shuttlesworth Human Rights Award. Davis knew Shuttlesworth personally as an indomitable leader in Birmingham during the Black Freedom Movement, surviving beatings, assassination attempts and bombings.

After the decision by the BCRI board to rescind the award, there were immediate protests and rallies by Birmingham activists, including many who explicitly support the Palestinian struggle.

At the same time it became clear on a wider public level that Zionist pressure had been exerted. Objections to Davis evidently came from the Birmingham Holocaust Education Center. However, it

should be noted that, in the U.S. South, it is common for right-wing, almost exclusively white, Christian churches and denominations to hold tenaciously Zionist views.

These are based on an anti-Semitic,



Angela Davis and Rev. Ralph Abernathy in Birmingham, Ala., 1972.



Birmingham activists protest for Angela Davis and Palestine outside the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, Jan. 7.

end-of-the-world theology that the second coming of Christ cannot occur for Christians without the dominance of Israel in certain geopolitical events. These views are held at the national level by such public officials as former U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

As support grew for Angela Davis, and by extension the Palestinian struggle, on Jan. 10, the activist group Jewish Voices for Peace released an open letter now signed by more than 550 distinguished academics.

The letter read in part: "The canceling of this award by the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute is unjust, insulting and ill-conceived, especially because it is likely premised on Professor Davis' long-standing support for Palestinian human rights. The decision seems to stem from a misinformed view that to advocate for Palestinian human rights is somehow offensive to the Jewish community.

"As a Jewish organization dedicated to justice, dignity and equality for all people in Palestine/Israel, we share Professor Davis' visionary commitment to the 'indivisibility of justice,' and believe we are all responsible for pursuing social justice for all human beings, without exception — which includes pursuing social justice for Palestinians." (tinyurl.com/ybpkj769)

On Jan. 14, the board of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute publicly apologized to Davis for its "mistakes" in offering and then withdrawing the award. Finally, on Jan. 25, the BCRI reinstituted the award to Angela Davis "in keeping with its commitment to learning from its mistakes." (al.com)

The mounting campaign for acknowledgment of the justice of Davis' principled stand for the Palestinian people was the primary factor in that "learning" — and this victory. □

Government reopens

Head bigot caves to pressure

By Martha Grevatt

After 35 long days without pay, 800,000 federal workers received word late on Jan. 26 that the government shutdown was over—at least temporarily.

Without an agreement to fund a racist, anti-migrant border wall, the president reopened the closed departments of the federal government. Furloughed federal workers were called back to work; those working without pay will be getting paychecks, with a promise that back wages will be paid soon. Not so for contract workers.

The American Federation of Government Employees, the largest of several federal worker unions, rightly called the mass furloughs and payless paydays a lockout. Normally when union members cannot strike by contract, there is also an agreement they cannot be locked out by the boss. Federal workers are legally barred from striking—the basis for Ronald Reagan’s firing air traffic controllers in 1981.

In addition to not getting paid, some locked-out federal workers could not apply for unemployment compensation. To collect, they had to be available for work—but to be available for work they needed government permission to look for another job. The people authorized to grant permission were not working!

Many federal workers demonstrated against this lockout, some just a few hours before the shutdown ended. Three days earlier, hundreds had protested inside two Senate office buildings in Washington, D.C., when twelve union activists were arrested for sitting outside Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell’s office. As the news of the reopening became known, protests turned into celebrations.

Millions of workers and their families have been harmed by this, the longest U.S. government shutdown in history. Workers at private companies with government contracts were affected. Small businesses were hurting.

Had the shutdown continued, the lost purchasing power of unpaid workers—an estimated \$6 billion—and of tax revenue would eventually have cost more jobs. Funding for survival programs such as food stamps, the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Food and Nutrition Service, Indian Health Service, school lunches and Medicaid would have run dry.

The bigot-in-chief created a public safety emergency, affecting everything from air travel to food inspection to air and water quality. Nature also was threatened: from trash piling up in national parks to distressed marine mammals not being rescued. Scientific research was drastically curtailed.

Why did Trump back down?

Most people do not believe that Trump acted out of compassion for workers, who were struggling to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads. Nor do they believe that there is a “national emergency” at the Mexican border mandating construction of an enormous wall.

On the contrary, a majority in an AP News poll blame the president for the shutdown. As of Jan. 25, his falling popularity ratings—at 37 percent—are the lowest of any U.S. president in 80 years. (tinyurl.com/ydejdvppe)

Resistance to the shutdown grew. Unpaid workers at the Transportation Security Administration and other “essential” agencies phoned in sick in large numbers. Sara Nelson, president of the

Association of Flight Attendants, called for a countrywide general strike to stop the shutdown—remarkable solidarity from a union whose members were working and not locked out.

The fightback was not on the scale of resistance elsewhere in the world—like the Yellow Vest movement in France or the All-India General Strike—or even the education worker upsurge in the U.S.

But the growing potential for worker organizing was there. The ruling class knew and feared this.

In addition to fueling worker resistance, the shutdown had a negative effect on the capitalist economy. A \$6 billion loss in a month is no small change. But that was just the tip of the iceberg.

Flights were cancelled at New York’s LaGuardia airport, one of the country’s busiest. For corporate executives who conduct business worldwide, being able to fly safely is essential. Companies seeking exemptions under Trump’s import tariff regime were hamstrung because the people who could authorize those were furloughed. Farmers, small businesses and potential home buyers could not access government financing.

This preventable economic slowdown occurred as leading bourgeois economic analysts are warning of a new recession, i.e., a crisis of capitalist overproduction that they are powerless to prevent. Some of them are worried about “social unrest.”

But federal cops and military personnel at the FBI, the Coast Guard and, ironically, the Border Patrol were not getting paid. The shutdown was undermining the repressive capability and the basic functioning of the capitalist state as an instrument of class rule.

The president—darling of the ultra-right, trumpeting a racist, xenophobic “build the wall” mindset to his electoral base—faced pressure to end the shutdown from both the masses below and the one-percenters on top.

Pelosi the hero?

Mainstream media were awarding credit to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi for ending the shutdown while refusing Trump’s demand to fund the border wall. Daily Kos, an online news source promoting mainstream Democratic Party politics, even posted a petition for people to sign thanking Pelosi: “[She] deserves enormous credit for holding her Democratic caucus in line, and refusing an inch. Her move to cancel the State of the Union Address was brilliant, and achieved the intended result of making Trump agree to end the shutdown (for now).”

This view minimizes the many factors that created pressure on Trump: especially the role of workers who risked being disciplined or fired if they were found to have acted in concert by staging sick-outs or other work resistance. The praise for Pelosi raises no objection to the Democratic backing of “alternatives” to a physical wall, which will also result in repression of migrants through fencing and increased “border security.”

Threat of a new shutdown after Feb. 15 remains, though there may be too much pressure on the White House for that to happen. If the masses of people harmed by this recent outrage want to prevent another, heaping accolades on Pelosi won’t achieve that goal.

The best bet is to follow the lead of AFA President Nelson—and shut down the whole capitalist economy with a general strike. □

‘We are all Marzieh’

Activists from New York and New Jersey met at Grand Central Station in Manhattan Jan. 25, just three days after Marzieh Hashemi, an African-American journalist working for PressTV, was released from federal detention. Members of the Tri-State Iranian Community, International Action Center, People’s Power Assembly, Workers World Party and even passersby joined together to demand an end to harassment of anti-racist, anti-imperialist journalists. They also demanded an immediate end to the



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Material Witness Law, an unconstitutional measure used to hold people, especially Muslims like Hashemi, indefinitely without charges. Her release was a victory for the people’s movement worldwide.

— Report by Taryn Fivek

Striking L.A. teachers win big victory

By G. Dunkel

The United Teachers of Los Angeles have won a big victory after six days on strike, Jan. 14-22. The 32,000 teachers and staff were on the picket lines at every school in the district, with the support of tens of thousands of parents and students. Support rallies of more than 50,000 brought out teachers, parents, students and union members in downtown Los Angeles. Eighty-one percent of the members of UTLA voted to accept the contract their strike won.

Improvements in the working lives of teachers will be dramatic: smaller class sizes, a nurse in every school, more counselors and librarians. Public education was also defended with restrictions on the formation of charter schools. A slew of “common good” demands were won regard-



ing social justice issues that benefit the entire community, like support for immigrant rights, opposition to racial profiling, restrictions on random searches of students, and green spaces at schools. All this was won—as well as a 6 percent pay raise!

The teachers were emphatic they were striking for the good of their community and their students. According to Alex Caputo-Pearl, president of UTLA, close to 95 percent of the 500,000 L.A. students are students of color and “over 85% low-income, working-class folks.” (UTLA net, Sept. 28, 2018)

The superintendent of the L.A. school district, Austin Beutner, is a billionaire investment banker with no experience in education. He knows how to cut a deal, has deep ties to the Democratic Party, which is how he got his job, and is chummy with the for-profit charter-school operators aiming to privatize as much of the L.A. school system as they can profitably loot.

