

U.S. hands off!

Venezuela fights for all Latin America

By Sam Ordóñez

March 23 — This week U.S. President Donald Trump and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro met for the first time since Bolsonaro took office. The two far-right presidents appeared to be good friends while spouting fascist talking points like denouncing “gender ideology.”

The two presidents made the real purpose of their meeting in Washington, D.C., very clear, however, with much of their conversation focused on regime-change efforts in Venezuela. Bolsonaro had even visited the CIA before his meeting with Trump, and Trump mentioned in their joint press conference that he would support Brazil joining NATO, the imperialist military alliance.

The last major expansion of NATO was only possible through the 1999 war that fractured Yugoslavia. It seems that imperialism is prepared to start a new war in Latin America, specifically in Venezuela, to carry out another strategic expansion.

Trump alone cannot make the decision to add Brazil to NATO, but the U.S. has the biggest economy and military in the alliance. Brazil wouldn’t be the first Latin American country in NATO, since Colombia joined as a “global partner” last year.

Colombia has a long history of cooperation with imperialism and is considered one of the most loyal U.S.

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March 30 Confront the NATO war machine!

People are coming to Washington, D.C., on March 30 from across the U.S. and around the world to confront NATO and defend Venezuela. Many different forces are mobilizing. Become an Organizing Center or find one near you!

When the rightwing, racist president of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, recently visited the White House, Donald Trump said he’d like to see Brazil as a closer “military partner” — possibly even a NATO ally.

With Colombia now an official actor in NATO, this would turn both Brazil and Colombia into bases for the U.S. war machine.

Make no mistake — this attempted U.S. expansion into Latin America with NATO is a dagger aimed directly at both Venezuela and Cuba and the gains of



past decades. There is an immediate threat of military dictatorships again dominating the people of Latin America. And if the U.S. gets its hands on Venezuela’s immense oil wealth, the U.S. will assume functional control over the vast majority of the world’s oil.

But with all our strength, we are fighting back! From solidarity delegations to flash pickets and mass mobilizations, we are gaining momentum. Activists and peace-loving people are converging on Washington, D.C., on March 30.

We will meet in front of the White House at 1 p.m. EST to tell Donald Trump, his generals and his financial crooks that the people of the world are sick of racist and imperialist institutions like NATO.

NoWarOnVenezuela.org



International Women's Day on March 8 was marked by global actions, strikes and protests, including in the Philippines, above. More on 6-7.

International Working Women's Month

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BOSTON

‘Resistance, Remembrance and Revolution’

By Maureen Skeehan

"Uphold the legacy of women's resistance! Women and gender-oppressed peoples are in the forefront of global fight-back!" was the call of the International Working Women's Day program held by the Boston branch of Workers World Party and the Women's Fightback Network on March 22.

Viewing war as an urgent women's issue, the WFN was formed in 2001 in direct rejection of President George H.W. Bush's call for endless war. The WFN called women and their allies into the streets to protest any U.S. military aggression, and continues its anti-imperialist work today.

Opening with the theme "Resistance, Remembrance and Revolution," Phebe Eckfeldt, a retired Harvard clerical worker and unionist, a Visiting Nurse Association nurse and WFN leader, welcomed the audience and introduced the panel of speakers.

Doris Reina-Landaverde, a national leader with the Harvard TPS Coalition and union shop steward with Service Employees 32BJ, detailed the ongoing attacks on immigrants and undocumented workers: "Every door is closed to us. They don't want to give us [driver's] licenses. As a mother I have to drive for food and to get to work. Thousands of families are in the same situation. Our children are citizens and have a right to grow up with their parents. There are workers with TPS [Temporary Protected Status] from 13 nations who are facing deportation and the loss of our families and livelihood. This fight is for all of us!"

Next, Dorotea Manuela, a long-time Puerto Rican Independentista activist and leader of Boston's May 1st Coalition, greeted the crowd: "I am an Afro-Latina Boricua member of the captured nation of Puerto Rico that remains a colony of the United States." She dedicated her talk to fierce revolutionary women warriors, both well-known and unknown. She asked the crowd to remember the women who have fought for decent housing, welfare rights, to stop hospital and school closings, and to demand clean drinking water: "We are everywhere and we have to continue uniting and fighting for our liberation."

Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center, gave an exciting eyewitness account about Venezuela, having just returned from a solidarity trip



WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

Some speakers at the International Working Women's Day program were (left to right) Belladonna Ashman, Doris Reina-Landaverde and Dorotea Manuela.

that included meeting with President Nicolás Maduro. Flounders shared vivid examples of the Venezuelan people's creativity and organized mass resistance involving unions, collectivos, schools and ongoing defense by workers from the farms to the oil fields. She also reported on the heroic struggle of President Maduro and the Bolivarian people's government against U.S. imperialism.

Belladonna Ashman, a young trans activist and organizer with Stonewall Warriors and WWP, moved the crowd with her revolutionary working-class assertion that "trans women are as much a part of the women's struggle as cis women. ... Let us be who we are and let us define ourselves." On how trans women suffer disproportionately, especially trans women of color, she emphasized, "Stop killing us!" Ashman pointed out that "reproductive justice needs to include the health needs of trans women."

