

As solidarity actions grow

Venezuelans resist U.S. ploy

By John Catalinotto

Feb. 25 — The first showdown in the latest U.S.-led aggression against Venezuela ended on Feb. 23 in a clear defeat on the ground for the imperialist forces and their local lackeys.

None of the so-called opposition attempts managed to force the U.S. “humanitarian aid” into Venezuela. (See article, p. 10.) Colombian state forces and armed gangs created some short-lived havoc on the bridges, but no provocation succeeded in opening a path for goods, weapons and troops to cross.

Having lost this battle, the White House gang directing this assault adopted tactics pushed during the occupation of Iraq by George W. Bush’s War Secretary Donald Rumsfeld: “If you can’t solve a problem, make it bigger.” Unable to win with reactionary forces from Venezuela, they threatened direct U.S. military intervention.

First, they lied about what happened on Feb. 23. They had orchestrated the confrontation at the bridges to try to force the Bolivarian troops to fire on the “opposition” and then use this to justify imperialist intervention. The international corporate media machine spread this line.

That didn’t happen, and in an article that mostly attacked the Maduro government, the New York Times finally called the scene at the border “chaotic and inconclusive,” adding, “although a few members of the security forces defected, Mr. Guaidó’s hope that the armed forces would step aside and even join his flag-waving supporters did not come to pass.” (Feb. 23)

The worldwide movement in solidarity with Bolivarian Venezuela knows the following: Every meeting, demonstration, article and tweet that counters these lies and supports Venezuela’s sovereignty is part of the battle to stop another U.S.-led war of aggression.

Second, the White House gang leaders were sent to Colombia to meet with their puppet, Juan Guaidó, and threaten war against Venezuela. Guaidó was photographed, looking like the pawn he is, next to Vice President Mike Pence and Colombian President Iván Duque at a meeting of the 14-member Group of Lima.

Although most of this group of countries from the Western Hemisphere has attacked Venezuela and the government of Nicolás Maduro — with Mexico dissenting — it refuses to authorize a military strike. The European Union has lined up with Washington behind the verbal and economic attacks on the Caracas government. However, the EU also won’t endorse a military strike.

Neither the leaders of the Group of Lima nor those of the EU are willing to take responsibility for openly supporting a Yankee invasion and occupation of Venezuela.

In the United Nations, many countries — outsiders beyond the immediate imperialist orbit — have continued to recognize the Maduro government. The upstart Guaidó was a virtual unknown in Venezuela until Pence told him to name himself “interim president” in January.

This lack of world support did nothing to stop the White House gang — including Sen. Marco Rubio — from making

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New Yorkers tell Wall Street: 'Hands off Venezuela!' Coast-to-coast solidarity actions, pp. 6-7.

PHOTO: JOE CATRON

Editorial

Trump’s Trojan horses stuck in the mud!

When the U.S. McCarthyite-in-Chief said on Feb. 19, “The twilight hour of socialism has arrived,” the Venezuelan people answered, “Not so fast!”

President Donald Trump had all but predicted the collapse of the Bolivarian government on Feb. 18 when he addressed Miami’s anti-Chavista Venezuelan community. He was flanked by right-wing Cuban-Americans Sen. Mario Rubio and Rep. Mario Diaz-Belart, plus National Security Adviser John Bolton and other reactionary allies.

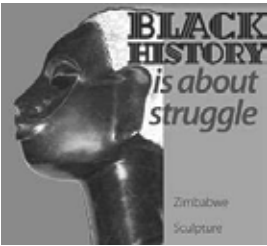
The attempted delivery of “humanitarian aid” on Feb. 23 over the Rio Arauca, which separates Venezuela from Colombia, was supposed to incite the Venezuelan military and police to desert and the masses to abandon the revolutionary process. It was

supposed to give world imperialism an opening to topple President Nicolás Maduro.

Then, according to Trump, it would be only a matter of time before the governments of Cuba and Nicaragua fell, too. This side of the world would become “the first free hemisphere in all of human history,” he said. (CBS News)

“Hold your horses,” said the rest of the world. People around the world had already declared that Feb. 23, a month after presidential pretender Juan Guaidó announced the attempted coup, would be a global day of protest to loudly demand “No war on Venezuela.”

The success and scope of the Feb. 23 protests went
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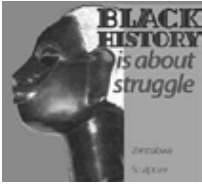
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By Doloress Cox

The 400-year existence of Africans and their descendants in the U.S. can be summed up with a word like “exclusion.” Also never-ending racial hatred and violence toward Black people. This includes 85 years of Jim Crow/ apartheid legal segregation and discrimination from the end of Reconstruction in 1877 to the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s.

Traveling while Black throughout the U.S. for work or leisure was always challenging for African Americans. Beginning in colonial times, controls and restrictions were placed on their movements and activities.

After the Depression of the 1930s ended and more African Americans could afford automobiles, they chose the freedom of driving as opposed to riding segregated buses and trains and enduring insults, humiliation and hostility. However, driving while Black was often fraught with not only rejection, but also harassment, inconveniences and hardships on and off the road, as well as age-old racial profiling by the police.

On the road, Black travelers had difficulty obtaining gas and getting cars repaired. They faced denial of restroom use in rest stops like Howard Johnson. Families had to bring a pail and toilet paper with them and include a bucket of extra gasoline in the trunk. They also had to prepare and pack meals for trips because they were refused entry and/or service in restaurants.

Finding overnight accommodations was daunting. Blacks often had to resort to sleeping in their cars, on the ground or in a barn. Navigating these alternatives was often risky and dangerous. Additionally, thousands of towns across the country were “sundown towns”—off limits to African Americans after sunset and violently enforced.

Out of necessity, Victor Hugo Green, a resident of Harlem, created a travel guide for Black travelers. Green was a Black World War I veteran and postal letter carrier. He edited and published the guide annually or seasonally from 1936 to 1966. It provided a directory of safe, hospitable and relatively friendly hotels, motels, rooming houses, garages and restaurants in New York state. Soon

he expanded listings to other parts of the country. Green also became a travel agent and made reservations for subscribers. He and his agents in the field would personally travel across the country to check on the accuracy and condition of places.

Originally named “The Negro Motorist Green Book,” it contained thousands of listings arranged alphabetically by state and city within that state. It became known as “the bible of Black travel during Jim Crow,” and was distributed by mail order and Black-owned businesses, expanding from 10 pages to more than 80. At least 15,000 copies were sold yearly.

The foreword of the 1956 edition stated: “The White traveler has had no difficulty in getting accommodations, but with the Negro it has been different. He, before the advent of a Negro travel guide, had to depend on word of mouth, and many times accommodations were not available.”

One of the last editions of the book included “Your Rights, Briefly Speaking,” featuring state statutes related to discrimination in travel accommodations. “The Negro is only demanding what everyone else wants. What is guaranteed all citizens by the Constitution of the U.S.”

As recreational travel by African Americans increased, a vacation section was added in 1947, which listed resorts, theaters, pools, beaches, golf courses and guest houses that were safe havens where Black people could relax and freely enjoy vacations or business trips. Later, hotels and guest houses in Alaska, the Caribbean, Mexico and Montreal, Canada, were included.

Civil Rights activism led to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that outlawed racial discrimination in public places. The year before, the “Green Book” acknowledged that activism had increased accessible accommodations. The title of the last edition was changed to “Traveler’s Green Book: International Edition.”

A recent Hollywood film entitled “Green Book” has a storyline about a real-life Black pianist, Dr. Don Shirley, traveling south from New York City in 1962. It informs or reminds viewers of the existence of Victor Green’s “Green Book” for Black travelers. The film just won Oscars for Best Supporting Actor, Best Original Screenplay and Best Picture. □

WORKERS WORLD

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Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans

people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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Georgia

Students fight institutionalized racism

By Arielle Robinson
Atlanta

"I was livid, furious," said Elijah John, a Black student at Kennesaw State University after seeing his image used in a GroupMe screenshot with a caption reading, "Need to call the Klan to solve this issue." The person who posted that was another KSU student who shared a class with John.

The screenshot was only one among a plethora of racist images in different GroupMe chats, which included memes that disparage Muslim and Jewish people and racially slur Black people.

John met with school officials Feb. 18 and was told that the racist student had voluntarily transferred out of the class they shared. John told officials at this meeting that did not do much to solve the issue of blatant racism.

John then met with the Office of Institutional Equity and was given two choices. One option placed John and the racist student on an "equal" basis, with them sitting down with mediators to try to come to a "solution" that would "benefit them both." One solution suggested community service for the racist student.

The other option was a more formal investigation to see if the racist student had crossed the line and violated KSU's anti-discrimination policy.

John says he is going with the formal investigation: "I want the student expelled from school. Switching classes is not enough. It's just sweeping the problem underneath the rug and pretending it

never existed. If KSU claims that it does not tolerate racism, then they need to punish this kid."

John also mentioned that someone at the Office for Institutional Equity whom he spoke with asked him if he thought the racist image of him was a joke.

'Fight for dignity and rights'

Further concern about safety for Black students at KSU was raised Feb. 19 as rumors circulated that white supremacists were going to shoot Black students on campus. An alert sent out by the KSU Police Department claimed there were "no credible threats to our campuses."

This claim did not quell worries around campus of a potential shooting.

In addition, the KSUPD had not notified students that a student was found to have a handgun in his backpack until after the situation had occurred.

Faith Broughton, a psychology major, said, "There is a huge lack of concern and regard from the university, and specifically [from] our emergency responders. ... We could have at least been warned to take precautionary steps."

John said he is networking with the NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the campus activist group KSUnited to help him get his story known.

KSUnited is a group that was started after the #takeakneeKSU movement. According to leader Alexa Vaca, it exists "because we understand the importance of having students, faculty, staff and alumni coming together to work on



Kennesaw State cheerleaders take a knee against racism in 2017 during U.S. national anthem.

changing policy at KSU. We also want to act as ... watchdogs of administrative suppression. Our mission is to fight for the dignity and rights of students, faculty and staff in minority groups."

When asked about the screenshot attacking John, Vaca replied, "We were not surprised whatsoever about the screenshots because we know this is the culture at KSU and this is not an isolated incident."

She continued, "It shows how the KSU administration has been complicit in letting a hostile environment fester. ... How can minority students be comfortable and safe and active in their community when they're working and studying in such a hostile environment?"

Racism at KSU is nothing new. Black cheerleaders were kicked off the

cheerleading squad when they took a knee to protest racism in the U.S.

A Black student's car tires were slashed and a noose was hung outside a housing building.

KSUnited has a list of demands they want to see met by the university, including building an anti-racist center and ensuring students, faculty and staff are educated on issues of diversity before being able to attend the university.

The anti-racist education center has been promised for at least five years, but has still not been created.

KSU President Dr. Pamela Whitten sent a vague email to the student body saying that diversity is encouraged at the university. So far, Whitten has not attended any campus meetings at which issues of racism at KSU are addressed. □

Mumia speaks to Yale Rebel Lawyers

On Feb. 1, students at Yale Law School courageously rescinded their invitation to Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner to be a keynote speaker at their Rebel Lawyers (Reb/Law) Conference of Feb. 15-16. This decision came after Krasner chose to appeal a court ruling that would have given political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal access to new Post Conviction Act Relief hearings. In Krasner's place, the students invited Abu-Jamal to address their conference. The following is a transcript of his recorded speech.