UTLA victory will have ‘national resonance’

Now the UTLA victory is going to put a serious crimp in local plans to privatize public education—and it’s also going to have national resonance. While education of K-12 grades in the U.S. is a local responsibility, state and federal governments supply essential funding for a variety of needs.

For-profit right-wing forces have focused for years at the national level on the creation of “charter schools”—private schools to be funded with public money, both state and federal, supposedly to offer

an “alternative approach” to public schools. Both Trump’s Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, whose family is one of the richest in the U.S., and Obama’s Secretary of Education Arne Duncan pushed for the creation of charter schools. Charter schools allow huge profits in a nonunion environment for big business investors.

One tactic in this privatization push has been to get pro-business state legislatures to systematically defund and underfund public education. The result has been overcrowded classrooms, tattered and out-of-date textbooks, elimination of school nurses, counselors and librarians as well as art and music programs—and plummeting teacher salaries.

In response, there was a huge surge in education worker walkouts, strikes and other job actions on the state level in 2018, especially in states where teachers’ very

low pay was set by state legislatures. There was a nine-day walkout in West Virginia, where teachers’ salaries ranked 48th in the U.S. Oklahoma, Colorado and Arizona all saw major, days-long teacher actions.

While California has a reputation as a wealthy, liberal state with good social programs, its spending on public education has been low. Exactly how low in comparison to other states is disputed. But ever since Proposition 13 was passed in 1978, spending on education has been restricted. Prop 13 reduced state property taxes by more than 50 percent.

A Jan. 17 report in Politifact, using data from the 2015-16 school year, pointed out: “California schools spent \$10,291 per K-12 student that year,” about \$1,900 less than the national per student amount.

UTLA has been organizing for years both to build support among the teachers for a strike and to explain to the community and their students the need for such an action. They were dramatically successful.

The UTLA victory—not against a “red” Republican state government, but against a “blue” Democratic hierarchy—is going to keep the education worker struggle energized throughout the U.S. Actions are already brewing in Virginia, West Virginia, Colorado—and just a short drive north to Oakland in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The UTLA victory also offers hope that more workers will see that independent, class-conscious action against the bosses—whether Republican or Democratic—is the only way to win. □

Legal abortion: Still under attack, but supporters fight back

By Sue Davis

Roe v. Wade, the landmark Supreme Court ruling legalizing abortion, turned 46 on Jan. 22. The yearly assault on women’s right to legal, safe, accessible abortion, led by the racist, misogynist minority headed by President Donald J. Trump and Vice President Mike Pence, began as nearly half the states introduced anti-reproductive health care bills and the federal government proposed restrictions on the rights of women and transgender and gender-nonconforming people.

But those attacks are being countered in the states and in Congress. “2019 will be a watershed year, with many more proactive laws promoting women’s health care in the states and at the federal level,” predicted Lourdes Rivera, vice president of the Center for Reproductive Rights. She was a panelist at a Jan. 22 meeting in New York City, “Defending Roe: The Future of Reproductive Rights in America.”

Yamani Hernandez, executive director of the National Network of Abortion Funds, with 70 grassroots affiliates around the country, stressed that the privately supported fund is able to help hundreds of women pay for abortions each year. However, women have so many abortion-related expenses, with long-distance trips requiring money for gas, food, motel room and child care, in addition to paying for an abortion. She says a broader support system is needed, especially for women of color and young women.

Dani McClain, author of “We Live for the We: The Political Power of Black Motherhood,” said that reproductive choice requires an intersectional approach: “a reproductive justice framework, where women have the right to not have a child, the right to have a child and the right to see that child grow up in a safe, caring society.” To provide quality health care for Black women and end the high rate of Black maternal mortality means “we have to challenge structural racism—white supremacy and poverty—in order to be able to raise our children in safe conditions.”

Rebecca Traister, author of “Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women’s Anger,” noted this country has a long history of controlling women’s bodies; women of color and poor and disabled women were

legally being sterilized beginning in the 1920s. She traced the current anti-abortion movement from the racist and class-biased Hyde Amendment, passed in 1976, that outlawed federal funding for most abortions via Medicaid. Only 15 states offer state-funded Medicaid coverage.

Asked to envision the future of reproductive health care, panelists were unanimous that there needs to be “widespread, generational cultural, economic and social change.” Hernandez wants to see the Hyde Amendment overturned and the government assume full responsibility for science-based health care for all women and gender-nonconforming people. McClain says achieving “reproductive justice requires a shift in how we think about the world — we need a human rights framework.” Traister suggests we need to “imagine new ways to bring about political, strategic change.”

Anti-abortion laws to be considered by states

Here’s a summary of the top four proposed state anti-abortion laws, among many others. (Statistics tabulated from Jan. 14 and 22 Rewire.News articles.)

Laws to criminalize and/or ban abortion, also called “fetal homicide bills” or “trigger bills” (which would automatically go into effect if the the Supreme Court overturns Roe), will be considered by eight states: Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas and West Virginia. According to the Guttmacher Institute, 18 states already have laws that restrict legal abortion, similar laws in five states are currently on hold by court order, and nine states uphold the right to abortion.

Legislatures in 10 states, including Indiana, North Dakota, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina and West Virginia, will vote on banning use of the obstetrical procedure called D&E (dilation and evacuation) for second trimester abortions.

Five states will vote on laws to prohibit abortion once a fetal heartbeat is detected, estimated at about six weeks. They are Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri and Virginia.

Three states — Nebraska, North Dakota and Oklahoma — will decide if abortion providers must inform patients that it’s possible to reverse a medical

abortion (from pills, not surgery). “Abortion reversal” is supported by the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists but no other professional medical organizations.

Laws that restrict the rights of transgender students—another example of patriarchal control—will be considered by two states, Indiana and South Dakota. These laws would ban students from using school restrooms that correspond to their gender identity. Though nine states considered such laws in 2015, none were passed.

Progress in New York state

On Jan. 22, the New York State Assembly passed the long-awaited Reproductive Health Act, which codifies federal protections of Roe v. Wade in state law. The bill authorizes licensed health care practitioners to terminate a pregnancy within 24 weeks. This law reinforces that the goal of public health policy “should be to increase access to quality health care, not to place restrictions and undue burdens on patients and providers,” said Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie.

A second piece of legislation, the Comprehensive Coverage Act, codified the Affordable Care Act requirement that health insurers provide cost-free coverage for all FDA-approved contraceptives prescribed by a provider. Another bill prohibits employers from discriminating against employees based on their or their dependents reproductive health care decisions.

Newly elected governors in both Rhode Island and Vermont have stated they will sign similar acts in their states.

State Sen. Brad Hoylman reported that on Jan. 15 the NYS Senate banned so-called “gay conversion therapy,” calling it “a form of child abuse used to punish LGBTQ children for simply being different.” In addition, after a 17-year battle, the Senate passed the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA), which protects the rights of transgender and gender-nonconforming people so they can no longer be denied housing, employment or fair treatment. □

Note: Proposed federal changes in reproductive health care will be covered in a later article.

Stop the Fare Hike! Money for Accessible Transit, Not Wall St.

By Tony Murphy

The heads of New York City’s Metropolitan Transit Authority have backed off voting for another fare hike for now, but they only put it off until February. According to the corporate-owned press, this is a calamity because the MTA is short a billion dollars.

Wall Street is the home of the banks to which the MTA owes \$40 billion. New York City is also the center of world capitalism. The idea that there’s not enough money in the city for public transportation or any other necessity is far-fetched, to say the least. A billion dollars is a lot for the average person, but for the rich gamblers on Wall Street that amount is all in a day’s trading.

New York City is also where the firms are located that got bailed out in the 2008 “Great Recession.” The total for that massive corporate welfare program ended up being in the trillions.

Insurance giant AIG alone got \$182 billion. What did AIG or Goldman Sachs or the others bailed out do to get so much money? They don’t make anything people need—like clothes or food or telephones. They don’t provide health care or serve as teachers.

No, those firms exist solely to make rich people richer. But the Bush and Obama administrations argued that Wall Street had to be bailed out because the companies were “too big to fail.”

The argument was that keeping the businesses from failing was for the benefit of society as a whole. If pressed, sometimes there were admissions that company executives were crooks who caused the mess in the first place. But defenders of the system still swore that if the companies were allowed to fail, the system would collapse.

In other words, the bailout was for “the benefit of society as a whole.”

It’s obvious that this was a lie: The bailout was only to protect the rich and their exploitative system of capitalism.

Wouldn’t it have been “for the benefit of society” to have bailed out the people who lost their homes, jobs and pensions?

Wouldn’t it be “for the benefit of society” if housing, heat in the winter, health care, education and child care were all rights to be supported at all costs?

And wouldn’t it be “for the benefit of society” if public transportation was free and every station was accessible with elevators that worked and didn’t break down?