The Team Solidarity Singers, with Kristin Turgeon on lead vocals, opened and closed the evening with a rousing musical tribute to women leaders in struggles against slavery and colonialism. Then the crowd raised their fists and sang the words of The Internationale, the anthem of the worldwide communist workers movement. With steadfast optimism, they sang, "We have been naught, we shall be all!" (See *workers.org* for an extended version of this article.)

WORKERS WORLD

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

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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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AUSTIN BOMBINGS 2018: Never forget

By Teresa Gutierrez
Austin, Texas

One year ago, from March 2 through 21, this city was gripped by acts of terror when Mark Anthony Conditt, who is white, left cardboard packages armed to explode in homes and yards.

At the end of it all, two people were killed and five injured. Although corporate media and law officials hesitated to call the acts terrorist or racist, Austin’s African-American and Latinx communities bore the brunt of Conditt’s aggression. The two people killed were Black.

The explosions most affected East Austin, which has historically been home to Austin’s Mexican and African-American communities and the center of the 1960s-1970s Black and Chicano liberation movements.

Today, with the gentrifying boom that has destroyed communities of color around the country, and indeed the world, people of color in East Austin are either forced to move out or are struggling hard to stay.

Never forget: Say their names

The first to die was Anthony Stephan House, 39, after picking up the package Conditt left on his front porch on March 2, 2018. Anthony, according to relatives and friends from his alma mater, Texas State University, was a family man and a loving father to his 8-year-old daughter. He was helping his daughter get ready for school before opening the package that killed him.

On March 12, two more bombs left 17-year-old Draylen Mason dead and another injured. Draylen brought the package into the kitchen where it then exploded, killing him and injuring his mother.

According to Facebook posts and the press, Draylen was a gifted student and bass player. He had been accepted into the selective Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin. Students spoke of his warmth and generosity at a memorial a year later.

Also on March 12, a 75-year-old Mexican-American woman was harmed by potentially fatal wounds after handling a package. Esperanza Herrera lives 15 minutes from the Mason family with her 93-year-old mother, who was also at home when the bomb exploded.

On March 18, the fourth explosion slightly injured two white men as they rode bikes in a predominantly white area. That explosion was triggered by a tripwire attached to a For Sale sign.

Two days later, a fifth explosion occurred in a FedEx sorting facility and injured one worker.

Finally, Conditt was identified by law officials on March 21. He killed himself in his car with his own explosives.

Liberal Austin myth also explodes

Austin is often painted as ultra-liberal, as “other” than the rest of the state. Often called the “Berkeley” of Texas, it has become the “it” city, working hard to distance itself from racist, reactionary, rural Texas.

But when Conditt dropped his packages, not only did his bombs explode, but so too did the liberal façade of Austin. Like the rest of Texas, Austin produces haters and white supremacists.

The first myth to explode was that the serial bombings were not racist or terrorist. The Black and Brown communities



Anthony Stephan House.

in Austin felt otherwise. How can any other conclusion be made in this violent society, and especially in the context of a white supremacist presidency?

This country was founded on racism and terror. Austin itself is named after settler and colonizer Stephen F. Austin. Texas, like other parts of the Southwest, was criminally stolen from Mexico.

One of the most egregious things during the bombings was a “Wanted” poster, issued by the FBI before Conditt’s identification, which exhibited the pictures of the two Black victims. Outraged comments on Facebook pointed out that it made House and Mason look like the perpetrators.

Furthermore, police initially treated House as the criminal. They said the bomb might have been self-inflicted, and they went to his neighbors’ homes, implying that the explosion was the result of a drug deal gone bad!

Yet, as the media stated, “House and the slain teenager are relatives of prominent members of Austin’s African-American community.” “House was the stepson of Freddie Dixon, a former pastor at a historic black church in Austin,” according to the March 12, 2018, Washington Post. Austin NAACP president Nelson Linder said that House graciously maintained the organization’s website.

Austin spurs growth. And racists

Austin’s population growth is among the highest in the U.S., according to several government reports. A new forecast says the region’s population will swell by 2.6 percent this year.

More than 150 people move to Austin every day, many from California.

It behooves Austin’s ruling class to promote the view that Austin is “cool” or “weird.” It aims to attract more and more high-tech or Amazon-like industries that use a liberal façade to destroy the planet and exploit workers.

This growth has not just made the traffic on Interstate 35 a nightmare; it has made it a nightmare for Austin’s communities of color as well. But many white workers also find it hard to afford adequate housing.

Of Austin’s population growth of 50,000 people in 2019, more than 13,000 will be millennials, according to real estate advisory company Marcus & Millichap.

Most millennials have many reasons to oppose gentrification, racism, etc. No matter their income, they are aware that the Earth they have inherited is in crisis. Many will stand with the victims of Conditt’s bombings and help to smash the system that produced him.

Austin’s ruling class, just like Trump, knows that interest in socialism is about to explode. Their days are numbered. □

ONE YEAR LATER: Gaza's Great March of Return

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

March 21 — Ahmed Abu Artema, from his home in Gaza, sent out a January 2018 Facebook post asking: What would happen if hundreds of thousands of Palestinians marched into the buffer zone fronting the barbed wire and chain link that fences off Gaza at the de facto border with Israel?

March 30 marks one year of Friday marches, Gaza’s Great March of Return, which Abu Artema is credited with having generated. Sometimes numbering in the tens and hundreds of thousands, Palestinian people have streamed toward the fence that separates them from their ancestral homes.