Dear Friends at Yale Law School, Dear Rebel Lawyers — On a Move!

When I think of the term "Rebel Lawyers," the first things that come to mind are jailhouse lawyers. They are, by definition, rebels who oppose the prison-industrial complex, especially the courts. Jailhouse lawyers fight for freedom, for themselves and others, and sometimes they prevail.

Some jailhouse lawyers, like John and Mo Africa of the MOVE Organization, defended themselves at trial and won acquittals. Because such men and women aren't trained in the law, and do their work using logic and sheer will, they fall under the description of Rebel Lawyers. But I've got a feeling that this isn't what students at Yale Law think of when they use the term. If you're really interested in that subject, I urge you to see my book, "Jailhouse Lawyers."

Let us return to Rebel Lawyers, but with a peculiar twist.

Two revolutionary leaders — Fidel Castro and Nelson Mandela — went to law school, but found that law, and the

systems they lived under, were so corrupt, so biased, so dominated by unjust political elites that they learned that their very society had to be radically transformed before the law could be functional. The two men are rarely thought of as lawyers, even though both studied law, and one even briefly practiced it.

Castro went to law school under the Cuban dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista — a tool of U.S. imperialism and a supporter of the American Mafia.

Mandela earned his law degree under the racist National Party, which ruled South Africa with brutality and what they called "apartheid" — Afrikaans for "separateness," a system of domestic colonialism that deprived all Africans of their most fundamental human rights.

Both Castro and Mandela rebelled against such unjust systems and joined revolutionary movements to try and reform those societies. They are the very epitome of Rebel Lawyers.

Unless I'm dead wrong, I don't think there is a Fidel or a Nelson in this audience. But I'll be glad to be wrong.

The next rebel lawyer is a little closer to the mark. He is Clarence Darrow, who lived during the late 19th and early 20th century. He was a brilliant lawyer, a socialist back when millions of Americans voted for socialists, and an atheist.



Yale law students reject DA Krasner, support political prisoner.

PHOTO: BAYSM HASAN

In 1902, Darrow went to the Cook County Jail in Chicago and spoke to the prisoners there about law. Here's a little something of what he said: "See what the law is. When these men — the rich — get control of things, they make the laws. They do not make the laws to protect anybody. Courts are not instruments of justice. When your case gets into court, it will make little difference whether you are guilty or innocent, but it's better if you have a smart lawyer. And you cannot have a smart lawyer unless you have money."

"First and last, it's a question of money. Those people who own the Earth make the laws to protect what they have. They fix up a sort of fence, or pen, around what they have, and they fix the law so that the fellow on the outside cannot get in. The

laws are really organized for the protection of the men who rule the world. They were never organized or enforced for justice. We have no system for doing justice. Not the slightest in the world."

Those are the words of Clarence Darrow, one of the original Rebel Lawyers.

In September 1925, Dr. Ossian Sweet of Detroit, was charged — and convicted — of murder, after shooting at a mob of whites assembled to attack his home for being a Black man who dared to move into a white area. When he was granted a retrial, Clarence Darrow took the defense case and won an acquittal.

You law students should read the closing arguments, for you will read some of the finest arguments ever made in an

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Oakland teachers' strike remains strong

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

Oakland teachers went on strike Feb. 21 in a fight against privatization and for racial justice in Oakland schools. Striking teachers sent messages to parents after two days to report the picket line had over 97 percent teacher participation, with only 3 percent of students attending school.

Oakland teachers are strong and united in their strike. Their union, the Oakland Education Association, has four demands: a 12 percent raise over 3 years; smaller class sizes; more counselors and nurses; and a moratorium on neighborhood public school closures.

Under a 5-year plan recently unveiled by the Oakland Unified School District and adopted by the school board, 24 neighborhood public schools will be closed or consolidated. Some will be forced to share campuses with charter schools.

"This is a racial justice issue," said OEA president Keith Brown. "We will fight to keep our neighborhood schools open." The overall student population in Oakland is about 45 percent Latinx students and 26 percent African-American students. (Alameda Magazine, Dec. 4, 2018)

Brown noted at a recent press conference that outside consultants are being

paid tens of thousands of dollars per month to sell this privatization plan.

A typical strike day in Oakland involves picketing at individual schools for several hours in the morning, then meeting at a central rallying point. On the first day of the strike, over 3,000 teachers and supporters marched several blocks from Oscar Grant Plaza in downtown Oakland to the OUSD offices.

On the second day after picketing in front of their schools, teachers and supporters met at a park in West Oakland and marched to the office of GO Public Schools. This is an organization that supports and promotes charter schools in Oakland. Thirty percent of Oakland schools are run by charter companies.

OEA strike leadership emphasizes that teachers and the Oakland community are fighting to stop the opening of new charter schools at the expense of closing neighborhood public schools.

On the weekend of Feb. 23-24, teachers came together at an Art Build to silk-screen signs for the coming week's picket lines. Teachers, parents and students gathered in the garage of the OEA building for several hours, hand painting banners for various school sites.

During the first week of the strike, several schools had no students and were virtually forced to shut down. According to OEA strike organizers, the school district was not prepared for the overwhelming



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Teachers say: 'This is a racial justice issue.'

student, parent and community support for the strike. OEA teachers hoped for even stronger picket lines the week of Feb. 25.

Community members are urged to join the picket line at any school to support the strike. Organizations and individuals can "adopt" a school and bring food

to striking teachers. For more information and a site map of Oakland schools, go to the Oakland Education Association website, www.oaklandea.org, and/or www.facebook.com/OaklandEA/.

Judy Greenspan is a striking Oakland teacher.

N.C. city workers speak out: 'End austerity, end racism'

By Calvin Deutschbein
Durham, N.C.

City workers in the Durham chapter of United Electrical Workers Local 150, N.C. Public Service Workers Union, came together Feb. 21 for a "Workers' Speak-Out" held at the historic Tobacco Workers Union Hall. They raised their voices against city government efforts to restructure their jobs and against the ongoing racist attacks they face.

Recent job classification changes in December 2018 cut 450 jobs to only 203, while workers were given no additional pay. The UE workers understand this is a speedup — adding urgency to the struggle against racism in the city's hiring, firing, promotion and discipline practices.

The union brochure at the event explained: "This is a speedup, designed in the name of 'efficiency' to squeeze more work out of each worker. It's one of many ways we feel the effects of a corporate-dominated state government that prioritizes tax breaks to the wealthy over the integrity of public services and the dignity of those who depend upon them and those who provide them."

The city workers brought four major demands: a fair grievance process; an end to arbitrary and racist hiring and promotional practices; an end to the merit pay system; and an end to austerity and speed-ups.

Speakout emcee Nathanette Mayo said, "We demand an end to austerity and speed-ups within city departments, by fully funding and hiring for all currently open positions and a formula to ensure that the city's workforce grows at the same pace as the city's population."

Retired chemist in the Water Department and former UE150 president Mayo criticized the failings of some elected officials and then introduced over a dozen workers from five city departments to share the real story of their jobs.

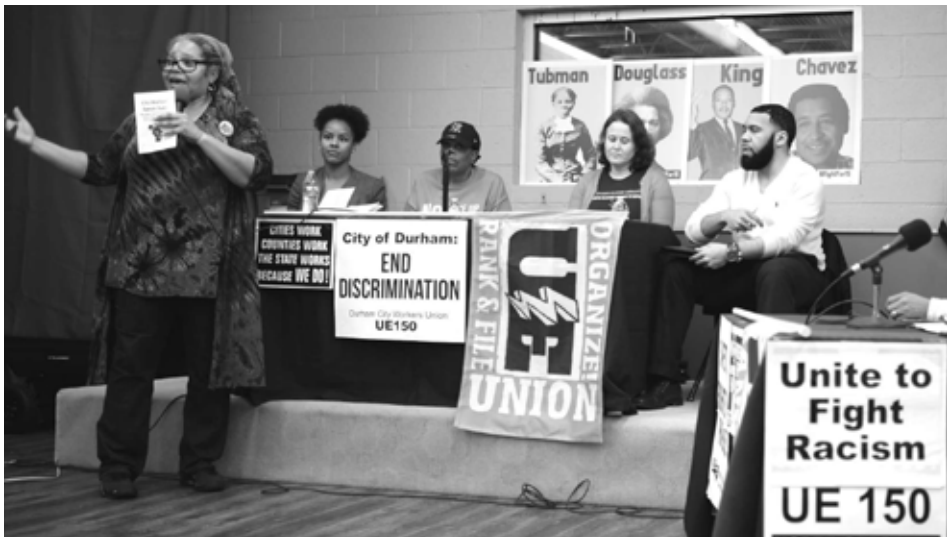


PHOTO: DANIEL HOSTERMAN

Workers share info on dangerous speedups, understaffing.

Workers speak truth to power about their jobs

John Morris said, "I care about my job, and I care about everybody here and your safety." He described the impossible task of on-call duty where workers in Water and Sewer Management work full days, yet are called back to work overnight for emergencies like water main breaks. After working continuously for 24 hours, they are required to clock back in for another work day, operating heavy machinery on no sleep. The only option for a day of rest is using vacation time. They earn no over-time pay.

Workers are required to be on call more and more frequently — now up to 15 times a year from four times in the past. "Every three weeks," Morris said, "we get penalized for making the safe choice to go home and get rest, rather than risk the lives of community members."

Racism is a major factor aggravating unsafe working conditions. Calinto Parker, a Water and Sewer crew chief, said of racist promotions: "[They're] bringing [white bosses] in with no experience, no certifications, no nothing. And

me — I actually have those things."

Marcus Smith, a Black worker in Parker's crew, said, "He's passionate about what he does [and] his passion keeps our city safe." Smith mentioned that they both continue to get skipped over for promotions they deserve, which go to less-senior white employees.

Racist white foremen order the largely Black workforce to use their own backs and bodies rather than allow use of available equipment; this racist treatment causes many injuries. Workers called out the injustice of all eight upper managers in the Water and Sewer department being white, while a majority of the frontline workers are Black.

Community and worker solidarity

Throughout the evening, city workers directed their concerns to a panel of community organizers, who responded about what could be done.

"This will be addressed," pledged Bertha Bradley, a fast food worker and member of Fight For \$15. Bradley recalled how she had been fired without cause from her job at a Wendy's

down the street from the Public Works Department. The city workers then boycotted the Wendy's until she was offered her job back. "We've got to keep fighting," Bradley said. "Whatever we can do, we're going to do."

Durham city workers are banned by law from collective bargaining, as are all public sector workers in North Carolina. UE150 has been leading a statewide campaign of city workers to demand a Municipal Workers Bill of Rights, including a repeal of the Jim Crow-era ban on collective bargaining.

The Durham Workers Assembly helped mobilize community support for the forum. The aim is to bring together workers from all unions, unorganized workers and worker organizations to build Durham as "a union town"—a bold move in the largely unorganized U.S. South.

DWA won passage of a Workers Rights Commission by the Durham City Council in January. Several worker leaders, including Bradley of Fight For \$15, plan to serve on that commission to hear worker complaints and support worker organizing.