Fighting the MTA for the benefit of society

To accept the claim that the MTA is starved of funds now is to accept the premise of capitalism that there is not enough money to meet people’s needs.

But capitalist government and business can use the riches it has access to at any time, for any reason. They just don’t choose to consider spending on people’s needs to be “to the benefit of capitalist society.”

That doesn’t mean we have to wait until society is socialist to win rights like accessible transportation.

In 2008, the bosses at Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago announced the company would be closing in days. Workers would not receive unused vacation time nor the 60 days’ pay they were entitled to under the 1989 federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act. In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, the plant’s chief creditor, Bank of America, was cutting off its line of credit.

The workers occupied their plant with picket lines in



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

The Non-March for Disabled Women demands accessibility at Grand Central Station, New York, Jan. 19.

front and solidarity demonstrations across the country. A week later, when thousands demonstrated in Chicago in front of BOA headquarters, the workers received a \$1.75 million settlement from the company. They won eight weeks’ pay, two months of continued health coverage and pay for any outstanding vacation time.

JPMorgan Chase paid \$400,000 of the total amount, with BOA covering the rest.

The overall atmosphere of anger at the Wall Street bailout helped the Republic Windows and Doors workers.

In 2019, there is mass anger in New York City about the \$3 billion to be handed to the planet’s richest person, Jeff Bezos, to locate his new Amazon headquarters in Long Island City along the MTA’s 7 train line, which will be overwhelmed by tens of thousands of additional riders.

Mass resentment about the tax subsidies and other benefits Bezos will get may be a factor in the MTA’s decision to postpone the fare hike vote—along with mass anger about the recent MTA mismanagement of L train plans.

As riders continue the fight to stop the fare hike, they can keep the lesson of the Republic Windows and Doors in mind: After worker action and mass support, the banks behind the company came forward and coughed up the money the bosses said they didn’t have. □

Emergency rallies in North America defend Bolivarian Revolution

By Betsey Piette

The demands “U.S. Hands off Venezuela” and “End the Sanctions Now” and “No U.S. Intervention, No Coup” echoed on the streets of cities from Buffalo, N.Y., to Portland, Ore., in the U.S. as well as Canada, as protesters denounced the U.S.-backed coup d’etat aimed at toppling the legitimate government of Venezuela.

Boston—On Jan. 25, demonstrators gathered in response to the U.S.-orchestrated coup attempt in Venezuela. The demonstration was called by the Party for Socialism and Liberation and endorsed by Workers World Party, the Boston Venezuela Solidarity Committee and Massachusetts Peace Action.

Organizers from these groups as well as the Boston Democratic Socialists of America, Answer Coalition and others spoke or read statements denouncing the attempted coup by Juan Guaidó. They highlighted the devastating effects of past U.S. interventions in Latin America, particularly in Chile, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Guatemala.

At a second demonstration on Jan. 26, speakers from the Committee for Peace and Human Rights, WWP, the Coalition to End the Genocide in Yemen and others took turns addressing the need for solidarity from workers and oppressed in the U.S. Several speakers also emphasized the connection between U.S. interventions in Central America and the current refugee crisis and U.S. treatment of refugees on the southern border.

Buffalo, N.Y.—In one of the first U.S. protests against U.S. intervention in Venezuela, at 7:30 a.m. on Jan. 25, intrepid organizers and activists in this snowy, cold, windy city hung a banner on the overpass facing traffic on the busiest downtown expressway. The banner read “U.S. Hands off Venezuela, No Intervention, No Coup!” and was greeted with enthusiastic honks from rush-hour drivers. The action was initiated by Buffalo Spring Action 2018, Burning Books, Buffalo DSA, WWP, Buffalo International Action Center and more.

At rush hour later that day, activists demonstrated at the Federal Office Building. Although high winds and bitter cold made raising a banner impossible, they were able to bring out such demands as “U.S.: Hands off Venezuela! No Sanctions, No Intervention, No Coup and No More Regime Change! Respect the sovereignty of Venezuela and all nations!”

New York City—Activists took to NYC streets Jan. 27 with cries of “USA! Hands off Venezuela!” and “Cuba si! Bloqueo no!” while imperialist criminals Mike Pompeo and Elliot Abrams were nearby at the United Nations demanding the rest of the world sign on to their crimes against Venezuela.

WWP, IAC, December 12th Movement, the Socialist Workers Party, the Internationalist Group and the Communist Party USA, among other groups, stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the freezing cold to answer the call of Cuban solidarity activists, who asked that protesters gather across the street from the Cuban Mission to the U.N. in unity and solidarity.

The call was to support the working class in both Venezuela and Cuba, both of which have come under attack since the U.S. war machine attempted to overthrow the democratically elected government of Venezuela last week. Their strong, united showing indicated that the U.S. left is ready to unify and mobilize at a moment’s notice to

defend workers’ gains across the world.

Philadelphia—Nearly 100 activists rallied outside City Hall on Jan. 26 to demand “U.S.: Hands off Venezuela” and to support the Bolivarian Revolution. Demonstrators condemned the U.S.-backed coup d’etat aimed at toppling the legitimate government of Nicolás Maduro.

The pro-Chavista gathering outnumbered a small group of Venezuelan fascists who tried to disrupt the rally. When Mexican activist Carmen Guerrero, addressing the crowd in Spanish, was interrupted by a fascist provocateur, she fearlessly faced them down in a heated exchange. She led the crowd in a chant of “¡Chavez, Presente! ¡Maduro, presidente!” and drowned out the interruption.

When a second fascist agitator shouted at the crowd, calling them communists, Deandra Jefferson, member of Philly REAL Justice and WWP, addressed the red baiting with a rousing defense of socialism and communism: “Capitalism doesn’t work for us here in Philadelphia. Why the hell would we think it would work in Venezuela?”

Asantewaa Nkrumah Ture of the Black Alliance for Peace affirmed the analysis of election observers who certified Maduro was elected in a free and democratic process.

Demonstrators shut down traffic in the heart of Center City, marching around City Hall toward the Philadelphia District Attorney’s office. There Meghan Malachi of REAL Justice read a statement of solidarity with the Venezuelan people and Nicolás Maduro, which was a commentary by Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The action was called by WWP and endorsed by the IAC, PSL, Black Alliance for Peace, the Green Party, Philly REAL Justice, Black and Brown Workers Cooperative, the International Marxist Tendency, Extinction Rebellion, Philly Socialists and the MOVE Organization.

Durham, N.C.—WWP Durham, joined by Youth



WW PHOTO: DURHAM WW BUREAU

Fighting U.S. Empire, members of the Young DSA and the North Carolina Green Party, demonstrated in downtown in solidarity with Venezuela and the Bolivarian Revolution. Passersby eagerly took solidarity statements demanding “U.S. Hands off Venezuela!” Many made connections between the attempted coup in Venezuela and the increasing anti-Trump climate. A brief march followed through the city to the “food truck rodeo” where many families were gathered. Food truck lines were interrupted by chants of “No Sanctions, No Coup! Venezuela, We Stand with You!” Another demonstration is planned in Raleigh, N.C., on Feb. 2.

Atlanta—On Jan. 25, WWP held a solidarity speak-out in defense of the Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution. During the evening rush hour at a main downtown intersection, anti-imperialist activists held signs and distributed leaflets denouncing the U.S.-orchestrated coup attempt and supporting the presidency of Nicolás

Maduro. Speakers included representatives of Friends of the Congo, PSL and WWP.

WWP called a second solidarity action outside CNN for Feb. 1 to expose the false reporting of the 24-hour “news” channel which openly advances the interests of the Venezuelan and U.S. coup-makers.

Miami—Activists rallied in front of Univision 23’s stu-



PHOTO: DIDIER ORTIZ

dios against U.S. intervention in Venezuela on Jan. 26. The demand was straightforward: Hands Off Venezuela! The rally, hosted by the Emergency Hands-Off Venezuela Committee, was joined by members of various local progressive and revolutionary organizations. The slogans most popular with the protesters were “Paz si, golpe no!” “Yankee Go Home!” and “No More Sanctions!” This action is the first among many that the nascent anti-imperialist movement in Miami plans for this year in response to the Trump administration’s escalation of aggression against Venezuela.

Houston—Houstonians took to the streets two days in a row to show solidarity with the Bolivarian government and to demand the U.S. stop attempts to organize a coup. On Jan. 28, at the federal building during rush hour, leaflets were handed out in traffic and activists spoke, using a loudspeaker. A lot of honks and thumbs-up were given in response. Participating were WWP, Houston Socialist Movement, Young Communist League, PSL, Students for a Democratic Society at University of Houston and independent activists.

San Francisco—A militant crowd rallied and marched Jan. 25 in San Francisco’s Mission District to demand “No U.S. Intervention in Venezuela” and to support the democratically elected government of President Nicolás Maduro. The emergency protest was organized by the Answer Coalition and joined by several resistance, human rights and anti-war forces in the Bay Area.