As the anniversary approached, Abu Artema spoke in Atlanta about the inspiration for the historic action. This talk was the last stop of a multiweek U.S. tour organized by the American Friends Service Committee, with local sponsors including Jewish Voice for Peace.

Some 2.2 million Palestinians are imprisoned in Gaza by Egyptian guards on the south, Israeli military on the east and north and an Israeli naval blockade to the west.

Palestinians suffer from shortages of food, electricity and water. They live among bombed-out buildings and destroyed infrastructure. Unemployment is rampant, and poverty is intense. Most are refugees — forced into Gaza by Zionist attacks on their villages in 1948, others by the 1967 Israeli war that seized control



PHOTO: AFSC

Ahmed Abu Artema in Gaza.

of the West Bank, the Golan Heights and Gaza itself.

International law affirms their right to return to their land, but Israel responded to the Great March by using live ammunition. Sniper fire killed over 300 Palestinians in 2018, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, including those clearly identified as journalists and medics. More than 26,000 have been injured, with thousands shot in the legs, often requiring amputation, or in the head, suffering life-altering wounds.

Abu Artema was asked by an audience member how Palestinians of all ages continue to march, unarmed, despite the danger. He replied that the Great March represented the collective scream of invisible and discarded people declaring defiantly, “We are here and we will be heard!” □

WALTER RODNEY: Immersed in class struggle

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

The 16th Annual Walter Rodney Symposium was held March 22-23 at the Atlanta University Center Woodruff Library where the renowned scholar and Marxist activist’s papers are archived.

Rodney is best known as the author of “How Europe Underdeveloped Africa,” a seminal work that exposed the convergence of capitalism, race and class in the modern political, economic and social reality of that continent.

Rodney was assassinated June 13, 1980, in Guyana, where his steadfast work in promoting class unity and struggle against oppression and exploitation had earned him the hatred of the ruling elite.

The Walter Rodney Foundation hosts the Symposium each year on the weekend closest to his birthday, March 23. It gathers together writers, activists, scholars, students and others to engage in Rodney’s main position: The role of those with knowledge and skills is not to collaborate with, but to challenge and undermine the lies and myths of capitalism, racism and imperialism.

As illustrated by his own life, Rodney called on progressive or radical intellectuals to join social movement organizations to help build the capacity of the masses of working and poor people for self-emancipation.

He stressed that immersion in the class struggle would bring real life to the academic’s understanding of systems of



power and exploitation and would constitute a valuable tool in overthrowing capitalism and building socialism.

Among those attending this year’s Symposium were Mireille Fanon Mendès-France, daughter of famed African liberation activist Franz Fanon, author of “The Wretched of the Earth”; Jamaican Rastafari who collaborated with Rodney; scholars and professors of African studies and political science influenced by Rodney; activists engaged in support of the Bolivarian Revolution and leaders of community struggles.

The Walter Rodney Foundation was initiated by his widow, Dr. Patricia Rodney and his children, who lead and sustain the Foundation.

For additional information, visit: walterrodneyfoundation.org. □

Black and Brown workers reveal Philadelphia City Council gentrification scheme

By Ted Kelly
Philadelphia

At 2 a.m. on the night of Feb. 23, over 50 people were gathered outside Philadelphia’s Ninth Police Precinct building at 21st and Hamilton. Despite frigid temperatures, the dozens of primarily Black activists rallied, chanted and shut down traffic demanding the release of Abdul-Aliy Muhammad, arrested earlier that evening at City Hall.

Muhammad is one of the founders of the Black and Brown Workers Cooperative, dedicated to the liberation of the most oppressed sectors of the working class. BBWC has launched several campaigns to combat gentrification in Philadelphia, as well as confronting white supremacy in the city’s LGBTQ institutions.

In 2017, they mobilized to confront a culture of racism and sexual violence permitted by the administration of the Mazzoni Center, one of the largest LGBTQ health care providers in the U.S. Over 70 workers walked out, calling for the resignation of Mazzoni CEO Nuri Shein, among other demands.

Muhammad, who is HIV positive, put their body on the front lines of the struggle by engaging in a “med strike” — forgoing the medications that keep the virus at bay. Shein and another executive resigned within three days. BBWC is working with the Mazzoni Center to assure that structural changes are made to address workers’ demands.

Activist victory over cops and cronies

Now the cooperative has turned its energies toward revealing and reversing the displacement of Black and Brown communities. At a Feb. 21 re-election campaign launch event for City Councilmember Jannie Blackwell, BBWC protested the 30-year incumbent for collusion with real estate developers to sell off public properties to her friends and cronies.

At the protest, Blackwell’s campaign staff violently assaulted demonstrators and called the notoriously racist Philadelphia Police Department on them. Blackwell associate Michael Youngblood assailed BBWC members with threats of rape and further violence. Youngblood, who works as a private contractor for

Blackwell’s family, was convicted of bank fraud and extortion for shaking down a homeless shelter in the Third District.

Two days later, organizers staged another protest to disrupt a Council meeting at City Hall. Again, Blackwell and her allies on the City Council called police on the protesters, and Muhammad was arrested in full view of the press and the public.

Police outrageously claimed that this revolutionary activist was armed and attacked the officers, charging Muhammad with possession of an instrument of crime, resisting arrest, reckless endangerment and aggravated assault, among other serious and bogus charges.