"For years we've been out there doing an organizing blitz, 4:30 in the morning, passing out flyers: 'Join the union!'" related Angaza Samora Mayo-Laughinghouse, a community-labor organizer and activist with the Southern Coalition for Social Justice.

At the speakout, with the union coming together powerfully, Mayo-Laughinghouse again directed attention to elected officials: "We as a people have got to be ready to put our hands—our political hands—on our elected officials ... as a consequence of [them] doing our people wrong."

Workers vowed to continue to organize, build their union and speak out at an upcoming City Council meeting.

Deutschbein is a rank-and-file graduate worker in the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Chapter of UE150.

West Virginia

Rank-and-file education workers block privatization

By Workers World West Virginia bureau

West Virginia educators walked out, again, on Feb. 19, in a reprise of their 2018 militancy. The statewide walkout was announced the night before by union officials of the American Federation of Teachers-West Virginia, the West Virginia Education Association and the West Virginia Service Personnel Association.

Classroom teachers and school personnel in office work, school transportation, general maintenance, custodial care, cafeteria work and teacher aide assignments also walked in a unified job action.

Within hours on Feb. 19, the educators had won a dramatic victory, forcing the West Virginia House to vote down a reactionary privatization bill 53-45. On Feb. 20, leaders in the three West Virginia unions announced that, for the moment, strike action was suspended, and the unions reserve their right to go out again at any time if the reactionary legislative attack resumes.

The walkout was in response to an anti-union “omnibus bill,” SB 451, introduced in the state Legislature as retaliation for last-year’s nine-day action.

In the recent bill, the ultra-rightist state Senate brought back most of the original, rotten proposals defeated by the 2018 walkout. Prior to the Feb. 19 walkout, the House of Delegates spent a week debating and making amendments to the bill.

‘Carrot-and-stick’ legislative maneuvers

In a true “carrot-and-stick” manner, SB 451 was originally written to link a 5 percent pay raise and health insurance funding for teachers with reactionary legislation about charter schools, vouchers, the elimination of seniority rights and the eradication of union dues deduction through payroll.

One section of the bill would have placed a cop in every school. While union officials did not take a concrete position on that, the left-leaning rank-and-file union members of the WV United Caucus raised principled opposition, which sparked intense debate on social media.

Caucus members brought up issues such as the “school-to-prison” pipeline prevalent throughout North America, along with the criminalization of a whole generation

of students. School policing is especially a concern for nationally oppressed students of color in the mostly white, rural areas of the state, and for LGBTQ students who live in fear of racist, homophobic and transphobic police violence.

Because of pressure from the educators, the House removed the bill’s sections on vouchers and union-dues deduction during the week’s debate. The number of charter schools the state could open was limited to two “pilot” operations. The language on seniority was slightly altered.

But when some union leaders announced they would support the House changes, rank-and-file members of all three unions immediately went to social media and made it clear to the union higher-ups that the rank and file would not compromise to allow any charter schools.

Then, on Jan. 18, reactionary senators — many of whom are funded by the right-wing Koch brothers and their American Legislative Exchange Committee (ALEC) — defiantly reintroduced vouchers and increased the charter school limit from two to seven. The bill was set to go back to the House, which like the Senate, is majority Republican.

The walkout was announced that evening by officials of the three education workers unions.

Union worker-teachers, students, community solidarity

During the 2018 walkout, county superintendents had closed schools and no one who walked a picket-line was docked pay. That cooperation and leniency are even more significant in this “right-to-work” (for less) state where collective bargaining is prohibited and labor actions are illegal.

This year, all but one of the 55 counties closed after the walkout announcement. On the day of the work action, only the superintendent of education in Putnam County schools refused to close them, and the administration had a difficult time getting staff to report.

Picket lines were set up at every school on Feb. 19. Bus operators did not show up, but a handful of scab mechanics did. The Putnam County superintendent ordered the mechanics to operate the buses, but the few mechanics who



PHOTO: W.VA. SCHOOL SERVICE PERSONNEL ASSOC.

W.Va. education workers take their rank-and-file anger against privatization to the Statehouse.

shamefully crossed the picket line were not experienced drivers and could not fulfill that task.

Teachers and support staff from surrounding counties stood with employees on the Putnam County picket lines, starting with the bus garages at 5 a.m. Many students also joined the picketers, rather than break solidarity by going into the classrooms.

In Ohio County, anti-union and pro-corporate Board of Education members called an emergency meeting, intent on filing an injunction to force strikers back inside the schools.

Once again, school workers from other counties, as well as labor unionists from Wheeling, W.Va., eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania, came to provide solidarity.

Wearing mostly red, people held signs all around the outside of the Board office and filled the meeting to maximum capacity. Just as the union-busting Board members were in a private executive session, preparing to seek an injunction, the House voted 53-45 against the bill.

People inside and outside the meeting started chanting, “Vote them out!” as embarrassed Board members walked out of the conference room in shame.

Rank-and-file militancy in all 55 counties

From the very beginning of the current struggle, union officials admitted to members that they had made a mistake in 2018 by prematurely calling off that walkout. At the time the rank and file exerted leadership and led a wildcat strike until the governor signed a pay raise bill and confirmed that the nasty, anti-worker proposals were defeated.

School workers continue to have little trust in the Legislature and have told union leaders they were not going back this year until there is a guarantee that House members will not reverse their “no” to the reactionary SB 451 bill.

The billionaire coal-baron governor, Jim Justice, held a press conference the afternoon of the walkout, “promising” a “clean bill” that featured only a pay raise and insurance funding. He also urged school workers to go back to work.

Union officials, including American Federation of Teachers national President Randi Weingarten, held a press conference at the end of the walkout’s first day. They emphasized the members’ lack of trust in state politicians. In defiance of the governor’s request, these leaders declared there would be another walkout the next day to ensure there is no take-back by the House.

State Superintendent of Schools Steve Paine sent a message to county superintendents, ordering them to open schools, despite the unions’ announcement.

Once again, all counties were closed except Putnam County. To the dismay of the backward legislators and a handful of cowardly Board of Education members,

the threats of injunctions, disciplinary action and state intervention could not stop the school workers from being “55 United.”

After teachers and support staff in West Virginia completed their work stoppage in 2018, education workers in many other states, such as Oklahoma, Kentucky and Arizona, walked out as well.

Recently, educators in Los Angeles and Denver carried out victorious strikes. Despite differences in geography and conditions, the struggle is the same. Education workers are vehemently against for-profit charter schools and for smaller class sizes, better pay and affordable health coverage.

Socialism, education workers and Venezuela

ALEC, started by a racist segregationist named Paul Weyrich, and other organizations funded by the Koch brothers, such as “Americans for Prosperity,” are responsible for legislative bills aimed at privatizing public education. These bills weaken unions under the false guise of “school choice.” In Oklahoma, an ALEC bill is presently being considered as a way to revoke certifications of teachers who participate in any future walkouts.

In his recent State of the Union address, Trump advanced the misleading phrase “school choice.” In the same speech, he also vowed that the U.S. “would never become a socialist country.” Trump continues to try to build a xenophobic, racist “border” wall by undemocratic means and also to destabilize and overturn the democratically elected revolutionary government of President Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela.

One of the creators of SB 451, Senate Education Committee Chair Patricia Rucker, has written several editorials red baiting union leaders. Rucker, who is of Venezuelan descent, travels there regularly and openly supports the violent, anti-democratic opposition in that country.

Another vocal supporter of the original SB 451, Eric Porterfield, made national news recently for spewing hate against the LGBTQ community on the House floor. Porterfield, a backwater Christian preacher, despises unions and, like Rucker, wants to replace public schools with “faith-based” education.

The same ultra-right forces that have been threatened by socialism for well over a century are the very same ones now trying to break public sector unions and turn public services into profit-driven industries.

Education and public sector workers all around the globe have the same class enemy, which is also shared with President Maduro, a staunch union member and a bus driver by trade!

No class war on education workers! No U.S. war on Venezuela! □

Teachers strike Ohio charter school



Ohio has over 600 charter schools; only a few states have more. Only one of these schools, which are for-profit, publicly funded private schools that undermine public education as well as unions, is unionized. On Feb. 19, teachers at that school, Summit Academy in Parma, went on strike for a fair contract and smaller class sizes.

On the first day, strikers and supporters chanted: “Get up, get down, Parma is a union town.” This Greater Cleveland suburb is home to United Auto Workers Local 1005, representing General Motors plant workers, and many other union members. The strikers were joined on the picket line by members of the Steelworkers, UNITE-HERE, AFL-CIO and other union supporters.

Parents and the local community are behind the strike, and donations are already coming in.

— Story and photo by Martha Grevatt

Protesters across North America

By Betsey Piette and Kathy Durkin

U.S. threats to invade Venezuela, along with Trump’s efforts to instigate a coup d’état, were answered on Feb. 23 by demonstrations in 150 cities across the U.S. and worldwide. The rallying cry for this International Day of Action was “No U.S. War on Venezuela!”

February 23 marked the one-month anniversary of the U.S.-backed coup attempt against Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. Called by the No War on Venezuela Coalition, the mobilization in the U.S. brought together a diverse range of organizations, including the All African People’s Revolutionary Party, Black Alliance for Peace, Democratic Socialists of America, Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere (FIRE), Green Party, International Action Center, Party for Socialism and Liberation, Workers World Party and United National Antiwar Coalition.

The International Action Center initiated the call for coordinated global actions opposing a new U.S.-imperialist war for oil in Venezuela. The IAC contacted immigrant groups and global organizations that have opposed past U.S. wars, asking them to translate the Call to Action and to mobilize. It was posted in 16 languages at NoWarOnVenezuela.org, where hundreds of endorsing organizations and thousands of signers were listed, as well as information on the 150 cities that held actions.

While accepting the Best First Feature award for his film “Sorry to Bother You” at the Film Independent Spirit Awards, director Boots Riley spoke out: “We should all be putting our voices out to stop regime change for oil in Venezuela.” It would seem his message was taken to heart.

Protests were held in over 35 U.S. states, in cities large and small, from Belfast, Maine, in the Northeast to Miami in the Southeast and to Spokane, Wash., and San Diego on the West Coast. Protests were also held in Canada, including Vancouver, B.C.

President Maduro sent a video message to the No War on Venezuela Coalition the next day in appreciation of the solidarity actions.

Here are highlights of the day’s activities:

Boston — Over 200 people gathered downtown to denounce the U.S.-led coup attempt in Venezuela. The Committee for Peace and Human Rights and the WWP Boston Branch initiated the action. Endorsers included former Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner, Bishop Filipe Teixeira, Venezuela Solidarity



Buffalo WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE



New York City

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN



Boston

WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN



Philadelphia

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Committee, United Steelworkers Local 8751 (Boston School Bus Drivers), FIRE, Answer, Veterans for Peace, Palestinian House of New England, United American Indians of New England, Green-Rainbow Party and Massachusetts Peace Action.

Speakers connected the anti-imperialist struggle of the Venezuelan people to struggles facing all of Latin America and the world. They cited the Trump administration’s hypocrisy in claiming a humanitarian motive. Several connected the imperialist offensive against Venezuela with the ongoing anti-government insurrection in Haiti.