After a short rally, the protesters marched down Mission Street in the heart of this city’s Latinx community. Bystanders and motorists cheered, honked and showed support for the anti-war demonstration.

Speakers at the closing rally linked their struggles against U.S. imperialism to the threat of U.S. intervention in Venezuela. Fernando Echeverría, speaking for BAYAN, said, “Let us remind the U.S. of its own abuses from supporting the bombing of Palestinians to supporting the ongoing drug war in the Philippines, which is taking the lives of tens of thousands of poor people.” Echeverría, who had just returned from the U.S./Mexico border at Tijuana, spoke about the real humanitarian crisis in Latin America created by the U.S.

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WW PHOTOS: BRENDA RYAN



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Emergency rallies in North America defend Bolivarian Revolution

Continued from page 7

Portland, Ore.—Demonstrators protested the U.S.-backed Juan Guaidó coup d'etat in front of the Portland courthouse and Powell's Books on Jan. 24. One sign read, "U.S. makes endless war, Venezuela feeds the poor." Demonstrators distributed Workers World newspaper. One passerby, when asked if she "would like a weekly socialist newspaper," said, "Hell yeah."

Seattle—A Venezuela solidarity protest on Jan. 25 brought out dozens of people demanding "Hands Off Venezuela" in a busy shopping district. The street rally was organized by Answer and supported by many

organizations.

Veterans for Peace speaker Randy Rowland talked about being a war resister when he was jailed at the Presidio in San Francisco during the Vietnam War. As a former member of the Presidio 27, he said he looked up to Hugo Chávez as a soldier-resister to the former pro-imperialist regime. The demonstration denounced U.S. intervention as a plot to rob Venezuela's control of its oil resources.

Vancouver, Canada—People came together in unity on Jan. 26 to protest the illegal and undemocratic attempts of the U.S. and Canada to overthrow the

democratically elected President of Venezuela Nicolás Maduro. People from many political parties, organizations and grassroots groups joined in solidarity with the people of Venezuela who are defending the Bolivarian revolutionary process and their democracy, sovereignty and self-determination. No Coup in Venezuela! U.S./Canada: Hands Off Venezuela! □

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WW PHOTO: JOSHUA HANKS



PHOTO: FIRE THIS TIME

WW Commentary The united lies of the global ruling class

By John Catalinotto

Jan. 27 — The ultra-right media and the mainstream corporate media took a break this week from some months of vicious baiting of each other. They instead joined hands to slander Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

This latest assault on sovereign Bolivarian Venezuela exposes the united criminality of the imperialist ruling class. This includes the corporate media, both major U.S. political parties and Washington's allies, which are trying to resurrect their colonial empires.

Here are two of many media examples: the first from the pro-Trump, ultra-right Fox News; the second from the corporate mainstream, anti-Trump New York Times. Both media's goals are to defame the Maduro government and justify U.S. intervention.

A Jan. 26 Fox News opinion piece: "The Trump administration's announcement Wednesday to recognize Venezuelan National Assembly leader Juan Guaidó as interim president of Venezuela amid the current popular uprising against the anti-democratic socialist Maduro regime was an act of brilliant statecraft."

A Jan. 24 New York Times editorial:

"That Mr. Maduro must go has been obvious for some time. Since he succeeded the leftist strongman Hugo Chávez in 2013, his mismanagement, cronyism and corruption, exacerbated by the drop in the price of oil, Venezuela's dominant source of revenue, have brought the country to ruin. ... The Trump administration is right to support Mr. Guaidó."

Both parties join the slime

Likewise, the two imperialist political parties, Republican and Democratic, which have been battling over the budget and the government shutdown, united against the Venezuelan people and its elected government.

The Trump gang have been agitating for intervention, and of course, they blame Maduro for everything and call him incompetent, brutal and corrupt.

With a handful of exceptions, Democratic Party leaders have taken a position like that of Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin. He blamed Maduro for a "sham election" and praised Trump for having "appropriately recognized National Assembly President Juan Guaidó as the constitutionally appropriate leader of Venezuela." (Miami Herald, Jan. 25)

Even the handful of left Democrats

criticized Maduro.

In reality, in elections held with international observers who approved them, Maduro won 68 percent of the votes cast and 32 percent of the eligible voters. Trump only won 46 percent of votes cast and 27 percent of eligible voters — fewer than his opponent.

Guaidó won 0 percent on both counts; he represents nothing. Except the fact that Vice President Mike Pence called Guaidó and pledged him U.S. support the night before he named himself interim president. (Wall Street Journal, Jan. 25)

World imperialism's united opinion

The U.S. imperialist allies — which are also rivals — have joined the festival of slander aimed at Maduro. Canada and Britain bent to the U.S. as usual. Spain, former genocidal conqueror of Latin America; France, former colonial overlord of large swaths of the world; and Germany, which opened two world wars to try to get its share of plunder; all did too. Though they added a little twist.

The three insisted Maduro set new elections "within eight days" or they would recognize Guaidó. Maduro accused them of kneeling before Washington and said no one can give Venezuela ultimatums.

With the British government unable to carry out a Brexit (itself based on anti-immigrant backwardness), the Spanish rulers buried in corruption from the royal family down, the French cops shooting rubber bullets at Yellow Vests, and the German government an unhealthy coalition facing racist opposition gangs, it's a wonder these regimes don't choke on their hypocrisy.

As in the period building up to the Vietnam War, to the 1991 war against Iraq, to the bombing and destruction of Yugoslavia in 1999, etc., the media and the governments' near unanimity give the population the false impression that all right-thinking people want "regime change" in Venezuela.

The truth, however, is that this manufactured public opinion is based on the imperialist oppressors' joint hatred for any nation or people that challenges their rule. If that nation happens to also be sitting on the world's largest oil reserves, the imperialists will repeat any lie and commit any crime to grab it.

Anyone who believes sovereign peoples have a right to their resources will unite to reject these media lies and the ruling class that orders and buys them. □

South Asian group condemns U.S. attack on Venezuelan gov't

Manik Mukherjee, vice president of the All India Anti-imperialist Forum (AIAIF), issued the following statement:

The All India Anti-imperialist Forum strongly condemns the U.S.-masterminded move to overthrow President Nicolás Maduro from power, and thereby bring about a coup in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The USA and its bootlickers, the opposition forces, are constantly spreading the lie that President Maduro is a dictator, usurper and illegitimate. However, President Maduro was elected by the Venezuelan people last May with an overwhelming majority, and the election was held under the observation and monitoring of more than 150 international teams, who considered the election to be free, fair, transparent, peaceful and democratic.

With typical imperialist arrogance USA has announced the right-wing opposition leader Juan Guaidó as the "legitimate

President" who was not even a candidate in the last presidential election. This is tantamount to an abject, illegal interference in another country's sovereignty in the name of democracy to get rid of non-submissive governments.

USA has a notorious record of installing puppet regimes in recalcitrant states under the pernicious slogan of "regime change" and of supporting reactionary right-wing dictatorships so long as they toe the U.S.-sponsored line. They are trying to follow the same tactics in Venezuela. Ever since the time of Hugo Chávez they have been conspiring to destabilize the popular governments in Venezuela. They have been instrumental in ruining the economy of Venezuela by imposing totally unjust and illegal economic sanctions, and are now out to nakedly intervene to bring about a regime change. Such interventions have nothing to do with democracy, but the sole aim is to strengthen U.S. hegemony

and tyranny.

The so-called "pro-democracy mass-movement," as depicted by Western media, is organized from outside, feeding the disgruntled elements trained by U.S. rulers.

These forces are working in Venezuela [for a long time to bring] about the downfall of the economy through monetary and oil price manipulation from outside and from within; and by diverting food and medicine shipments from being delivered to supermarkets and instead transferring them as contraband into Colombia, where they are sold at dollar-manipulated inflated local currencies.

Guaidó has declared himself as interim head of the country on the 23rd of January 2019. Without any legitimate ground, he has, in a naked manner, trampled on democratic rights with the full backing of U.S. imperialists and their lackeys.

He has appealed to the army to turn against democratically elected President Maduro and to support him instead.

However, the army has not recognized him as the President of Venezuela and is backing President Maduro. Guaidó has announced his plans to overthrow all the social welfare measures of the previous governments and to bring in mass privatization and to follow neoliberal capitalist policies.

All the progressive-minded people from different sections are protesting against the heinous move of the coup by the U.S. rulers led by Donald Trump who are trying to bulldoze and take over Venezuela!

The AIAIF calls upon the people of all nations not to be deceived by the false propaganda of USA and rise up in protest against the manipulations of the U.S. imperialists and stand firmly by the Venezuelan masses who are struggling to protect their sovereignty.

Anyone who believes sovereign peoples have a right to their resources will unite to reject these media lies and the ruling class that orders and buys them. □

Venezuela

A tense calm in Caracas

By Marco Teruggi
Caracas

Teruggi is an Argentine journalist and social scientist who lives in Caracas and who contributes articles to various left publications. Translation by Michael Otto. Original: pagina12.com.ar.