After the Feb. 23 arrest, Muhammad was transported to Hahnemann Hospital to be treated for injuries inflicted by the police. The hospital refused to allow Muhammad to be treated without police in the room, so Muhammad declined treatment. They were then taken to the Ninth Precinct building where officers refused to serve halal food to Muhammad who is Muslim.

That’s when the network of workers and oppressed people snapped into action to demand the immediate release of Abdul-Aliy Muhammad.

Finally, on March 21, as the result of organized effort by the community, all charges against Muhammad were dropped, with the exception of a disorderly conduct charge. Abdul-Aliy pleaded guilty and was fined \$100.

Muslim and queer activism

Abdul-Aliy Muhammad was born to Melody Ellen Beverly, who became the first Black woman to operate a trolley in Philadelphia. When Beverly was a child, her family was one of the first to move into the 46th Street projects. Beverly converted to Islam and her family joined a Muslim community on the 52nd Street corridor. Muhammad grew up with Arabic as their first language.

Inheriting a deep spirituality from their mother, Muhammad said, in comments to WW, that it can be very difficult to be both Muslim and queer. “These rigid boxes are violent,” they said when describing the conflict imposed on these identities. This has certainly informed Muhammad’s activism, particularly in BBWC’s mobilization against racism and

segregation at gay clubs in Philadelphia.

Muhammad’s mother died in 2012, followed by their father in 2013. In 2018, they were diagnosed with HIV.

A poet, Muhammad says, “Writing was crucial to my survival. If I didn’t write, I would be dead.” When medical professionals sometimes insinuate that HIV positive folks should abstain from sex and intimacy, Muhammad refuses to have their bodily autonomy revoked. The victim blaming and stigma are not unlike what they saw their mother face after she was diagnosed with lung cancer.

Confronting racist gentrification

“It wasn’t until the 2000s that you started to see white folks not just shopping and passing through West Philly communities, but settling there,” Muhammad told WW. Luxury apartments began springing up overlooking Malcolm X Park. Student apartments replaced family homes. Muhammad was forced out of their own community due to skyrocketing rent and lived in South Philly for some time before they were able to return to their home in Philadelphia’s Third District.

Council member Blackwell is known to exercise a prerogative that Muhammad described as “an unspoken deference City Council members receive in deciding on land deals that happen within their district’s borders.”

Blackwell wants to see a vacant city-owned property at 4601 Market Street sold for \$10 million to a private developer. Michael Karp has been awarded numerous contracts to gentrify West Philly with luxury student housing around the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University. This is part of a decades-long project to “settle” that historically Black neighborhood, turning communities like Mantua, Powelton Village and Black Bottom over to landlords who rent to white students in “University City.” Karp, also an “advocate” for charter schools, is a founder of the for-profit Belmont School.

Karp is not unique in Philadelphia. In a recent op-ed written for the Philadelphia Inquirer, Abdul-Aliy also pointed to the examples of developers Shawn Bullard and Felton Hayman, who both made a fortune after other members of City Council were able to use their “prerogative” to award contracts.



WW PHOTO: TED KELLY

Abdul-Aliy Muhammad of the Black and Brown Workers Cooperative.

Muhammad wrote: “To raise awareness of these issues, the Black and Brown Workers Co-op, an organization I helped to co-found with Shani Akilah and Dominique London, launched an anti-displacement platform last summer called ‘disappearing Blackness is displacement politics,’ which tackles the gentrification of West and Southwest Philadelphia. Dominique knows this issue firsthand: She was displaced from her own apartment in Wynnefield. As a whole, our collective focuses on the communities that we have seen be hit hardest by displacement and homelessness: Black and Brown people, LGBTQIA people, and people living with disabilities, including chronic illness.

“We urge city leaders to consider those populations and develop a means by which 40 percent of city-owned land in each district would be reserved for residents and community members — not just officials — to decide its use. After all, when [real estate developer Shawn Bullard] said he wanted his property to cater to college students and ‘millennials that work downtown,’ that doesn’t sound like it describes most Philadelphians.”

Philadelphia is a working-class city. And it is, more importantly, a Black and Brown city. “It shouldn’t be any one person’s prerogative,” Muhammad wrote in conclusion. “It has to be all of ours.” □

Fight for women’s liberation! Build Workers World!

As Marxists, we strive to not just honor history but to make it — to promote changes that put the workers and oppressed first instead of last. Workers World commemorates the socialist holiday of International Working Women’s Day, March 8, with a roundup of women’s protests for freedom, justice and equality the world over.

Struggle is the only way to bring about change — like the Black Lives Matter movement, started by women and gender-nonconforming activists, which boldly fights racism and demands redress for centuries of oppression. Women are powering the fight for \$15 an hour and a union because two-thirds of low-wage workers are women, often women of color and heads of households.

Inspired by the #MeToo movement and Time’s Up, women are speaking up at work — particularly in restaurants, offices and hotels — against sexual harassment and for respect, and trans women are resisting horrific sexual assaults by police and prison guards.

WW continues to focus on women who bear the



brunt of Trump’s racist, sexist, bigoted xenophobic agenda: im/migrant women and refugees detained and often deported for the “crime” of crossing borders to find work and provide for their families or to escape life-threatening repression and violence; children separated at the border from parents, making it nearly impossible to reunite them; and “Dreamers” whose legal status under DACA is still in limbo.