Ahmad Kawash, director of the Palestinian House of New England, explained the solidarity between Palestine and the Bolivarian Revolution: “Maduro said, ‘I am a Palestinian,’ and I say, ‘I am a Venezuelan.’” Bishop Teixeira criticized military funding that has been diverted from money for essential educational and medical programs. Jill Stein, Green Party 2016 presidential candidate, noted the media’s role in creating a pretext for U.S. imperialism’s oil wars. She stressed, “We need to do whatever it takes to stop this empire from crushing half the world.”

Syracuse, N.Y. — Dozens rallied at Perseverance Park in downtown Syracuse, including members of Upstate Drone Action and the Workers Center of Central New York. A covert U.S. drone was recently deployed in an assassination attempt on President Maduro.

Buffalo, N.Y. — Protesters joined national and global rallies denouncing U.S. aggression against Bolivarian Venezuela, calling for an end to U.S. sanctions and interventions. The demonstration was held at Buffalo’s Federal Building and was called by Buffalo AntiWar, with planning and participation

from Buffalo DSA, Buffalo Food Not Bombs, IAC of Buffalo, Buffalo Spring Action 2018, Burning Books, Geneva NY Answer Coalition, Green Party of Erie County, Latin America Solidarity Committee, WWP, U.S. Friends of Soviet People, Veterans for Peace Chapter 128 and Western New York Peace Center..

New York City — Upwards of 1,000 people marched on Wall Street to defend Venezuela. A rally outside the Trump Building near the New York Stock Exchange exposed the forces behind the opposition in Venezuela. The bankers and billionaires who comprise the racist U.S. ruling class have doggedly tried to sabotage the Bolivarian Revolution since it began in 1998.

Many organizations worked together to coordinate this act of resistance, including Call to Action Puerto Rico, IAC, Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle NY, December 12th Movement, Frente Independentista Boricua, WWP, National Jericho Movement, Committee to Stop FBI Repression, U.S. Peace Council, Pastors for Peace, People’s Power Assembly/NYC, July 26 Coalition, NYU Students for Justice in Palestine and NYC Shut It Down.

Showing solidarity that day were people from countries that have also faced imperialist attacks, such as Honduras, Ecuador, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Haiti, Yugoslavia, Iran and the Philippines. The marchers met resistance from the police, but they pushed through the blockade. Some activists then rallied at the center of the giant atrium in the World Trade Center. Nearly 3,000 people have already viewed WWP’s livestream of the event.

Philadelphia — A spirited and diverse crowd of 150 rallied at City Hall before marching to the Liberty Bell. Speakers

included Berta Joubert for the Puerto Rican group Comité Boricua Filadelfia y Camden, Pam Africa from the MOVE organization, Mexican activist Carmen Guerrero, Scott Williams from WWP and Asantewaa Nkrumah-Ture from BAP. The action in solidarity with President Maduro and the Bolivarian Revolution was confronted by a small group of pro-U.S. intervention demonstrators who unsuccessfully tried to rush the stage, shouting about so-called “humanitarian” aid for Venezuela.

Palestinian activist Susan Abulhawa responded, “Palestinians are living in extreme poverty with many facing starvation, but no Palestinian is asking the U.S. to invade.” She noted that Venezuela has been more steadfast in its solidarity with Palestine than many Arab countries. At a brief speak-out during the march, REAL Justice member Mike Wilson said: “The people of Venezuela have been fighting against the oligarchy there and trying to build socialism. We need to do the same here.”

Durham and Charlotte, N.C. — Socialist formations and progressives from across the state gathered in Charlotte to express solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela and firm rejection of the Pentagon’s attempted coup. Activists and organizers from WWP, PSL, NC Green Party and the Socialist Party convened under a “No War On Venezuela” banner at Eastway Square, a bustling part of town in the heart of the growing migrant and Latinx community. Cars driving by honked and cheered as the crowd chanted, “What do we want? U.S. out! When do we want it? Now!”

Atlanta — A solidarity program called “Stand with the Bolivarian Revolution! U.S. Hands Off Venezuela!” was held at

say: 'No U.S. war on Venezuela!'



Charlotte, N.C.

PHOTO: NC GREEN PARTY

the Arts Exchange, a progressive institution in Atlanta. Featured speakers were Akinyele Umoja, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement leader, university professor and author; and Damani Aaquil, representing the Regional Council of Africans in the Americas. In discussing the origins of the U.S. sanctions, propaganda war and attempted coup, both drew on personal experiences while traveling to Venezuela and meeting with community groups, especially Afro-Venezuelans and government figures.

Discussion focused on the need and the ways to educate and mobilize opposition to all U.S. moves to foment "regime change" in Venezuela. Proposals included organizing a local March 16 demonstration, setting up campus events, pressuring Metro Atlanta Congressional members to oppose the coup and raising funds for Venezuela. Participants included Vets for Peace, housing justice activists, members of the Latinx community, students, and Patricia Rodney, widow of assassinated Caribbean revolutionary Walter Rodney, and her daughter. WWP initiated the event, which was co-sponsored by MXGM, Regional Council of Africans in the Americas, PSL and Friends of the Congo. Later that day the progressive community radio station WRFG 89.3FM aired reports from No War on Venezuela organizers in New York, Houston and Pensacola, Fla.

Pensacola, Fla. — Demonstrators from WWP and PSL gathered outside the Pensacola Bay Center to show solidarity with the people of Venezuela and global anti-imperialist struggles. The activists rubbed shoulders with U.S. armed forces outside Pensacon, one of the city's biggest annual events that draws over 10,000 people to the military town. Activists handed out fact sheets about Venezuela to the crowd and demonstrated with

vivid signage that a broad, diverse group showed what Southern activists think of bold-faced U.S. imperialism.

Wheeling, W.Va. — As part of an International call to defend Venezuela and in support of President Maduro, picketers held signs reading, "No War On Venezuela" and "Support Maduro." The action received a lot of support from people driving by. It was organized by Ohio Valley Peace and was endorsed by the No War On Venezuela mass organization. One of the participants was Bill Reuther, a local labor activist and relative of the Reuther brothers who were early leaders of the United Auto Workers.



Houston

WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Cleveland — A spirited picket line was held outside military contractor Voss Aerospace, followed by a short march to the Cleveland West Side Market for a rally. Passing cars beeped horns in solidarity. The actions were called by the Cleveland No War on Venezuela Committee and endorsed by Cleveland Peace Action and Interreligious Task Force on Central America.

Houston — Activists gathered at a busy traffic circle in the heart of the city to denounce the U.S. government's attempted coup in Venezuela and say "U.S. hands off Venezuela!" Armed with bright yellow signs supporting President Maduro and a huge Venezuelan flag, they got a largely positive response, as many drivers honked and waved. Some raised their fists in solidarity. Several new activists attended, having found the information at nowaronvenezuela.org. Youth and seniors agreed at the closing rally that they must stay on alert. Plans were made to protest at the Mickey Leland Federal Building in downtown Houston if the U.S. invades.

Organizer Joanne Gavin with the Houston Friends of Venezuela said: "We

found that people in Houston do not want another war." Activists with Students for a Democratic Society from the University of Houston announced a teach-in on Venezuela on Feb. 25. Pacifica radio hosts of Proyecto Latino Americano, Alma and Henry Cooper, announced their show would have more coverage of Venezuela.

Denver — The 10 inches of snow that fell on the Denver area the night before did not stop about 35 people from rallying Feb. 23 on all four corners of the downtown 16th Street Mall. They handed out fliers and engaged people in learning about the danger of another U.S.-provoked war, this one in Venezuela.

Salt Lake City — Activists of all ages, including members of the Latinx community, gathered at a busy corner holding signs and banners and chanting, "No War on Venezuela!" They were there to show solidarity with the democratically elected government of Venezuela against U.S. efforts to destroy it. They maintained a constant presence on the corner and received positive responses from the community, with supportive honks and thumbs-up gestures by people driving and walking by.

The IAC and Veterans for Peace co-hosted the event, while individuals from Union for Street Solidarity, a local housing activism organization; United for Peace and Justice; and unaffiliated individuals joined. Participants signed an open letter to the people of the U.S. from President Maduro. They were given fact sheets detailing background on the current crisis in Venezuela, as well as WWP newspapers explaining why a new war there should be opposed. Several activists expressed interest in studying together to understand more about how to end U.S. imperialism.

Oakland, Calif. — Over 150 people rallied at Oscar Grant Plaza to demand "U.S.-CIA Hands Off Venezuela." Organized by UNAC-Bay Area and the Spring Action Antiwar Coalition, the event was endorsed by over 30

organizations. Speakers expressed strong support for the Bolivarian Revolution and the Maduro government.

Alicia Jrapco, representing the International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity, said: "Today in Caracas there were hundreds of thousands of people in the street to support the only legitimate president — Maduro. It was so moving to see. Here the news says he has no support. We cannot believe the media. They are lying to us." The rally was chaired by representatives from BAYAN USA, IAC and UNAC. Solidarity statements were made by Task Force on the Americas, Labor Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, Answer, the Green Party, Peace and Freedom Party and the Communist Workers League.

Vancouver, B.C. — The Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice-Venezuela Solidarity Campaign was on the streets for the "No War on Venezuela" International Day of Action. Marching from the CBC to the Vancouver Art Gallery, the action brought together people from different backgrounds, grassroots groups, organizations and parties to defend the people of Venezuela and democratically elected President Maduro. As protesters chanted, "No to Sanctions! No to War! U.S./Canada Hands Off Venezuela!" passersby were encouraged to sign a petition demanding that the



Windsor, Ontario, Canada

PHOTO: WINDSOR PEACE COALITION

Canadian government end sanctions against Venezuela and end all meddling in the sovereign country's internal affairs.

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As solidarity actions grow, Venezuela resists U.S. ploy

Continued from page 1

violent threats against Maduro. Since the Feb. 23 defeat of their plans, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Maduro's "days were numbered"; Pence said at the Group of Lima meeting in Bogotá that the U.S. would impose stronger sanctions and "take concrete steps"; and Rubio tweeted a photo of the assassinated Libyan leader Muammar Gaddhafi in an attempt to intimidate Maduro.

Maduro hits hard, calls for socialist revolution

Speaking to tens of thousands of supporters in Caracas on Feb. 23 — a crowd much larger than the gathering at the "Live Aid Concert" on the Colombian side of the bridge in Táchira state — Maduro anticipated these threats with his own bold steps.

First, he announced that Venezuela was breaking relations with the pro-U.S.,

reactionary regime in Colombia: "No one has ever fallen as low as President Duque" in his servility to the Yankees.

"Let us be proud of our courage, of popular power. This is a battle for dignity in the face of those who want us to kneel before imperialism."

Second, Maduro said to the huge crowd, "If one day you find out that they did something to me, go out into the street and make a socialist and proletarian revolution." By saying that, he was recognizing that many workers would like to turn Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution into a complete overhaul of the social system itself.

Calling on the workers and people to mobilize to defend the government, a statement from leftist parties and organizations, including the Communist Party of Venezuela and the Homeland for All Party, wrote in a similar spirit: "We call for the establishment of

worker-peasant-communal and popular control over the processes of production, commercialization and distribution and for the promotion of a plan of national industrialization and a true agrarian revolution that will definitively remove us from the dependence, exploitation and ruthless anti-patriotic extortion by the great historical enemies of the Venezuelan people and the world."

Message for the people of the U.S.