Jan. 28 — It looked over the weekend like a rearrangement of positions was taking place, a maturation of international variables and buying time at the national level.

The right wing held assemblies on Saturday (Jan. 26), and on Sunday launched its call to draw in the Bolivarian National Armed Force (FANB) — the opposition refuses to use the word Bolivarian — in handing them the so-called Law of Amnesty and Constitutional Guarantees for Military and Civilians. The law has been approved by the National Assembly, a body declared illegal by the Supreme Court of Justice, but legality is not the issue today when it comes to an attempted coup d'état.

That law proposes two acts: to pardon those who have engaged in the violent actions from 1999 to date, and to give the green light to those who would lead those acts from now on. The right wing self-proclaims its president and grants itself a future self-pardon.

U.S. targets Venezuela's military

The central objective is the FANB, the

axis around which the main speculations revolve. How to add the armed forces to the plan in progress, i.e., how to get a sector to lead the power play.

The relations of the right wing with FANB have been contradictory: On the one hand the right wing has publicly denigrated it, attacked it with bottles of excrement in the street and with weapons of war in the barracks — as in 2017 — at the same time that they have called on the FANB to follow the different plans to withdraw recognition from Nicolás Maduro. The right wing knows they need the FANB, both to carry out the coup and to sustain the future order they would like to impose.

While the right wing has bought time, the situation continued to develop internationally. Threats continued to multiply, such as the one posed by U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton who tweeted Jan. 27: "Any violence and intimidation against U.S. diplomatic personnel, Venezuela's democratic leader, Juan Guaidó, or the National Assembly itself would represent a grave assault on the rule of law and will be met with a significant response." (euractiv.com, Jan. 28)

The United States also recognized a diplomatic representative of the parallel virtual government, Carlos Vecchio, a fugitive from Venezuelan justice and leader of Voluntad Popular, the party to which Guaidó belongs. Voluntad Popular (Popular Will) is the force that has been most closely associated with armed/paramilitary groups in the country;

Vecchio is associated with a member of his party who took part in the dismemberment of a woman in 2015.

In addition to that, Benjamin Netanyahu announced that the Israeli government will recognize Guaidó. The United States finished gathering all the parts of the bloc it leads: France, Germany, Spain, Britain, Israel, Canada and the Lima Group without Mexico. The European Union members threatened that if Venezuela held no elections in eight days — now seven — they will recognize Guaidó.

"No one can give us an ultimatum. If someone wants to get out of Venezuela, let him go," Maduro said on a day marked by FANB military exercises in different parts of the country. There will be no elections.

The different pieces have been placed on the chessboard. It awaits the next steps that will put into motion their plan — a plan that isn't spelled out — a plan Guaidó summarizes in three phases: "End the usurpation, transition government, free elections." And Guaidó refuses all dialogue — although there has been a dialogue (in Santo Domingo), in which the government showed good will, but the opposition broke it.

How does "end of usurpation" become reality? Without that, it is difficult to imagine a real transitional government and a call for elections. So far everything is just virtual reality.

On the other hand, it is necessary to wait for the balance sheets that the United

States provides after the assembly of the Organization of American States and the Security Council of the United Nations.

We'll find out when it happens

Did Washington know that they would fail to achieve the necessary majority? Are they willing to take the next steps without that agreement? We'll find out when we see what happens.

The strategy regarding Venezuela does not seem to have consensus within the Democratic and Republican parties. Guaidó is presented in various media as an "opposition leader" and not as what he was told he would be, i.e., "interim president." In addition to being a virtual president, he is also the object of mockery on social networks, with labels such as #GuaidoChallenge [people self-appointing themselves leaders of cities, organizations, etc.].

Was Guaidó, a second-class figure in the right wing, put in that role because he could be sacrificed as part of the strategy? That will also be reflected in the evolution of events.

The weekend ended with more questions than certainties.

Meanwhile, Venezuela goes on with a deeply broken normality, with public meetings of President Maduro speaking to young people and the FANB, and mobilizations of Chavismo in various parts of the country. What lies behind the tense calm? □

Union report uncovers discrimination at Grinnell College

By Mike Kühlenbeck
Grinnell, Iowa

A new report by the Union of Grinnell Student Dining Workers uncovers evidence of racial discrimination against Spencer Grill employees. (tinyurl.com/y9l1tf6s)

The Spencer Grill, located on campus, is the college's second largest employer in dining services, with 90 student workers, four staff members, three supervisors and an assistant director acting as chief supervisor.

On Jan. 21, UGSDW released its report, "Racial Discrimination at the Spencer Grill." Commissioned last November, the study found "strong evidence of racial discrimination in discipline decisions."

According to the report, "This discrimination is borne primarily by African-American employees and 'non-resident alien' (i.e., international student) employees, the vast majority of whom are from Asia."

The report studied 162 student workers employed at the Grill over the past four semesters. The data provided go back to 2017, but UGSDW conversations with past employees suggest discriminatory trends potentially occurred as early as 2014.

The study was authored by Grinnell student Cory McCartan, a math major pursuing a Ph.D. in statistics, who served as UGSDW president in 2016-17 and now works as an advisor to the union.

McCartan told Workers World, "We'd heard from several Spencer Grill employees in the past about discrimination, and so the results of the analysis were not as surprising as they perhaps should have been, given Grinnell's institutional values and history."

In response, the Grinnell administration circulated a Jan. 25 memo that read, in part: "[T]he College takes the concerns raised in UGSDW's report very seriously, and we are committed to investigating the matter thoroughly." (tinyurl.com/ybdjv8zt)

However, UGSDW members are concerned the administration will try to sweep these concerns under the rug.

"UGSDW will push the administration to take serious



PHOTO: UGSDW

Some members of the Union of Grinnell Student Dining Workers gather on the Grinnell College grounds, Dec. 7, 2018.

corrective action, including new training, more oversight and possible personnel changes," McCartan said. "We will not accept a 'task force' or other attempt to bury the issue."

Given the Grinnell administration's hostile relationship with UGSDW, that is a legitimate concern.

Student workers organizing for justice at Grinnell

UGSDW was founded in 2016 to represent students working in the dining hall. Seeking to expand membership, the union held a Nov. 27 campuswide election where student workers voted 274-54 in favor of joining.

The Grinnell administration challenged the election, threatening to take the matter up with the Trump-influenced National Board of Labor Relations. Since the board's decision could endanger future organizing efforts, UGSDW withdrew its petition on Dec. 14.

"We are continuing to organize toward higher wages, fair workplace treatment and a union for all of campus," McCartan said.

When WW contacted Grinnell College for comment, the response from Vice President of Communications Debra Lukehart was a perfunctory repetition of the school's Jan. 25 memo.

UGSDW advisor McCartan emphasized, "We are working to broaden and deepen support in the campus and town community, and especially are working to engage with all of our members about a potential large-scale action later in the semester." □

Stop U.S. coup against Venezuela!

Continued from page 1

There have also been reports that the U.S. government may attempt to seize the assets of Citgo, a subsidiary of Venezuela's national oil company that operates in the U.S.

International support for Maduro

In the Security Council session, 19 of 35 countries came out against U.S. interference in Venezuela. A common theme among these countries, which include Cuba, Bolivia, China, Russia, Mexico, South Africa, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Uruguay, Barbados, Equatorial Guinea and Dominica, was the need to respect the sovereignty of the Venezuelan people.

The Cuban representative reminded the Council of the many dictatorships U.S. imperialism imposed on Latin American countries in the 20th century, and stressed the right of national sovereignty for the nations of the hemisphere. Cuba also highlighted the role the U.S. government has played in previous attempts to specifically overthrow Bolivarian rule.

The Russian and Chinese governments also reiterated their support for the legitimate government of Venezuela, reminding the council of the elections held in May in which Maduro was re-elected. Both governments recently signed trade deals with Venezuela intended to help counter the economic pressure of U.S. sanctions.

Mexico once again offered to host a comprehensive dialogue between the government and the opposition. At the time of this writing, Maduro has accepted Mexico's offer but the opposition has not.

The diplomatic victory at the U.N. comes just days after the U.S. and its puppet governments failed to pass a similar motion in the Organization of American States, an organization that has been dominated by U.S. imperialism throughout its existence.

In many of the countries that have recognized the opposition government, demonstrations have been held to reject the possibility of military intervention. In the U.S., demonstrations in support of the Bolivarian government have been held in many cities, including New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Miami, Dallas, Houston, and Los Angeles, San Jose, and San Francisco in California. □

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

U.S. hands off Venezuela!

Workers World Party calls on the movement here in the U.S. to unite in the streets to defend the elected Nicolás Maduro government of Venezuela against Washington's blatant coup attempt, aimed at rolling back the gains made by the Bolivarian Revolution. This aggression is an attack on working and oppressed peoples everywhere.