If you appreciate WW’s year-round coverage of struggles that advance women’s liberation, join the WW Supporter Program. For a donation of at least \$75 a year — and much more if you can — members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give to friends. Write checks (either monthly or once a year) to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up at workers.org/donate/ to make monthly deductions. Know we appreciate your help in building Workers World — for today and for the future. □

Between the lines of the Mueller Report

By Deirdre Griswold

The relationship between the law and politics is once again the subject of oceans of ink — and their electronic equivalents in this digital age — as the Mueller Report is being analyzed, down to the last comma, by people who have not read it and are not allowed to read it.

It has been hyped as the biggest legal challenge yet to the Trump administration. The whole country is presumed to have been breathlessly awaiting its release — which has still not happened and may never happen.

All that has come out into the open so far is a brief summary of Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s report, written by Attorney General Bill Barr. He says that Mueller’s investigation “did not find that the Trump campaign or anyone associated with it conspired or coordinated with Russia in its efforts to influence the 2016 presidential election.”

Barr had to add that while the “report does not conclude that the President committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him.”

An ‘impartial’ FBI?

It should be remembered that both Mueller and Barr were appointed to their jobs by Trump. The FBI, which Mueller headed for 12 years, has a long history of repressing unionists, progressives and immigrants, beginning with the Palmer Raids of the 1920s.

The FBI spied on and worked to destroy Black leaders from Marcus Garvey to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Huey

Newton. It fed Sen. Joseph McCarthy the information to point a finger at socialists and communists and get them fired from their jobs in the 1950s. It tried to bring down the American Indian Movement with baseless charges.

The FBI also targeted Palestinian professor Edward Said, “various AIDS advocacy and gay rights groups like ACT UP and the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights, and the Committee in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador.” (“The FBI Is Not Your Friend,” Jacobin, May 13, 2017)

There is much discussion that the Mueller Report will now become the focus of a huge struggle in Congress.

Really? Is this report more important than all the other crimes of the Trump administration?

What about U.S. attacks on Venezuela? Or support for Israel?

How ironic this issue of a foreign country influencing U.S. elections should provoke such indignation. At the very same time, the U.S. government has openly dismissed Venezuela’s elections, anointed a little-known politician there as “president” of that country and is attempting a coup there! Where is the outcry over that?

Many in the capitalist media have reported on how the Trump administration is trying to help get the far-right Israeli politician Benjamin Netanyahu re-elected by moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem and recognizing Israel’s seizure of the Golan Heights from Syria.

Haaretz, a liberal Israeli newspaper, writes that the Mueller Report helps

“Trump’s shameless campaign to anoint Netanyahu as the American government’s clear preference in the upcoming Knesset election.” Under Netanyahu, hundreds of unarmed Palestinians protesting the unbearable conditions in Gaza have been shot and killed by Israeli troops.

But there are no headlines here about how the U.S. “influences” elections all over the globe.

What about climate change?

This administration has shocked the world by axing what little had been done in the U.S. to curb greenhouse gas emissions and protect the environment. Fossil fuel conglomerates are ecstatic while climate change destroys lives all over the planet. Compare all the articles circulating on the Mueller Report with barely a mention of the floods currently devastating the Midwest and the extremely intense storms from Norway to Bangladesh to the eastern coast of Africa.

Suicides are rising dramatically in the U.S. as young workers are trapped in the gig economy with no income security, even as rents soar and millionaires become billionaires. No blaring headlines or demands for congressional investigations on that.

All the hoopla about the Mueller Report is a distraction from the real problems facing the workers of this country.

Moreover, the focus on the report covers up a basically undemocratic system.



Trump lost the election by 3 million votes. That didn’t stop him from winning the presidency, however. He won not because of Russia, but because of the highly undemocratic way in which the Electoral College is structured.

Then there are the millions of dollars spent by both Democrats and Republicans on political advertising with little restrictions. This, with a few exceptions, guarantees victory for the candidates with the biggest money behind them.

While progressives may use elections as a platform to bring their message to a wider audience, the electoral arena is tailor-made to perpetuate the rule of the capitalist monopolies.

The battle over the Mueller Report will undoubtedly dominate the headlines of the capitalist media for a long time, but it must not distract from the real struggle — in the streets, on the picket lines, in the nitty-gritty organizing that goes on everyday to end exploitation, union busting, racism, misogyny, anti-LGBTQ2S bigotry, xenophobia, attacks on Muslims and the oppression of im/migrants. □

Houston

Chemical fires cause immeasurable pain, illness, fear Part 1

By Mirinda Crissman and Gloria Rubac
Houston

The morning of March 17 saw dark black billowing smoke begin to cloud the skies of east Harris County, causing residents to wonder if a storm or hurricane was approaching. But this was no natural disaster. It was man-made, caused by ITC, Intercontinental Terminals Company’s facility in Deer Park, outside Houston.

Several petrochemical storage tanks caught fire, and it took four days to put out the fires which spread to several more tanks. Then midweek, the fires reignited.

While the fires are now out, residents fear they could break out again. While company officials report no danger, residents don’t believe them. Thousands of people have gone to hospitals, clinics and emergency rooms for a multitude of symptoms from watery and itchy eyes to problems breathing and inability to keep food down. People with asthma have suffered greatly.