In a short video message on Feb. 24, Maduro thanked the people of New York for the solidarity demonstration held the day before on Wall Street. Venezuela's Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza spoke directly to the U.S. population in a Feb. 25 interview on Democracy Now!

"Because the coup failed, now they're looking for what they call other options. And there is when it's dangerous. And I believe that the American

people have a word here," said Arreaza.

"They can — you can stop the war, if you really tell your Congress and your government and your people, and all over the streets, you raise your voice, because that's going to be a war on Venezuela, against the Venezuelan people. Venezuelan people are going to die. There's going to be a bloodshed.

"But also American soldiers will die, Marines will die in Venezuela, because we know how to resist. We are ready also to defend our homeland. But that's not what we want. I believe that the American people and the American institutions can stop this from happening, this insane proposal of invading Venezuela. And this is the right time to do it."

The people in 150 cities around the world who came out on Feb. 23 to defend Venezuela have taken the first step in giving a positive answer to Arreaza and Maduro's message. □

A return to Leninism: The centennial

By Larry Holmes

Larry Holmes is the First Secretary of Workers World Party.

V.I. Lenin, the principal leader of the Russian Revolution, opened the first meeting of the Third Communist International — which came to be known as the Comintern — 100 years ago this March 2 in Moscow. Fifty-one delegates were registered, representing 35 organizations from 22 countries. The modest numbers in attendance were in large part because imperialist countries had blockaded the Soviet Union, and it was hard to get to Moscow. Every imperialist power that could muster forces, warships and weapons to support the counterrevolutionary forces invaded the Soviet Union.

However, the delegates to the meeting did not consider their small numbers to be significant. Provoked by the terror and suffering unleashed on the masses by the first imperialist world war and inspired by the Russian Revolution, the working class in the industrially advanced centers of imperialism — as well as the oppressed peoples in the vast areas of the world colonized by imperialism — were in motion. There was a sense that more revolutions were possible, even imminent. Although attempts at repeating the Bolsheviks' success in central and eastern Europe proved unsuccessful, they were nonetheless taken very seriously by the capitalist ruling class.

'Revolutionary wave' of the working class

What was then called by some the "revolutionary wave" of the working class rolled across the oceans to U.S. shores. The great Seattle general strike of 1919 preceded the Moscow meeting by a few weeks.

Bearing in mind the main cause of the collapse of the Second International — the failure of some workers' parties to break with their ruling classes over the war — Lenin wanted to invite to the Moscow meeting only those who were dedicated to revolution and who would never repeat the mistakes that doomed the previous International. The Comintern resolved to "struggle by all available means, including armed force, for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie" and for its replacement by a world confederation of soviets based on socialism.

Even though the war had just ended, revolutionaries the world over could see the seeds of the next world war in the crises of capitalism. The Comintern was determined to do all it could to turn imperialist war into a civil war between the workers and the imperialists — a war that would end with the victory of world socialism.

That the Soviet Union, as a matter of survival, would have no other choice than to adapt itself to the conditions of the world class struggle at any particular time is a given. However, Lenin understood that the fate of the Russian Revolution was ultimately dependent on more revolutions — in essence, on world revolution. As such, the Comintern's orientation was not to reduce internationalism to symbolic acts of solidarity — but rather to coordinate the actual world struggle for the victory of communism over capitalism at the earliest possible opportunity.

It was Lenin's view that no working-class party could base its analysis and goals on conditions in its own country alone, but rather on an accurate analysis of capitalist crises and the state of the global class struggle. The class struggle in any country is, in part, separate from the rest of the world and has its own features. But it is no less true that regardless of



Vladimir Lenin

differences, the struggles are also interdependent. If this was true at the time of the Comintern's founding, then it is immeasurably more true today based on historical development.

Imperialist globalization fueled by new technology has to a large degree turned the notion of an economically independent nation state into an anachronism. Imperialism recognizes no borders. Neither should the working class.

The global class struggle

The next quarter of a century after 1919 encompassed the collapse of the world capitalist economy, the Great Depression, the rise of fascism and the second imperialist world war. At the end of that period, the world situation and the state of the global class struggle had changed. On the plus side, the Soviet Union had survived and helped to liberate major parts of Europe from imperialist domination.

The victory of the great Chinese Revolution changed the world landscape in favor of the national liberation movements. On the other hand, the working-class movement in the imperialist centers emerged politically and ideologically weaker. The victory of fascism in Europe was a crushing defeat for the working class. Although sections of the U.S. working class had fought for and won historic concessions from the ruling class under the Roosevelt administration, it is often forgotten that the U.S. ruling class was forced to make these concessions in order to prevent a Soviet-type revolution at home — and to shore up the loyalty of the masses for the war that resulted in U.S. imperialism's domination of the capitalist world for 75 years.

That U.S. imperialism is now losing that domination is a factor that is integral to the terminal crisis of capitalism and the associated economic and political upheaval underway.

The leadership of the Soviet Union, which was in a nominal and short-lived wartime alliance with U.S. imperialism — influenced by the false illusion of peaceful coexistence with imperialism — dissolved the Comintern in 1943. Some elements in the working-class movement tried to organize a Fourth International, but, among other things, they never garnered the influence to transcend symbolism.

At this time when rallying worldwide defense for the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela against a U.S.-backed attempted coup and counterrevolution is critical, it is a good time to recall that 10 years ago, former Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez sponsored a large meeting of socialist and communist forces in Caracas to propose the formation of a

Fifth Socialist International. The political differences among the delegates to that meeting were such that the project was not viable. This much is clear: Chávez understood that a new international could play a role in defending Venezuela against imperialism.

Building a revolutionary movement

At the height of its strength, the Comintern — with all its weaknesses and contradictions — had considerable influence in determining the course of the global class struggle for socialism and communism. It would take far more time than we have here to go over the political turns and struggles within the communist movement which played a part in how things turned out.

The political and ideological struggle in the communist movement back then does not lend itself to either simple explanations or labels with respect to the different political forces or leaders in the movement. For a certain generation of veterans of the struggle, merely invoking the names of Stalin or Trotsky will prompt a strong response based on the deep divisions that existed.

In our party, we have always tried to objectively assess that period because only in this way can revolutionaries discern lessons from the events. We believe that the weaknesses in the working-class movement that are still part of the legacy of that period — weaknesses that endure today — are key to understanding why the Soviet Union collapsed.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Sam Marcy, the late chairperson and principal founder of Workers World Party, called on the most militant organizations and forces in the communist movement to put aside past differences and unite around some of the principal tenets of Leninism, such as adherence to revolution over reform, unflinching opposition to imperialism, the vanguard role of the party and a revolutionary position on the national question, etc. Marcy's advice was that while there may be value in dwelling on the past, the urgent need now is to rebuild the revolutionary movement.

In order to do that, revolutionaries had to be oriented toward the future — and to be free of anything from the past that would make it difficult to do what had to be done in the interests of the working class. The time will come — and the sooner the better — when revolutionaries will once

again rise to the challenge of constituting an international alliance for the purpose of organizing world revolution.

Lenin's thinking and the world now

In preparation for the next phase of the global class struggle, it's helpful to use the anniversary of the Comintern to study Lenin's thinking and consider how it would be applied to the present world situation. From an honest historical perspective, the time is ripe for the world struggle for socialism to take a leap forward by returning to the bold, revolutionary vision of Leninism as it was understood at the launching of the Third Communist International.

Why is this necessary? Because it's the only path to realizing the revolutionary potential that may be closer than many of us think.

After the second imperialist war, the working-class movement, especially in the West, including the labor unions and the workers' parties, changed their orientation. The prevailing view was that capitalism and imperialism had emerged stronger from the war — and as a consequence, the working class would have to get used to an extended future rule of the super-rich. The capitalists were able to perfect the illusion that their system was best and that it promised relative stability and advancement for everyone. Indeed, for sections of the working class the illusions and promises seemed real for a period of time.

The goals of revolution and internationalism seemed too lofty. The working-class movement tended to be more conservative, narrow, limited and local in its thinking and direction — and tied to the capitalist ruling class. None of what we are discussing is in any way meant to denigrate or dismiss the many heroic struggles of the working class over the better part of the past century. But in order to understand what we must do, it's necessary to be candid about the setbacks and weaknesses.

One example of the narrowness of the organized labor movement can be seen in the recent developments in France. The millions of Yellow Vest protesters, most of them from the working class, have rocked the French government and bourgeoisie. To some extent, they were compelled to rise up because they didn't feel the French labor movement was going to fight for them.

Under pressure from below and for the sake of its survival, the organized labor movement the world over is slowly beginning to change. However, the pace of the changes must speed up — and their political direction must be toward greater militancy, inclusiveness, anti-capitalism and internationalism. The initiative to revolutionize the labor movement will not come from the top but from below. This is one of the lessons of the education workers' revolt.



Ho Chi Minh, lower left, was one of the delegates to the Fifth Congress of the Comintern in 1924.

anniversary of the Comintern

The final struggle to end a dying capitalist system

The global capitalist economy is slowing down. Claims by some that the U.S. economy is somehow immune from the downward direction of the world economy are being punctured by reality every day. Until a few months ago, capitalist bankers and politicians — especially in the U.S. — were able to deny, ignore or conceal the magnitude of the economic crisis. They can no longer do that.

The inevitability of another worldwide financial market crash looms over Wall Street and the whole system of finance capital. The global slowdown is not really a recession, although it will be called that. Traditionally, a recession is a cyclical phenomenon followed by a recovery and then an expansion of economic activity. What is under way reflects a crisis that is far more serious than a cyclical event. The economic storm that is gathering is the product of a permanent systemic crisis, one that is irreversible and foretells the dying of capitalism.

Actually, the 2008 “near-death” crash of the capitalist financial system was never fixed. Central banks, led by the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank, desperately flooded the markets with trillions of dollars in free money, effectively putting the financial system on life support. Trump gave the U.S. markets another boost with huge tax breaks. But now central bankers are no longer able to sustain the support system for finance capital. How critical is this?

Finance capital has long since replaced industry as the dominant driver of the economy. That reality is a defining feature of a dying system. Of course, the capitalist system has also used its tried-and-true methods for dealing with these crises, such as imposing low wages and austerity, squeezing as much out of the working class as they can in order to support high-profit levels for the super-rich.

As significant as trade wars, Brexit, interest rate gyrations in the financial markets or the bursting of any of the enormous debt bubbles that finance capital has inflated, they are symptoms of the crisis — and catalysts for the crisis to explode. The fundamental cause of the crisis is a state of permanent capitalist overproduction. By permanent, we mean that overproduction now exists on a scale never experienced in the history of capitalist development. Capitalism has been incompatible with society in many ways for most of its history. However, it has never been more incompatible with society than now.

The phenomenal growth of the productive forces in the capitalist economy, fueled by new technology, has essentially made capitalist overproduction — and a myriad of associated problems for the system like falling profits — much greater and much more resistant to capitalist remedies.

For the capitalists, as well as the workers and oppressed peoples of the world, there will be no more periods of normalcy, predictability and stability. Until capitalism is ended and replaced with socialism, the only certainty will be a deterioration of living conditions for most of us, punctuated by increasingly violent economic, political and social shocks.