Venezuela's sovereignty is at stake as the Trump administration has formally anointed a small right-wing grouping with unknown "leaders" in Venezuela, calling it the "legitimate" government. This refusal to recognize the will of the Venezuelan people, who have consistently elected leaders committed to the path of independence from Washington, is imperialist arrogance taken to its height.

It is also a clear threat that U.S. imperialism intends to intervene openly to overthrow the Venezuelan government and install its own puppets, as it tried to do in 1961 with the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs invasion against

revolutionary Cuba.

In the 21st century alone U.S. imperialism has lied to the population here, inventing pretexts to bomb, invade and overthrow governments in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, committing war crimes and murdering millions of people. It has killed other hundreds of thousands in Syria through subversion, sabotage and bombing. These costly U.S. wars devoured hundreds of billions of dollars and created tens of millions of refugees abroad, even as public services here are starved for funds.

There is no doubt that were this latest imperialist intervention in Venezuela to succeed, it would increase the tide — and the suffering — of economic and political refugees who already are fleeing repressive governments installed in Central America with Washington's blessing.

Let's be in the streets to say: No more coups! No more regime change! Hands off Venezuela! 



Mumia Abu-Jamal on 'Venezuela and presidential legitimacy'

The following slightly edited commentary was recorded by political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and is posted on prisonradio.org.

Jan. 24 — Now the U.S. President (Donald Trump) has decided that he will determine who is, and who isn't, the legitimate leader of a foreign country.

He has said that Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela was illegitimate, and he supported Maduro's opponent for national leadership of the country.

What if Maduro declared that Trump, who received some 3 million less votes than his opponent, Hillary Clinton, was illegitimate?

Who would listen?

For, in truth, Trump sits in the White House only because of the slavery-era artifact


known as the Electoral College — an institution designed to deny democracy to millions of Africans, and to assure Southern hegemony.

Isn't the so-called Electoral College fundamentally illegitimate? The Electoral College should be immediately abolished!

In a Sept. 9, 2018, edition of the New York Times, Trump officials touched base with Venezuelan military officials to support a coup against President Maduro.

For much of the 19th and 20th centuries, the U.S. decided who should rule in Latin America, based upon such nonsense as the Monroe Doctrine, a pretext for U.S. imperialism.

Lest we miss the play, Monroe is back.

What a shame! 

Spanish State

Red Network militants accused of 'financing terrorism'

By John Catalinotto

Ángeles Maestro, leader of Red Roja (Red Network) in the Spanish state, and two of her comrades have been accused of "financing terrorism" by raising and delivering funds to Palestinian organizations which help the victims of the Israeli military's attacks on Gaza in 2014 and 2015.

The Israeli attacks killed hundreds and wounded thousands of Palestinian people, while destroying many homes, schools and hospitals.

Maestro, who was an elected member of the Spanish National Assembly in the 1990s for the United Left party, may be known to readers of Workers World, as some of her articles and analysis have been published here.

The three militants have been summoned to appear before Court No. 6 of the National High Court on Feb. 5, which will decide how to proceed against them. Two Israeli associations based in Spain filed the complaint, working through a U.S.-based lawyer. The accused face a possible sentence of 1-5 years in prison and a fine of about 25,000 euro, now worth about \$28,600.

The group collected the funds mostly through small contributions of 10-20 euro and delivered them to well-known Palestinian liberation fighter Leila Khaled, who was on a speaking tour

in Spain at the time.

Maestro says she believes the charge is based on Khaled's membership in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which the European Union in 2002, in an anti-Arab frenzy following the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., declared to be a "terrorist organization."

Maestro explained in an interview with Canarias Semanal on Jan. 28 how Zionist organizations intervene to try to stop solidarity with Palestine: "In the Spanish state, for example, numerous city councils, universities, etc., have reached agreements not to support the institutions of the State of Israel, in the framework of the BDS campaign (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions). Faced with this, the Zionist lobby responds by trying to criminalize this solidarity and launching the accusation of "anti-Semitism."

Maestro and the Red Network pledge to continue their solidarity work with the Palestinian struggle for self-determination.

To read the communiqué of the Red Network in English, see tinyurl.com/yc6zeq3z. 



Ángeles Maestro, leader of Red Roja

Cuban Communist Party: 'Venezuela is not alone'



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

The following article appeared in the Jan. 25 English edition of Granma, the official voice of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee. Go to tinyurl.com/y7crzn9y.

The Venezuelan people are mobilized, following the call of their legitimate President, Nicolás Maduro, to defend their sovereignty, peace and constitutionality, after recent moves in the United States to instigate a coup.

The maneuvers came after Juan Guaidó, president of a National Assembly in contempt, declared himself interim president of Venezuela, and was recognized as such by the U.S. and its allies.

Despite this, the Maduro government continues to enjoy the majority support of the international community, with global powers such as Russia and China reiterating its legitimacy and condemning any foreign interference.

Governors, Supreme Tribunal of Justice, the electoral and citizen powers uphold the Constitution

The Electoral Power of Venezuela, represented by the National Electoral Council (CNE), demanded respect for the will of the Venezuelan people, who constitutionally elected Nicolás Maduro for a second term as President in May 2018. "The CNE repudiates and condemns the complete disregard and violation of the constitutional order demonstrated on January 23," stated CNE President Tibisay Lucena.

Meanwhile, Maikel Moreno, president of the Supreme Tribunal of Justice, confirmed that the judicial system recognizes Nicolás Maduro's authority as constitutional president of the nation, and does not recognize the move to usurp him, against the will of the people.

Attorney General Tarek William Saab, on behalf of the Citizen Power, condemned the attempted coup and expressed unrestricted support for the Executive.

According to Prensa Latina, governors of 19 Venezuelan states called for the preservation of peace, respect for democracy and the sovereignty of the South American country, and rejected violent acts by sectors of the opposition. Governor of Miranda State, Héctor Rodríguez, noted: "The country's security forces are deployed to guarantee the peace of the nation."

Jan. 26 protest, NYC.

Military ratified Maduro as Commander in Chief

Commanders of the Strategic Integral Defense Regions (REDI) of Venezuela ratified their commitment to the Constitution and support for President Nicolás Maduro, as their Commander in Chief, and rejected international interference in the country's internal affairs.

Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino stressed: "The FANB will defend the Venezuelan Constitution as the guarantor of national sovereignty."

The international community supports Venezuela

Member countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA-TCP) supported and recognized Maduro as the legitimate President of Venezuela, in the face of the coup threats promoted by the United States. In a statement they reiterated that they will only recognize as representatives of Venezuela in multilateral and bilateral spheres, diplomatic officials appointed by the Executive Power headed by President Maduro, and no supposed transitional government.

Meanwhile, teleSUR reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin called Maduro to express his continued support and "emphasized that destructive external interference is a gross violation of the fundamental norms of international law."

The government of Nicaragua released a statement of its support: "The Great Homeland does not submit, it stands proud, with the Love of its Nations. United in ALBA, we are all Venezuela. Latin America and the Caribbean, the cradle of great and luminous beings, demands dignity and greatness against the empire."

"China supports the efforts made by the Venezuelan government to uphold national sovereignty, independence and stability," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said during a press conference. "We always follow the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, we oppose foreign interference in the internal affairs of Venezuela and we hope that the international community will also follow this principle," she concluded.

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Davos, ‘social cohesion’ and capitalism

By Deirdre Griswold

Even as the stock markets continue their turbulence, other symptoms of the growing capitalist crisis abound.

The annual conclave of zillionaires and their hangers-on at the lavish Swiss resort of Davos is usually the occasion for a celebration of capitalism, even though the participants will admit to it having a few flaws. The presumption is that the exploitation of labor by a few, and all the ills that result from that, can be patched over with a few social programs.

But this year, the assembled fortunate few at Davos were shaken by a letter from U.S. billionaire investor Seth Klarman. (You never heard of Klarman? Lots of the super-rich these days avoid putting their names on things, unlike the Rockefellers and Fords of an earlier time.)

Klarman’s letter came in the middle of the Yellow Vest protests in France. It came when Oxfam had just reported that the combined fortunes of only 26 of the world’s richest people were equal to the combined wealth of the 3.8 billion poorest people in the world.

Billionaire mourns loss of ‘social cohesion’

Klarman warned his friends at Davos that “social cohesion is essential for those who have capital to invest.” His message to his billionaire buddies was that things will fall apart if they continue to subordinate everything to their pursuit of quick profits. He reminded them that anger is rising everywhere as poverty grows alongside obscene wealth, and that this is already manifesting itself in spontaneous uprisings, like the one in France.

Last August, Pew Research reported that U.S. real wages, taking into account inflation, were now at the level they had been back in 1974. Prices, however,

especially rents, have soared. Most people don’t need to read the figures to know that it is becoming more and more impossible to make ends meet. The result is growing mass anger — tearing apart the “social cohesion” that allowed the rich to rule without fear of a social explosion.