According to ITC’s web page, the Deer Park terminal “currently has 13.1 million barrels of capacity in 242 tanks. It stores all kinds of petrochemical liquids and gases, as well as fuel oil, bunker oil and distillates. The terminal has five ship docks and ten barge docks, rail and truck access, as well as multiple pipeline connections.”

These fires are not ITC’s first offense. ITC has been out of compliance with the Clean Air Act nine out of the past 12 quarters. Since 2003 there have been 39 unauthorized air releases. In 2013, they released 10 times the legal limits of cyanide into the San Jacinto River.

Fire releases deadly chemicals, shuts down shipping

The chemical tank fire occurred near Houston, the U.S. petrochemical capital. The blaze released chemicals commonly found in the production of gasoline, which can cause dizziness and headaches. Those symptoms were reported by residents in the area throughout the week, even though the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality daily downplayed the fire’s risk to the public.

The Houston Ship Channel is a 50-mile waterway that runs from the Gulf of Mexico through Galveston Bay and up the San Jacinto River, ending 4 miles east of downtown at the Port of Houston. According to a study by the University of Texas Health Science Center, children living within 2 miles of the Ship Channel have a 56 percent higher risk for childhood leukemia than those living over 10 miles away.

The Channel was shut down due to pollutants released by the fire. It won’t reopen until the U.S. Coast Guard verifies that cancer-causing benzene has dissipated in the air, and oily runoff from the area’s worst chemical disaster in 14 years poses no threat to vessels or their crews.

Oil refiners, chemical manufacturers and grain exporters in Houston’s eastern suburbs are now cut off from Gulf of Mexico shipping as the unfolding disaster enters its second week.

Texas politicians have defiantly sought to limit pollution lawsuits, and Texas has notoriously lax pollution enforcement. However, the lack of traffic through the shipping channel, which impacts productivity and therefore profits, is likely



Toxic “tank farm” fire still burning in Houston on March 22.

behind the Texas Attorney General’s filing a lawsuit against ITC this week, accusing the company of violating clean-air laws.

Decades of activism against pollution

For decades activists from the Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (t.e.j.a.s.) have fought the polluting refineries on the east side of Houston. Those communities in Texas Congressional District 29 (CD 29) surround the Houston Ship Channel, home to the largest petrochemical refinery complex in the Western Hemisphere. The lack of safety in these industrial facilities has subjected residents to uncontainable toxic pollution.

According to t.e.j.a.s., “Houston ranks

1st in the U.S. for mercury, formaldehyde, benzene, 1-3 butadiene and a host of other toxic chemicals in the air. Texas ranks 1st in the country for carbon dioxide emissions, cancer-causing chemicals released into the air, toxic chemicals released into water, hazardous waste generated, and much more undocumented pollution. ... Despite record profits, record pollution, record sickness, and minutes away from the largest medical center in the world, Texas CD 29 has more uninsured children than any district in the country.” □

Next: Town meetings expose community health crisis in Houston.

International Working Women's D



Kenya



Argentina



Australia

By Kathy Durkin

International Working Women's Day was founded in 1910 at an International Women's Socialist Conference in Copenhagen to strengthen global solidarity among women, especially workers. Its socialist founders recognized the burgeoning numbers of women workers pouring into factories at a time of capitalist expansion, facing terrible working conditions and lacking any rights. This year's IWD calls for solidarity with women living under the gun of U.S.-backed wars or occupations, as in Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan and Occupied Palestine, and those defending their country against imperialist intervention, as in Venezuela. It's a day to support women and people of all genders facing brutal right-wing, dictatorial governments, as in Brazil, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines and elsewhere.

In response to oppressive capitalist globalization, women workers worldwide are striking and marching for higher wages, pay equity, safer workplaces, unionization and equality. They demand an end to sexual and physical abuse on and off the job. The #Me Too movement has spread internationally. Workers, as in Bangladesh, are fighting for union protection from global brands and local bosses. The movement for reproductive justice is spurred on by young women from Argentina to the north of Ireland to South Korea.

IWD is a time to support the tens of millions of migrant and refugee women workers—and their families—forced to leave their homelands, fleeing repression, violence and poverty, only to face racism, abuse and detentions. And to thank Indigenous women, leading the global movement against corporate destruction of the planet, often at great risk.

Although capitalist governments give lip service to IWD with phony proclamations about women's equality, and corporations commercialize it, the day's working-class roots and global solidarity prevail. On March 8, women workers and students, labor unionists, leftists, people of all genders, nationalities, cultures, religions, ages, disabilities and abilities demonstrated in the streets with colorful banners held high.

Here are some highlights:

Latin America: mass protests from Mexico to Chile

In **Guatemala City**, hundreds of Indigenous women, trans women, domestic workers and others protested decades of state killing, rape and torture, which targeted Indigenous peoples. They protested pending release of convicted perpetrators.

The Civil Council of Peoples' and Indigenous Organizations of **Honduras** held events in early March honoring co-founder Berta Cáceres, a Lenca woman, socialist and environmentalist, murdered three years ago. Her now-convicted killers are members of the Honduran military and executives of the Energy Development Company, whose dam she fought against. Cáceres' family demands “true justice.”