Add to these convulsions the prospect of even bigger, more destructive wars and the existential threat to the ecology of the Earth. Time is running out for the race to save the planet; the ecological threat is inextricably linked to capitalism.

Even though a terminally ill capitalist system will continue to ravage, paralyze and threaten our very existence, it will not completely die on its own. Capitalism

will try to regenerate itself on whatever basis and at whatever cost it takes — if the workers and the oppressed of the world fail to deposit the system into its grave. We have no other choice as a movement but to radically rethink and shorten the time frame for ending capitalism.

The coming revolt of the working class: The revolt has already begun!

There is evidence of a marked upsurge of the working class, which includes major strikes on every continent. In the U.S., education workers, who opened up a new militant wave in West Virginia a year ago, are still in motion in West Virginia, Colorado, California and elsewhere.

There is no contradiction between the day-to-day struggle of the working class and the maximum program of socialist revolution. There is a tendency in the movement to view the struggle for higher wages, better working conditions and other basic labor demands as being at odds with the goal of preparing for revolution. Such is not the case.

“Workers of the World – in the struggle against imperialist barbarism, against monarchy, against the privileged estates, against the bourgeois state and bourgeois property, against all kinds and forms of class or national oppression – Unite!

“Under the banner of Workers’ Soviets, under the banner of revolutionary struggle for power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, under the banner of the Third International – Workers of the World Unite!”

From “The Manifesto of the Communist International to the Workers of the World,” adopted March 6, 1919

Large sections of the working class will always respond first to the struggle for immediate demands. At the same time, the most radicalized sections of the working class — a section that is bound to grow as the crisis deepens — is not only ready to embrace a revolutionary program, they will insist on it. If our movement is not prepared to meet the expectations of the more radicalized sections of our class, we will lose influence with them. That would be a tragic mistake.

Revolutionaries must have a practical, short-term strategy for the working class. But they must also have a larger view of the global class struggle and the crisis of the system. This does not mean being driven out of frustration and impatience to embrace ultra-left fantasies that can only produce failures and confusion. But it does mean envisioning the future, instead of being tied to the past.

We cannot base ourselves on any predictions that the workers’ revolt will develop rapidly, as this is unknowable.

On the other hand, we must not be overly influenced by the experiences of older generations who have survived long periods of setbacks and defeats, and may therefore be of the opinion that no serious revolutionary development among the workers is possible in the near future.

The conditions that will govern the development of the future global class struggle will be in part similar to, but also wholly distinct from, those in all previous periods. Why? Because the level of the productive forces of capitalism is constantly changing. This is a fact that constantly changes or impacts the working class and everything else that governs the course of the class struggle.

A specter is haunting the capitalist ruling class

That specter is the worldwide revolt by youth. The capitalists are deeply demoralized. It is painfully apparent to them that they have lost the youth. The overwhelming majority of youth have turned against capitalism and more and more are rebel-

really just getting started.

Young workers, many of whom once thought that capitalist society would provide a comfortable existence for them, provided they received the increasingly unaffordable requisite level of higher education, are redefining the working-class struggle. Young people have found that higher education is no protection against the ever more precarious conditions of work and life in the epoch of a dying capitalist system. The lesson they are learning is not the lesson that the rich hoped they would learn: They are learning to hate capitalism.

It is true that some of the youth bring into the struggle naive and petty-bourgeois radical ideas, ideas that are at odds with Marxism, the class struggle and the role of the working class. As more youth have come into our party, we have encountered these ideas and have had to struggle against them. We don’t fault the youth for having wrong ideas.

We view this as an entirely predictable, and reversible consequence of the weaknesses of the working-class movement. We can lecture youth about this until we are blue in the face. But until there is a working-class movement that is able to demonstrate that it is independent of the capitalist political system and its political parties — and that it embraces all the oppressed — then the ideas and leadership of other class forces will hold some sway with those who are being radicalized by the crises of the system.

Instead of fearing the ideas of young militants, we should work harder to win them over. Doing that will require us to own up to the reality that the political degeneration of the working-class movement over a long period of time is a factor in this problem. All too often, our movement appears to youth to be afraid to change, or that it’s stuck in the past, or more closed than open — and that it’s conservative, sectarian, cynical, didactic and ineffectual. It should come as no surprise that some might conclude that any ideas are superior to those that seem so unappealing. The more revolutionary our movement is, the more we will win the confidence of the youth and wider sections of the working class.

A return to true Leninism

A return to true Leninism will help to win the confidence of the most oppressed sections of the working class. When Lenin presented his proposal regarding the national and colonial questions to the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920, he understood that if the movement did not embrace the national liberation movements and the struggle of the oppressed for self-determination, the objective of a strong workers’ international would be impossible. This is why the slogan “Workers of the World Unite” was changed to “Workers and Oppressed of the World Unite.”

Lenin’s position on the national question was not a departure from a class

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100 Years Later

Some Lessons of the Great Bolshevik Revolution

By Deirdre Griswold

Contents: From Marx’s view of social evolution to Lenin’s ‘Imperialism’ ♦ Social gains in the early years of Sovietpower ♦ ‘Whose state? Our state’ — meaning all nationalities ♦ External and internal problems, strengths and setbacks ♦ To the 0.001 percent: You are cheering too soon

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On D-Day, the trucks couldn't get in

By Marco Teruggi
Ureña, Táchira, Venezuela

The day of the announced arrival of “humanitarian aid” to Venezuela, Feb. 23, came and went. The apocalyptic forecasts did not take place. Nicolás Maduro did not fall; Juan Guaidó stayed in Cúcuta, Colombia; and no Hollywood showdown took place in Venezuela.

High tension? There was plenty, particularly in the border area where Venezuela is separated from Colombia by three bridges over an almost dry river: at Simón Bolívar, Tienditas and Santander. On the Venezuelan side is the state of Táchira — with the cities of San Antonio and Ureña — and on the other side, in North Santander, is the city of Cúcuta.

The day began early as expected — a strong confrontation on the bridges that was covered by an army of media. There were moments of excitement, for example, when a handful of members of the Bolivarian National Guard (GNB) decided to join the ranks of Trump, Rubio, Duque and Guaidó. The opposition’s enthusiasm quickly subsided, however, and with the passing hours it became certain that neither people nor trucks would pass to the other side.

This situation had two central components. On the one hand, a permanent stand-off unfolded on the Bolívar and Santander bridges — in addition to an attempt to occupy the airport in the city of San Antonio in Táchira, which was thwarted. And, on the other hand, the deployment of trucks with “humanitarian aid.”

The confrontation brought to mind the violent street strategies known as “guarimbas” that were implemented in several Venezuelan cities during 2014 and again in 2017. The difference is that the current violent actions are focused on

international bridges with the explicit support of the Colombian state security forces.

The cycle was repeated: First an advance toward the Venezuelan side, then a retreat and an attempt to cross under the Simón Bolívar Bridge. What can you expect a government to do in the face of an internationally financed guarimba-style attempt at invasion?

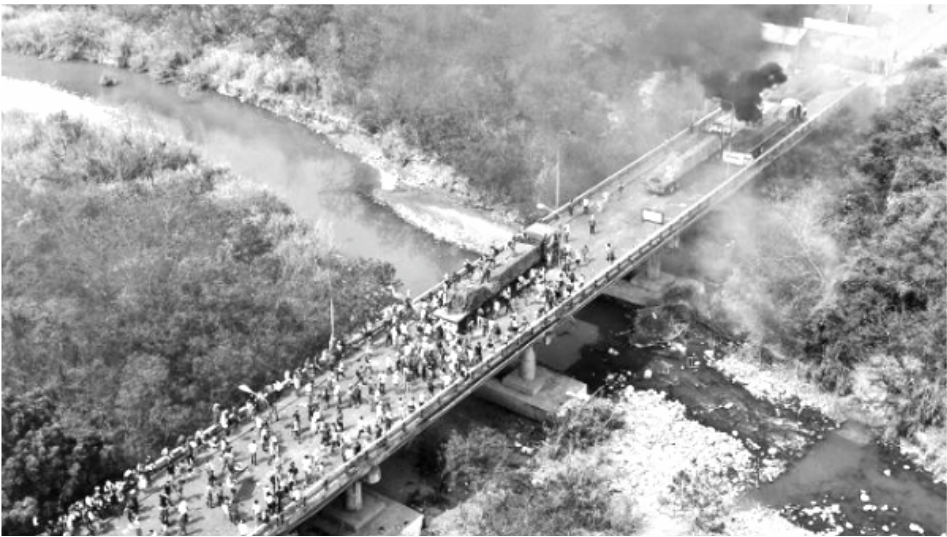
Deploying trucks had three key goals. The first was so the media could exploit the images of some caravans on their way to the bridges. The second was to spread the false claim that they had entered Venezuela — as the Venezuelan singer Nacho did at the end of the day. And the third was to create a false-flag pretext for intervention by burning two trucks. The media headlines would blame the Bolivarian National Guard, showing youths in the front line of the confrontation when it was filmed.

The truck fires seem to have been planned, and the media interpreted them to accuse Nicolás Maduro of having committed a crime against humanity. International threats escalated, like the one tweeted by U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, who claimed that Venezuela had fired shots into Colombian territory and that the United States would defend Colombia in the case of aggression.

No ‘aid’ entered Venezuela

What’s certain is that — beyond those events — what had been announced did not occur. The so-called “humanitarian aid” did not enter Venezuela through any point — not through Colombia, nor Brazil, nor by sea. There was no breakdown of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces. The bridges looked like the well-known scenes of the usual violent strategy of the right, now in a more complex framework.

If all this was meant to be the final day,



The false-flag operation at the Santander bridge.

PHOTO: TELESUR

it was not. If it was meant to be the breaking point, it does not seem to have happened the way it was announced. Once again the events demoralized the social base of the opposition, which had to face the gap between the promises of its leaders — now international — and the real balance of forces.

The supporters of Chavismo, for their part, mobilized in Caracas; it was their fifth consecutive mobilization in five days. In this context, the government announced a key step — that it would break relations with the Colombian government — in addition to decisions made previously to close the borders with Brazil, Colombia and the islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao.

The result at the end of Feb. 23 was that the big offensive, which was supposed to be the final offensive, failed to achieve its objectives. The Venezuelan government stood up to the aggression that, as we know, struck on several flanks simultaneously: weapons, media, psy-war, diplomats and an attempt to grab territories on the border. That final outcome could have been expected by taking into account the actual forces on the ground — eliminating the inflated claims on social media — and without the appearance of a new manifesto from the likes of Elliott Abrams, Iván Duque or Marco Rubio.

The weapon of false news

There is another factor: namely the amount of false news, fabrications of rumors and unverified data without any credible sources. It is part of the numbing avalanche of false information, with the goal of providing justification for further possible actions. The case of the burned trucks was the most obvious provocation on Feb. 23.

The difficulty often comes when

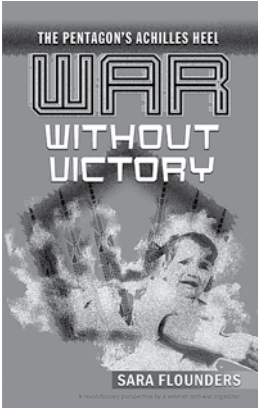
confirming sources, numbers and accuracy of the facts — which tend to be swept away by the logic of a war that uses media activity as the backbone of its operation. No one can be surprised by a U.S. lie during acts of aggression. There can be no right to remain naive; we need to be constantly suspicious.