For decades mass anger has boiled over into outright rebellion in those countries super-oppressed by U.S. and European imperialism. But now the potential for rebellion exists within the imperialist countries themselves. That is what has the billionaires so worried.

Back in 2016, a poll taken by the Harvard Institute of Politics found that only 42 percent of millennials supported capitalism. That figure is even lower now.

Which is why Klarman cautioned his peers at Davos: “People will say the words ‘Wall Street’ with a derogatory tone. They’re talking about an immoral place, where there’s just disgusting amounts of greed and nothing good happens — which isn’t fair and isn’t true.”

Ah, yes, the poor misunderstood capitalists.

But, to be fair, the capitalist class is not just a collection of greedy individuals. It is not their personal traits that are the problem. It is the very nature of the system itself.

Klarman denies this, insisting: “It’s a choice to do things that ‘maximize profits,’ to pay people as little as you can, or work them as hard as you can. It’s a choice to maintain pleasant working conditions or, alternatively, particularly harsh ones, to offer good benefits or paltry ones.”

Klarman is an investor, a money man making profits off the stock markets.

But the capitalists who actually run the industries that create the profits the money men gamble with — they know what the real deal is.

The capitalist owners know they have

to beat out the competition if they are to survive. And that means just one thing: It is greater exploitation of the workers that makes them succeed, not greater intelligence or a greater appetite for risk.

Harsh exploitation is where their profits come from — and the ones that can’t or won’t do that are pushed aside.

Socialism and economic development

The question now on the minds of many is: What can replace capitalism? And, despite all the difficulties endured by countries that have had socialist revolutions, socialism keeps coming up as the only answer.

The advanced development of the means of production in capitalist countries like the U.S., Europe and Japan makes them ready-made for socialism. In fact, it is the tremendous surge in productivity and its subsequent shedding of labor, brought about by high technology in recent decades, that is making capitalism so unstable today.

But the chain of world capitalism broke first in the underdeveloped, poorer countries, precisely because the capitalist class was weakest there and the masses were most revolutionary.

So it took a great struggle in places like the Soviet Union, war-torn Eastern Europe and China to try and develop socialism while building up the means of production and at the same time defending themselves from imperialist aggression. The Soviet Union in the end was defeated, along with the countries of Eastern Europe.

The People’s Republic of China, however, has survived, even as it has compromised with capitalist forces internally and externally to do so. The basic infrastructure in China remains state-owned and the Communist Party — not the billionaires — controls the state.

So it is instructive to see how China

has fared in recent years, even as growing inequality plagues the U.S. and Europe.

According to statista.com, average annual wages in urban China tripled in the decade from 2007 to 2017. Yes, you read that right. Tripled.

If you look up the chart, you will see that this was not an up-and-down, erratic movement. Instead, wages steadily went up by about the same amount year after year. (<https://tinyurl.com/ycq4pbdx>)

In that period, unemployment remained at a constant 4 percent. All this points to the strength of a planned economy — even one that allows capitalist production at the same time.

There is much talk in the bourgeois media about the Chinese economy slowing down. As the number one exporter in the world today, China has to be affected by what is happening in the capitalist countries. But this is having little effect on the overall economic health of the people.

The International Monetary Fund forecast is that the rate of growth of China’s gross domestic product will slow down this year — to 6.3 percent!

By comparison, the IMF and World Bank forecast that U.S. GDP growth will hover around 2 percent — and this is without a big Wall Street crash, which seems increasingly likely.

Conscious, revolutionary movement

While socialism is the logical and inevitable next step for human social development, it won’t just happen “on its own.”

Socialism will be the result of an enormous class struggle. Capitalism will itself destroy the “social cohesion” that has held it together.

But it will take a conscious, revolutionary movement to make sure the working class takes political power away from the decaying institutions of capitalism in order to rebuild society on a socialist basis. □

Cuban Communist Party: ‘Venezuela is not alone’

Continued from page 10

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi told reporters: “The Islamic Republic of Iran supports the government and people of Venezuela against any sort of foreign intervention and any illegitimate and illegal action such as attempt to undertake a coup.”

The Syrian Foreign Ministry expressed its solidarity with Venezuela and with Maduro, condemning U.S. interference.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party of India also criticized foreign intervention and called on the peoples of the world to show solidarity with the Venezuelan people. The French Communist Party and social organizations such as the Paris Bolivarian Circle and the ALBA-TCP Collective in France, the Paraguayan Guasu Front and the German Left Party also expressed their continued support.

In the meantime, the U.S. has hypocritically asked for a U.N. Security Council meeting to discuss the situation in Venezuela. Social networks have been flooded with memes denouncing the interference of the Trump administration. One of them read: “Would you like to become president without going through an uncomfortable popular election? Just call 1800 Mike Pence for an immediate guarantee.” □

Black Alliance for Peace opposes U.S. intervention in Venezuela

The following statement was released on Jan. 25. For more information contact info@blackallianceforpeace.com.

We, the members of the Black Alliance for Peace, uphold our political stance in the face of aggressions waged by the United States. Two of BAP’s core principles are an unwavering commitment to self-determination for peoples and nations alike and opposition to imperialism in all its varied and brutal forms. Therefore, unlike so many who are confused about Venezuela, we say without equivocation that we oppose the illegal and immoral attempts by the United States and their Organization of American States (OAS) allies to interfere in the internal affairs of Venezuela.

No objective right has been bestowed upon the United States to impose its will on any sovereign people or nation. We categorically reject the arrogant and white supremacist assumption that the United States — itself a capitalist dictatorship — should arbitrarily take the liberty to presume leadership and rationalize its intervention into any nation by evoking a flimsy, laughable and ostensible argument that it is supporting democracy and/or human rights.

Were it not for the abject hypocrisy exercised by the United States, the irony in the case of Venezuela would be more laughable than tragic. On the one hand, a nation that annually pretends to honor the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., skirts over the many people’s understanding that he was murdered because of his opposition to U.S. state violence. That the United States would unleash a plan to subvert Venezuela — which would cost thousands of innocent lives — reminds us as Black people of the same methodology applied during the murderous and draconian tenure of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover who unleashed the COINTELPRO program in U.S. Black communities.

Militarized U.S. police forces, many of whom have received training from the Israeli state, enjoy impunity for the state-sanctioned execution of our people.

Like the war party that it was during the Vietnam War

period, the majority of Democrats have dropped their supposed fundamental opposition to Trump to line up in support of this criminal intervention. As always, the “party of the people” demonstrates its brand of subjective righteousness and justice.

We pose the question to progressive forces in the United States: How much more war, how much more death and destruction will you endure before you break with the capitalist duopoly of your government and say no more war, no more subversion, no more killings in my name by a state that by every definition has become a rogue state and threat to global humanity?

There can be no equivocation in the face of injustice and the psychopathology of white supremacist ideology that is unable to respect the rights and humanity of people of the Global Majority — Black and Brown people who are the ones who suffer from these imperialist adventures mobilized by the U.S./EU/NATO axis of domination.

The idea of a benevolent hegemon might be a comforting myth that assuages the conscience of left and progressive forces who engage in open class/race collaboration with the white supremacist, colonial/capitalist patriarchy that is the Western European project. But for those of us relegated to what Frantz Fanon called the “zones of non-being,” we cannot afford any illusions about the nature of what we are up against.

We call on those principled individuals and organizations located at the center of empire to put aside your divisions, stop your collaboration with the rulers and live up to your responsibility to the people of the world who suffer at the hands of this mad, criminal state.

Now is the time to say no, now is the time to build our movement, now is the time for all of us who say we believe in peace to be ready to fight for justice! HANDS OFF VENEZUELA! STOP U.S. SUBVERSION AND LAWLESSNESS! CLOSE U.S. AND NATO BASES! U.S. OUT OF AFRICA — SHUT DOWN AFRICOM! □



FOTO: VENEZUELANALYSIS.COM

Caracas, 23 de enero

¡Solidaridad con Venezuela Bolivariana!

Por Sam Ordóñez

Boletín 29 de enero — *El gobierno de los estados unidos ha anunciado nuevas sanciones contra PDVSA, la compañía de petróleo nacionalizado de Venezuela. Estas sanciones tienen la intención declarada de transferir control de la empresa a la oposición, liderada por Juan Guaidó. Ante esta agresión, y la continuadas amenazas militares de EEUU, los pueblos del mundo apoyan al gobierno bolivariano. En EEUU, el movimiento progresista debe luchar para prevenir más injerencia y terminar todas las guerras imperialistas.*

27 enero — El día sábado 26 de enero pareció como cualquier otro día en Caracas, después de tres días de movilizaciones en defensa del chavismo y el gobierno de Nicolás Maduro. La respuesta del pueblo venezolano ha sido un mensaje claro de unidad frente al intento de golpe de estado norteamericano.

Mientras tanto, en una sesión extraordinaria del Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas, la dimensión geopolítica del golpe seguía desarrollándose. El bloque imperialista de nuevo intentaba pasar una resolución que reconocería al

gobierno golpista de Juan Guaidó.