On IWD, **Venezuela** faced a U.S.-coordinated electrical outage and threats against President Nicolás Maduro. Imperialist intervention would endanger gains made by women workers, including equal pay, pregnancy and maternal benefits, free health care and education, and laws that mandate women must hold half of council seats and ban anti-woman violence.

In São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, crowds of 50,000 people marched, while 15,000 came out in Recife and thousands more demonstrated throughout **Brazil** against reactionary President Jair Bolsonaro and his austerity cutbacks, racism and misogyny. Agricultural workers occupied mines. Indigenous women rallied. Salvador protesters stressed that Bolsonaro's election unleashed a war against women, Black people, the poor and LGBTQ+ people.

Women chanted, “We are all Marielle!” to honor Marielle Franco, Black lesbian activist against racism and police brutality, advocate for urban poor people, women and LGBTQ individuals, and Rio councilor. Two ex-police officers were recently arrested in connection with her assassination a year ago.

Thousands of pro-choice activists marched in Buenos Aires, **Argentina**, carrying “Legalize Abortion Now!” signs. Each year hundreds of thousands of women have “underground” abortions, resulting in countless complications, even death. Legislation allowing the procedure was narrowly defeated in 2018, but the mass struggle goes on.

Cuba: Women celebrate 60 years of Revolution

March 6 was the first day of the 10th Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), which was dedicated to Fidel Castro, FMC founder Vilma Espín and young Cuban women. Espín had stated her pride in defending principles of socialism, without which women remain invisible in history.

Teresa Amarelle Boué, FMC Secretary-General, said, “For 60 years, Cuban women have had a voice and enjoyed rights that many countries can only dream of.” The great achievements made by women are the result of their efforts and the government's political will. (Granma, March 12)

IWD was commemorated in **Haiti**, while in San Juan's financial district in **Puerto Rico** women strongly defended their rights to safe housing, health care and more.

Europe: Women strike!

Massive marches and strikes involving millions of protesters swept the **Spanish state**, with 350,000 in Madrid streets, 200,000 in Barcelona, 220,000 in Valencia, and huge actions in Pamplona, Seville and in Bilbao in **Basque country**. The 1,400 protests showed the strength of the women's movement, backed by major labor unions. Hundreds of thousands of women workers, other gender-oppressed people and students struck for two hours or all day. They protested pay and job discrimination, misogynist violence, and rallied to protect hard-won rights, emphasizing, “There are 1,000 reasons!”

Demonstrations took place at 120 locations across **France**, uniting women's, student and LGBTQ organizations and labor unions. Key slogans demanded pay equity and an end to gender-based assaults inside and outside the workplace.

The next day, women wearing “pink vests” led a “yellow vests” demonstration in Paris, opposing the Macron administration's “labor reforms,” especially reductions in unemployment benefits.

The slogan in Berlin, **Germany**, a city where IWD is a paid holiday, was “Celebrate, strike, fight on!” Thousands of women and LGBTQ people, mostly young, held signs denouncing patriarchy, the gender wage gap, sexual assaults and reactionary anti-choice, homophobic

forces. German socialist Clara Zetkin initiated IWD.

Strikes by public sector unions and demonstrations swept **Italy**, protesting job inequities and gender-based abuse. Affected were transportation, education and public health services in many cities. Federica Stagni remarked, “The march blocked the entire city of Bologna.” (Italics Magazine, March 22)

Public sector workers in 30 unions joined women's organizations in initiating walkouts in Athens and other cities in **Greece** to oppose pay inequity and government austerity cutbacks harming women.

Women and their allies marched in Belfast in the north of **Ireland** for legalization of abortion, which their sisters won in the Irish Republic last May. Tens of thousands were on the streets in **Norway**. Other actions took place in **England, Belgium and Serbia**.

South Africa: Honor women workers!

The Congress of **South African** Trade Unions paid tribute to the struggles and contributions of women workers and acknowledged human and worker rights on IWD. COSATU called on women “to intensify their struggle for justice and equality by organizing themselves in their communities and workplaces,” learning about global women workers' struggles and always supporting each other “for the advancement of the women's struggle.” The Congress called on men to support women's leadership and stand with women “in eradicating patriarchy and all its ills.” (cosatu.org)

The South African Democratic Teachers Union, the country's largest educator union, celebrated IWD across four provinces and at a national event. Invited were sister unions in COSATU and the Tripartite Alliance, comprised of the African National Congress, South African Communist Party and the South African National Civic Organization.

Among other commemorations on the continent, hundreds of women, especially youth, demonstrated in Nairobi, **Kenya**, for an end to employment and wage discrimination, as well as gender violence. Thousands of women marched in Tunis, **Tunisia**, chanting: “Equality—a right, not a privilege!”



Brazil



Sri Lanka



Gaza

ay goes global!



Free Palestine!

Women in **Gaza** protested at Israel's border fence on March 8 in the 50th week since the Great March of Return to their historical homes began a year ago. On IWD, named the “Friday of Palestinian Women,” 7,000 Palestinians demonstrated, over half of them women, against U.S.-backed Israeli occupation and repression. During the Great March, Israeli soldiers killed nearly 200 Palestinians, including 41 children, two women, three paramedics, two journalists and eight disabled people, said the human rights group, Al Mezan.

When thousands of women gathered in Istanbul, **Turkey**, to commemorate IWD, police fired tear gas and blocked their access to a main avenue off Taksim Square. This has occurred every IWD since 2016 under Recep Erdogan's repressive regime.