What will happen on Feb. 24 or 25? It is too early to know. It would seem, from the way events have taken place, that the pressures on the bridges will continue, while there will be no real way to enter Venezuela. International threats and meetings will be on the rise, and perhaps there will be a major phony provocation. I predicted it on the night of Feb. 22-23 when Rubio wrote about the possibility of the Colombian National Liberation Army killing civilians. He announced what they themselves seem willing to do, how to camouflage their actions, using them to justify new actions and shift from "humanitarian aid" to a new scenario.

The border conflict ends in a tense night, as if something could happen at any moment. We are in for complex hours and days, where one of the central objectives of the Venezuelan government, of Chavismo, is to prevent being trapped into an action that can provide images of violence — and actual violence — such as that which left 42 wounded on the Venezuelan side on Feb. 23.

An idea of the social climate on Saturday night (Feb. 23-24) is seen by what’s trending on Twitter, where five of the most popular hashtags are calling for international intervention. The majority opinion thus clearly agrees that the internal opposition will fail to overthrow the democratically elected Nicolás Maduro through its own efforts.

First published on Feb. 24 by pagina12.com.ar; translated by Michael Otto.



WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

“By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity.”

– Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann,
President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009;
Foreign Minister of Nicaragua’s Sandinista government.

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WORKERS WORLD

editorial

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far beyond the most optimistic expectations of those who first called the day of action. Some 150-plus cities held actions, sometimes more than one, in at least 35 U.S. states, 7 of 10 Canadian provinces and 35 countries on six continents. People in many of these countries, from India to England, held events in multiple cities. Demonstrations began in Australia as the day started and continued across the world’s time zones.

The corporate media here all jump in line when it comes to spreading lies about Venezuela — or any country where the people try to break free of U.S. hegemony. Still, they failed to create popular sentiment here — or anywhere else — for

a U.S.-led invasion (except maybe among the Miami counterrevolutionaries originally from the wealthy classes of Cuba and Venezuela). People realize that the violent threats against Venezuela represent more U.S. aggression for oil and for strategic domination — just like with Iran, Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya and Syria.

Invasion blocked

Many protesters had been able to follow reports from Venezuela that showed enormous crowds of people in the streets defending their country and their democratically elected president from a Yankee attack. Contrary to U.S. predictions, only a handful of military personnel defected. Those claiming to be bringing

“humanitarian aid” failed to cross the bridges where the Venezuelan workers were amassed to stop them.

President Nicolás Maduro rightly called the meager amount of food supplies — “kits” of rice, beans, sugar and salt that could at best feed 3,500 families for ten days — “a Trojan horse.”

According to Greek legend, a massive, ornate wooden horse was brought to Athens’ rival, Troy. The Trojans, not knowing that enemy soldiers were hiding inside the horse, allowed it through the wall protecting the city. The soldiers then leaped out and were able to subdue the Trojans and destroy their city.

Today’s Merriam-Webster defines a Trojan horse as “someone or something

intended to defeat or subvert from within, usually by deceptive means.” It was obvious to most of the world that the imperialist “gifts,” so-called “humanitarian aid,” were being used to orchestrate an invasion.

No one should think for a minute that the danger of an invasion, with the goal of pulling off another “regime change,” is over. Anti-war forces must remain in the streets. The time to figure out what the next solidarity action will be is right now.

But anyone who believes, as Trump proclaimed Feb. 19, that “socialism is dying” is living in a bubble. More and more people join with Cuba and Venezuela in shouting, “Socialism or death!” □

Trump’s Trojan horses stuck in the mud!

A return to Leninism: The centennial anniversary of the Comintern

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orientation. On the contrary, it was asserted to objectively strengthen the class orientation. Many in the movement still don't understand this. As a result, their positions on the national question have weakened, sometimes to the point of completely dismissing the national question. Also, some in our movement mistakenly see the struggle against gender oppression as a departure from the class struggle. In our view, this reflects another example of a narrow, erroneous understanding of the class struggle — and a position that is influenced by patriarchal prejudice. Hopefully, there will be a reassessment of these questions in our movement so that all of us will finally be in sync with the lyrics of the International: “No more tradition's chains shall bind us.”

How to fight the danger of fascism?

Trying to accurately label Trump politically or predict what he's going to do is less helpful than understanding that his erratic

behavior and undisguised racism, misogyny and bombastic demagoguery are true reflections of the panic, chaos and political breakdown inside the U.S. ruling class. Trump is the U.S. ruling class unmasked in the face of a life-and-death crisis. He is proof that pretending to be civil, or upholding laws, or trying to maintain international alliances has not helped to extricate U.S. imperialism from its steady decline. Beyond this, Trump exemplifies the lengths that the ruling class will go to in order to maintain the political loyalty of sections of the working class at a time when economic stability — and thus political stability — is cracking up. Trump's obsession with building the wall and his war against immigrant workers — beyond appealing to the racism of his base — is also a desperate call to build walls between sections of the world's working class in order to thwart global class consciousness. It is in effect a declaration of war against the prospect of proletarian internationalism. The time has come for revolutionary and genuinely progressive forces to declare — and make part

of their mass appeals — that the workers' struggle has no borders. The Trump phenomenon is also a warning. If the unfolding of an uncontrollable crisis has the capitalist ruling class fearful about its very survival, sections of the ruling class are prepared to turn to fascism and war as a solution. History has shown that relying on other sections of the ruling class — which in the U.S. means turning to the Democratic Party — to “save democracy” is only likely to confuse and disarm the working class. The best — and actually the only real way of fighting the danger of fascism — is the radical, widespread upsurge of the working class for the purpose of waging the class struggle until revolution.

What is the role of the working class in the 'belly of the beast'?

A hundred years ago, the thinking among communists everywhere was that in one way or another, the working-class forces at the centers of imperialism — and most especially in the U.S.— would play

a decisive role in determining the fate of capitalism. Sam Marcy predicted almost 70 years ago, in the early post-World War II years, that the revolutionary impetus in the East that propelled the Chinese Revolution and the heroic resistance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would in due time come to the U.S. Che Guevara's view was that there would have to be a series of revolutions at the extremities of the imperialist empire before the masses at the heart of imperialism rose up to finish the job. The world has changed in unimaginable ways since these predictions were made. What has not changed is the dire need to end the rule of capitalism. We will not argue over the validity of prior predictions. We will instead affirm in no uncertain terms — and with resolute confidence — that the workers and oppressed peoples located in the belly of the beast have a special responsibility to the rest of the world to slay the beast. Whatever we must do tomorrow, it is not too early to commence preparations for the end game now! □

Youth demand action on climate change

By G. Dunkel

Since the start of 2019, tens of thousands of young people in Europe have hit the streets in multiple demonstrations to demand real action from their governments and funding needed to preserve a livable future and prevent further environmental disasters. February 15 saw tens of thousands come out in England, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden with placards and banners that read: “There is no planet B,” “We're old enough to know better — Why aren't U?,” “I stand up for what I stand on” and “Stop Trumperies climatiques.” The organizers of Youth Strike 4 Climate said protests in Britain took place in more

than 60 towns and cities and an estimated 15,000 people participated. The biggest protests were held in London, Brighton, Oxford and Exeter; there were also protests in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. The UK Student Climate Network, which helped coordinate the protests, has four major demands: the government should declare a “climate emergency”; it should inform the public about the seriousness of the situation; the national curriculum should be reformed to include “the ecological crisis”; and the age of voting should be lowered to 16 so younger people can be involved in decision-making around environmental issues. (www.bbc.com) The next major day of international protests is set for March 15. □



Students in England.

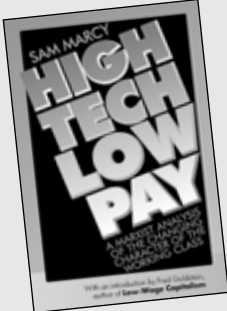
Mumia speaks to Yale Rebel Lawyers

Continued from page 3

American courtroom. I leave that to you, if you're interested. Now I use Darrow as a model for rebel lawyers for a reason. You, as law students, have a wealth of doors open before you. Indeed, some of you will go into prosecutors' offices and work to help build and strengthen the bulwark of mass incarceration. Why? Because the lure of power is powerful! How do you think mass incarceration came to be? Was it a mistake? No. Back during the early 1980s, neoliberals took power in major American cities and waged war on Black communities, led, more often than not, by Democrats like Philadelphia's first Black mayor, Wilson Goode, who brought the infamous MOVE bombing into being. Shortly before him, District Attorney Edward Rendell would join with former Mayor Frank Rizzo to give his blessing to the Aug. 8, 1978, attack on MOVE. Several years later, Rendell would announce an end to the prevailing prison system by saying that prisons would no longer do rehabilitation. Their job, he said, was incapacitation.

Thus we saw the so-called drug war achieve hyper status, with neoliberals joining conservatives to enact mass incarceration on a scale the nation and the world had never seen before. It should not therefore surprise us that Pennsylvania has the highest number of juvenile lifers on earth. Bipartisanship between neoliberals and conservatives built the monster we now call “mass incarceration.” No so-called “progressive prosecutor” can or will un-build it. That's because it took the entire system — DAs, judges, cops, defense lawyers and prison

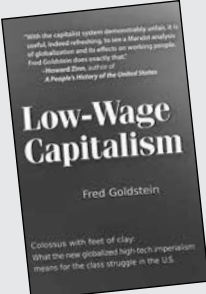
administrators, not to mention the media — to collaborate on a monstrous project like mass incarceration. Only mass resistance can abolish mass incarceration. In other words: only a mass movement. Movements like Black Lives Matter or, for that matter, Reb/Law — movements of law students who stay engaged after they become “lawyers” and say “no” to monsters like mass incarceration and its architects. That's why it's important to make note of Darrow's early days. He began his career as a corporate lawyer and made a pretty penny representing the people he would later call “the men who rule the world.” But his 1894 meeting with socialist activist and leader Eugene Victor Debs was transformative. Darrow resigned from his corporate clients and, at serious financial sacrifice, began representing those who opposed the economic elites. He represented Debs at a federal espionage trial four years later and lost. But Darrow — socialist, anti-racist atheist — had begun his long walk as a rebel lawyer. He opposed the death penalty and represented 100 clients facing death — and never had a single one go to death row. And speaking of the death penalty, I want you to know that this isn't my first trip to Yale. For in 1991, the Yale Law Journal published my essay, called “Teetering on the Brink between Life and Death.” It's in Volume 100. One of my lawyers was exulted, saying, “I made law review!” I calmly replied, “Hmm, you're right! And I didn't take a class.” I thank you for inviting me back and welcome the work to come to abolish mass incarceration. From Imprisoned Nation, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal. □



High Tech, Low Pay

A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class

By Sam Marcy with an updated introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of *Low Wage Capitalism*.





Low-Wage Capitalism

Fred Goldstein

Low-Wage Capitalism

Describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class in the United States of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx's law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval.



Capitalism at a Dead End

Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

For more information on these books and other writings by the author, **Fred Goldstein**, go to **LowWageCapitalism.com**



Maduro en Caracas, 23 de febrero.