Principal amenaza interna es económica

A pesar del intento de tomar el poder por la fuerza, el chavismo se ha defendido con movilizaciones masivas, empezando el 23 y que siguieron durante varios días. De nuevo el chavismo ha mostrado que es un movimiento popular, y no la dictadura que se imagina la oposición.

Según encuestas recientes, entre 37 y 41 por ciento del país se autodenominan chavista, y tienen un nivel alto de organización social y política entre los comités locales de abastecimiento y producción (CLAP), organizaciones comunitarias, milicias bolivarianas, y organizaciones políticas nacionales. Es el resultado de dos décadas del proceso bolivariano, que hoy puede llenar las avenidas principales de Caracas de un día a otro.

La fuerza popular del chavismo también ha asegurado la lealtad de las Fuerzas Armadas Nacionales Bolivarianas, que rechazaron a Guaidó. En su inmensa mayoría, las autoridades civiles y jurídicos han apoyado al gobierno bolivariano.

Pero cabe recordar que el arma principal de los Estados Unidos ha sido la guerra económica. Las sanciones impuestas

por el gobierno estadounidense le ha costado a Venezuela 20 mil millones de dólares en 2018. (tinyurl.com/yb5wjuu2)

Mientras que el gobierno venezolano introduce nuevas medidas para combatir la guerra económica como la subida de los salarios y nuevas leyes que prohíben la manipulación de los precios, en Washington se ha anunciado que pronto vendrán nuevas sanciones. También se amenaza con una usurpación de Citgo, subsidiaria de la empresa nacionalizada del petróleo venezolano que opera en Estados Unidos.

Apoyo internacional al gobierno bolivariano

En la sesión de la ONU, 19 de 35 países opinaron en contra de la injerencia y reiteraron que se debía respetar la soberanía del pueblo venezolano. Los países que salieron en contra de la injerencia incluían Cuba, Bolivia, China, Rusia, México, Sudáfrica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Uruguay, Barbados, Guinea Ecuatorial, y Dominica.

El representante de Cuba recordó las dictaduras que Estados Unidos había impuesto en Latinoamérica durante el siglo 20, exigiendo que la soberanía

nacional debía ser respetada. También recordó el papel que había jugado Estados Unidos en los anteriores intentos de golpe de estado en Venezuela.

También los gobiernos de Rusia y China reiteraron su apoyo al gobierno legítimo de Venezuela, recordando las elecciones de mayo 2018 donde ganó Nicolás Maduro. Estos gobiernos también han firmado acuerdos en los últimos meses para combatir la crisis económica que ha sido intensificada como resultado del bloqueo estadounidense.

México reiteró su llamado al diálogo para resolver la crisis, proceso que de momento la oposición venezolana ha rechazado.

Esta victoria diplomática se suma al fracaso del voto de la Organización de Estados Americanos que pretendía legitimar al gobierno golpista.

En varios países cuyos gobiernos apoyaron el golpe de estado, han habido demostraciones en apoyo al gobierno bolivariano y en contra de la posible injerencia de los Estados Unidos. En Estados Unidos, ciudades como Nueva York, Washington DC, Miami, Filadelfia, Dallas, San José y otras han tenido manifestaciones en contra del golpe de estado. □

Caracas vive una tensa calma

Por Marco Teruggi
Caracas

28 de enero — Se vive una tensa calma en Venezuela. Las calles de Caracas son de una normalidad que no se corresponde a la imagen que se ha construido en el exterior ni a la radicalidad de los anuncios dados en los días recientes. Ni los barrios están bajo incendio, ni existen dos gobiernos: autonombrarse presidente sin territorio ni capacidad de ejercer poder solo puede tener efecto en redes sociales, salones diplomáticos y notas de opinión de quienes apoyan a Juan Guaidó.

El fin de semana se asemejó a un reacomodamiento de posiciones, una maduración de las variables internacionales, un ganar de tiempo en lo nacional. La derecha realizó asambleas durante el día sábado, y el domingo puso en marcha su convocatoria para acercarse a la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana (Fanb) —la oposición le ha quitado la palabra Bolivariana— a entregarle la denominada Ley de Amnistía y Garantías Constitucionales para los Militares y Civiles.

La ley ha sido aprobada por la Asamblea Nacional declarada en ilegalidad por el Tribunal Supremo de Justicia, pero la legalidad no es el punto hoy cuando se trata de un intento de golpe de Estado. Esa Ley plantea dos actos: perdonar a quienes hayan incurrido en las acciones violentas de 1999 hasta la fecha, y dar luz verde a quienes los encabezarían de aquí en adelante. La derecha se autoproclama presidenta y se otorga futuros autoperdones.

El objetivo central es la Fanb, eje alrededor del cual giran las principales especulaciones. Cómo lograr sumarla al plan en marcha, es decir cómo lograr que un sector encabece la acción de fuerza. Las relaciones de la derecha con la Fanb han sido contradictorias: por un lado la han denigrado públicamente, atacado con frascos de heces en la calle y armas de guerra en sus cuarteles —como en el 2017— a la vez que las han llamado a seguir los diferentes planes de no reconocimiento de Nicolás Maduro. Saben que las necesitan, tanto para lograr el desenlace del asalto, como para sostener el futuro orden que intentarían imponer.

Mientras la derecha ganaba tiempo, el cuadro continuó

su desarrollo en el plano internacional. Las amenazas siguieron multiplicándose, como la propiciada por John Bolton, asesor de Seguridad Nacional de los Estados Unidos, quien afirmó: “Cualquier violencia e intimidación contra el personal diplomático estadounidense, el líder democrático de Venezuela, o la Asamblea Nacional, representaría un grave asalto a la legalidad y estará seguido de una respuesta significativa”.

Vecchio, prófugo de la justicia

Estados Unidos reconoció además a un representante diplomático del gobierno virtual paralelo, Carlos Vecchio, prófugo de la justicia venezolana, dirigente de Voluntad Popular, el partido al que pertenece Guaidó. Voluntad Popular es la fuerza que más ha estado relacionada con los grupos armados/paramilitares en el país, y Vecchio con un militante de su partido que fue parte de un descuartizamiento a una mujer en el 2015.

Junto a eso, Benjamin Netanyahu anunció que el gobierno israelí reconocerá a Guaidó. El bloque liderado por los Estados Unidos terminó de juntar a todas sus partes: Francia, Alemania, España, Gran Bretaña, Israel, Canadá, Grupo de Lima sin México. En el caso de los países de la Unión Europea afirmaron que de no darse elecciones en ocho días —que ahora son siete— reconocerán a Guaidó.

“Nadie puede darnos un ultimátum. Si alguien quiere irse de Venezuela, que se vaya”, afirmó Maduro en una jornada marcada por los ejercicios militares de la Fanb en diferentes puntos del país (ver aparte). No habrá elecciones.

Las diferentes piezas parecen posicionadas en el tablero. Se está a la espera de los próximos pasos que dará en función del plan que no termina de clarificar cómo hará lo que anuncia, que Guaidó resume en tres fases: “cese de usurpación, gobierno de transición, elecciones libres”, y se niega a todo diálogo —aunque existieron y terminó por reconocerlos producto de las evidencias presentadas por el gobierno—. ¿Cómo se materializa el cese de usurpación? Sin eso resulta difícil imaginar un gobierno real de transición y un llamado a elecciones. Todo resulta 2.0 hasta el momento.

Por otro lado es necesario esperar los balances que

Estados Unidos realice luego de la asamblea de la Organización de Estados Americanos y del Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas. ¿Sabían que no lograrían la mayoría necesaria? ¿Están dispuestos a dar próximos pasos sin contar con ese acuerdo? Se verá en los hechos.

La estrategia respecto a Venezuela no parece tener consenso en el interior de las fuerzas demócratas y republicanas. Guaidó es presentado en varios medios como “líder opositor” y no como lo que le dijeron que sería, es decir “presidente interino”.

Además de presidente virtual es además objeto de burla en las redes sociales, con etiquetas en redes sociales como #GuaidoChallenge. ¿Guaidó, cuadro secundario de la derecha, fue puesto en ese rol porque puede ser sacrificado como parte de la estrategia? También se verá en la evolución de los acontecimientos.

El fin de semana terminó con más preguntas que certezas. Mientras tanto Venezuela siguió con una normalidad quebrada en lo profundo, actos del presidente Maduro ante jóvenes y la Fanb, movilizaciones del chavismo en varios puntos del país. ¿Qué se esconde tras la tensa calma?

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El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida



www.LowWageCapitalism.com

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.

Durante décadas, la clase capitalista ha utilizado la revolución tecnológica digital para aumentar la productividad del trabajo a un ritmo récord. Menos trabajadores producen más bienes y servicios en menos tiempo con salarios más bajos. El resultado es una serie de “recuperaciones sin empleos” que hace que las cosas vayan aún peor.

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.