Maduro habla al pueblo venezolano

Presidente Maduro habló al pueblo en una multitudinaria movilización que se realizó el 23 de febrero en el Palacio de Miraflores, sede del gobierno venezolano.

Estas son algunas de sus principales definiciones:

Hay líneas clave, la más importante es la lealtad. La otra es la conciencia, defender la verdad en cada barrio, con argumentos y con amor. Hay que mantenerse movilizados todas las veces que sea. Venezuela va a ganar la paz. Nunca nadie cayó tan bajo como el presidente (Iván) Duque de Colombia. He decidido romper relaciones con Colombia.

El pueblo de Venezuela salió a la calle para defender a la unión cívico-militar, "yanquis go home", le decimos a Donald Trump. La combatividad es impresionante, la conciencia de las declaraciones. Ustedes son los invisibles, los que nunca salen en las televisoras gringas ni en las internacionales.

Sintámonos orgullosos del coraje, del poder popular. Los invencibles somos los invencibles, los indestructibles. No muestran que somos la mayoría. Somos los hijos de Chávez. Son impresionantes las movilizaciones, lo felicito a Diosdado. Zulia, Mérida, Táchira, de punta a punta está movilizada la Patria con la bandera tricolor. Paz con justicia social y libertad,

con dignidad.

Esta es una batalla por la dignidad ante quienes nos quieren arrodillar ante el imperialismo. Estamos defendiendo la dignidad de la Patria, no es tiempo de traición, es tiempo de lealtad a la Patria y a los ideales supremos de Venezuela. Me alimento de la lealtad del pueblo. Estoy más duro que antes.

Hace un mes nos vimos en Miraflores y les dije que el presidente obrero seguiría al frente de Venezuela. Estoy aquí porque ustedes son los que deciden en Venezuela. No decide Trump, ni el patiquín de Iván Duque. Acá decide el soberano y más nadie.

La victoria nos pertenece

Juré respetar la Constitución y defenderla incluso con la vida. Le pregunto a la minoría opositora hasta cuándo le harán daño al país apostando a una invasión. Les pregunto, ¿qué han logrado en veinte años de conspiración? ¿Por qué no convocaron a elecciones si tienen el poder, pasados treinta días? Yo sí fue presidente encargado y convoqué a elecciones en treinta días. ¿Dónde está convocatoria? Estamos esperando, al payaso de mil caras, que convoque a elecciones, lo desafío, a ver quién tiene votos.

No ha nombrado ministros, el golpe ha fracasado. La victoria nos pertenece. Van a seguir jugando al intervencionismo.

Hoy pretendieron un show más. Ayer y hoy hicieron su show y perturbaron la frontera. Agredieron a una periodista chilena y a una agente, toda mi solidaridad con ellas. Le vamos a garantizar la paz a la frontera, no me tiembla el pulso.

Tratan de lavar la amenaza militar de un monstruo como Trump con un cantito allí y otro allí. Son traidores los que le cantan a Trump. El propio Trump reconoce que contempla una invasión. Llamo a la solidaridad mundial, es hora que se levanten las voces valientes. Le decimos a Trump que saque sus manos de Venezuela. Hablan de ayuda alimentaria, ¿a quién ayudó a Trump en su vida?

Le hicieron el golpe a Chávez y el pueblo lo rescató en una gesta heroica. Han hecho de todo, pero nunca cayeron tan bajo. Han secuestrado a la dirección de los partidos de oposición y van detrás de la embajada, no tienen pensamiento propio.

Una revolución proletaria

Si un día se enteran que me hicieron algo salgan a la calle a hacer una revolución socialista y proletaria. Es muy grande el odio de Trump. Odia a los pueblos de América Latina, por eso quiere hacer el muro. Trump dijo que Venezuela es el país con el que deberían ir a una guerra, como denunció un agente del FBI. Quiere acabar con esta experiencia hermosa de

revolución democrática.

La ayuda humanitaria es una trampa. Le hablo a la gente de buena voluntad que cree que quieren ayudar a Venezuela. Están enmascarando todo para meter a los militares gringos y robarnos las riquezas por otros cien años. Los problemas se resuelven entre venezolanos, sin que se inmiscuya nadie. Mandan comida podrida. Ya hay dos muertos por eso. Y mandaron una cantidad que no llegaría ni a 15 mil hogares, y nosotros llegamos a seis millones todos los meses. Es un show malo. Es un paquete podrido. Es la verdad, y con la verdad no temo ni ofendo.

Quieren traer camiones con leche en polvo, arroz, carne, se los compro yo, para los mercados populares, mañana mismo. Por las buenas todo, por las malas nada. Tengo una lista de 50 mil venezolanos que quieren volver por los malos tratos en Chile o en Colombia.

Claro que tenemos problemas, estamos en guerra económica, pero hay un estado protector que cuida al pueblo. Queda mucho por construir y no lo va a hacer Trump o la derecha fascista. Resolveremos los problemas con el gobierno bolivariano con las riendas del país. Nunca hubo en 200 años una arremetida como esta, tan sucia y tan punzante. □

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En el ‘Día D’ los camiones no pudieron entrar

Por Marco Teruggi
Ureña, Táchira, Venezuela

El 23 de febrero, día de la anunciada entrada de la ayuda humanitaria a Venezuela llegó, y terminó. Los pronósticos apocalípticos no tuvieron lugar, no cayó Nicolás Maduro, Juan Guaidó se quedó en Cúcuta, el país no entró en una confrontación cinematográfica.

¿Alta tensión? Mucha, en particular en la zona de frontera que separa los dos países a través de tres puentes sobre un río casi seco: Simón Bolívar, Tienditas, y Santander. De un lado Táchira, las ciudades de San Antonio y Ureña, del otro Norte de Santander, con la ciudad de Cúcuta.

La jornada empezó temprano con lo que se esperaba, una presión frontal con fuerza mediática en los puentes. Las acciones tuvieron momentos de euforia, debido por ejemplo a que un puñado de integrantes de la Guardia Nacional Bolivariana (GNB) decidieron sumarse a las filas de Trump-Rubio-Duque-Guaidó. La euforia bajó y con el pasar de las horas se formó la certeza de que no pasarían para el otro lado ni la gente ni los camiones.

Esa situación se tradujo en dos elementos centrales. Por un lado, el despliegue de una confrontación permanente en los puentes Bolívar y Santander, a la cual se sumó un intento de ocupar el aeropuerto de San Antonio que fue desactivado, y por el otro la utilización de los camiones con la ayuda humanitaria.

La confrontación recordó las estrategias callejeras violentas desplegadas durante el 2014 y 2017 por la derecha en varias ciudades del país, conocidas como guarimbas. Con la diferencia de estar

concentradas en puentes internacionales, y contar con el apoyo explícito de los cuerpos de seguridad del Estado colombiano. El ciclo fue repetido: avanzar hacia el lado venezolano, retroceder, intentar pasar por debajo del puente en el caso del Simón Bolívar. ¿Qué debería hacer un gobierno ante un intento de invasión guarimbera financiada internacionalmente?

Generar un falso positivo

La utilización de los camiones tuvo tres momentos centrales. El primero el de mostrar unas caravanas en camino hacia los puentes y explotar mediáticamente las imágenes, el segundo el de mentir al afirmar que habían ingresado a Venezuela —como lo hizo el cantante venezolano Nacho al dar por terminada la jornada— y el tercero generar un falso positivo, como fue la quema de dos gandolas. La matriz fue la de acusar a la GNB, cuando quedó filmado cómo fueron jóvenes de primera línea de confrontación.

El incendio de las gandolas parece haber sido planificado, y se tradujo en la acusación a Nicolás Maduro de haber cometido un crimen de lesa humanidad, la escalada de amenazas internacionales, como la que también twitteó el senador norteamericano Marco Rubio, quien afirmó que Venezuela había disparado en territorio colombiano, y que Estados Unidos defendería a Colombia en caso de agresión.

Lo cierto es que, por fuera de esos episodios, no ocurrió lo que habían anunciado. No ingresó la ayuda humanitaria a Venezuela por ningún punto, ni por Colombia, ni por Brasil ni por el mar, no se produjo un quiebre de la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana, los puentes

se parecieron a las imágenes ya conocidas en la estrategia violenta de la derecha, ahora en un marco más complejo.

Si era el día final no lo fue, si era el punto de quiebre tampoco parece haberlo sido en la dimensión que lo anunciaron. Otra vez se generó la desilusión de la base social de la oposición, confrontada a la distancia entre las promesas de sus dirigentes —que ahora son internacionales— y las correlaciones reales de fuerza.

El chavismo, por su parte, movilizó en Caracas, fue su quinta movilización consecutiva en cinco días. En ese contexto el gobierno anunció la ruptura de relaciones con el gobierno colombiano como medida central, que se suma a las decisiones tomadas en días anteriores de cerrar las fronteras con Brasil, Colombia, y las islas de Aruba, Bonaire y Curazao.

El resultado al finalizar el 23 fue de una gran ofensiva que planteaba ser la final y no logró sus objetivos, y un gobierno venezolano que se mantuvo de pie ante la embestida que, como se sabía, golpeó en simultáneo sobre varios flancos: armados, mediáticos, psicológicos, diplomáticos, territoriales. Ese saldo final era el esperable según las fuerzas reales—sin efecto inflado por redes sociales—y sin la aparición de una carta nueva por parte de Elliot Abrams, Iván Duque o Marco Rubio.

Existe otro saldo, que es la cantidad de noticias falsas, construcciones de rumores, de datos sin comprobar, sin fuentes creíbles. Forma parte de la avalancha, el aturdimiento, la justificación de nuevas posibles acciones. El caso de los camiones quemados fue la más clara el 23. La dificultad reside muchas veces en confirmar fuentes, números, veracidad de los hechos,

algo que suele quedar barrido en las lógicas de guerra que tienen a la operación comunicacional como columna vertebral. Nadie puede sorprenderse de una mentira norteamericana dentro de un asalto, el derecho a la inocencia está prohibido, la necesidad de la sospecha es permanente.

¿Qué pasará el 24 o 25? Resulta temprano saberlo, pareciera, por cómo se han dado los acontecimientos, que seguirán las presiones en los puentes sin capacidad real de ingresar a Venezuela, irán en ascenso las amenazas y reuniones internacionales, y tal vez se de un falso positivo de alta envergadura. Ya la anunció Rubio la noche del 22 al 23 cuando escribió acerca de la posibilidad de que el Ejército de Liberación Nacional, de Colombia, asesine civiles. Anunció lo que ellos mismos parecen dispuestos a hacer, cómo disfrazarlo, y a partir de allí justificar nuevas acciones, y pasar de la forma “ayuda humanitaria” a un nuevo esquema.

La frontera termina en una noche tensa, como si algo pudiera ocurrir en cualquier momento. Estamos en horas y días complejos, donde uno de los objetivos centrales del gobierno de Venezuela, del chavismo, es el de prevenir las acciones-trampas, las imágenes de violencia, la violencia misma, que dejó 42 heridos del lado venezolano el día 23.

Una idea del clima social en la noche del sábado la da la tendencia del Twitter, donde cinco de las etiquetas más posicionadas son para pedir la intervención internacional. La certeza de que no lograrán derrocar a Nicolás Maduro, democráticamente electo, por fuerza propia, parece ser mayoritaria. □

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