Women in **Pakistan** marched for equal access to education and employment and for bodily autonomy, decrying sexist violence.

Throughout **India**, women workers and activists, labor organizations and left parties marched against job and wage discrimination and gender-based assaults. The All-India Trade Union Congress demonstrated in Coimbatore for a higher minimum wage and pensions for all workers, with equal pay for women.

Women workers at ATG Ceylon clothing manufacturer company in **Sri Lanka** have been on strike for 2½ months, protesting intimidation, abuse and unfair firings. On IWD, strikers, members of FTZ-GSEU workers' organization, marched in Columbo.

Contingents of women garment workers—who comprise 80 percent of the 4 million workers in that industry—marched in **Bangladesh**, demanding better wages and working conditions in plants that produce clothing for global brands. Leftists and unions participated. Companies have fired 7,000 garment workers, many women, following wildcat strikes and demonstrations denouncing a paltry wage increase.

Thousands of women workers, many in the Korean Confederation of Trade Unionists, rallied in Seoul, **South Korea**. Signs called for “gender equality” and better working conditions.

In **Democratic People's Republic of Korea**, IWD is a national day of

celebration. Women there are guaranteed the right to free, safe, legal abortions, while their sisters in the south are fighting for that right.

Thousands of women and people of all genders from 100 organizations, including Akbayan and Gabriela, marched through Manila, the **Philippines**, protesting President Rodrigo Duterte's reactionary policies, increasing sexual violence against women and children, and imposition of martial law in Mindanao. The groups said, “On this International Women's Day, we say 'enough' of the century of women's oppression ... and of the misogyny of this administration.” (GMA News, March 8) Gabriela Women's Party said, “There is no other path but the path of fighting.”

In Jakarta, **Indonesia**, thousands of women demonstrated for their rights, and those of other marginalized groups, and an end to misogynist abuse. Women workers demanded higher wages, lower prices for necessities, the right to maternity and menstruation leave, and an end to exploitative work contracts.

Australia: Support migrants!

Thousands of people marched through Sydney, led by migrant organizations and labor unions, including the Electrical Trades Union. A Latinx contingent honored Marielle Franco. Chants demanded equal pay and the right to abortion. Rally speakers denounced exploitation of Asian migrant workers and violence against Indigenous women. Sex workers marched in Brisbane, chanting, “Decriminalize sex work!” □

WORKERS WORLD statement

Workers World Party strongly protests that Rasmia Odeh, a renowned Palestinian activist, freedom fighter and former Israeli and U.S. political prisoner, was recently banned from participating in a speaking engagement in Germany and was ordered to leave the country.

Under pressure from Israel, the German government revoked Odeh's visa after she was scheduled to speak on “Palestinian women in the liberation struggle” at an International Women's Day event in Berlin.

This action is a violation of her right to speak openly and honestly about the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom and justice. Germany's actions also violate the rights of Odeh's audience to learn from her experiences and those of her compatriots.

Odeh was deported from the U.S. in 2017 after waging a long, arduous legal and political campaign against thoroughly biased charges; she was eventually convicted by equally biased federal courts.

Her treatment reveals the hostility of past and present U.S. administrations, regardless of political party, which deny the

Free Ana Belén Montes and Nina Droz Franco!

By Teresa Gutierrez
New York

The struggle to free Puerto Rican political prisoners Ana Belén Montes and Nina Alejandra Droz Franco continues.

On March 23 the ProLibertad Freedom Campaign held a Freedom March in Harlem as part of their Women's History Month activities and dedicated it to these heroes. ProLibertad organizes support for Puerto Rican political prisoners and demands independence for Puerto Rico.

Ana Belén Montes

Ana Belén Montes was a Pentagon analyst hired by the Defense Intelligence Agency. One of her first assignments was to go to Cuba to study their military, according to ProLibertad.

Her work meant that she was granted access to almost everything intelligence forces had related to Cuba, including from the CIA and the State Department.

“Allegedly for 16 years, she shared the information ... with Cuba,” states ProLibertad. (tinyurl.com/y6kfpusl)

In 2001, Ana Belén Montes was arrested by the FBI and accused of “conspiracy to commit espionage” in favor of Cuba. She pleaded guilty.

She was sentenced to 25 years in prison without parole and sent to a Navy Base prison in Texas. Her release date is



PHOTO: ASH JEGROO

Supporters of Puerto Rican political prisoners rallied in Harlem, N.Y., March 23.

scheduled for July 1, 2023. At her trial, Ana Belén Montes testified: “I engaged in the activity ... because I obeyed my conscience rather than the law. I believe our government's policy toward Cuba is cruel and unfair ... and I felt ... obligated to help the island defend itself from our efforts to impose our values and our political system.”

Nina Droz Franco

Nina Alejandra Droz Franco was arrested in San Juan, Puerto Rico, after she blocked a line of riot police at a major demonstration and rebellion on May Day 2017. She was accused of trying to set fire to the Banco Popular building, a target of the protest.

The anger of the Puerto Rican people toward banks is righteous. The banks, in collusion with the hated Fiscal Control Board imposed in 2016, have almost brought Puerto Rico to its knees. Unemployment and poverty abound. This, coupled with devastation from Hurricane Maria in 2017, has brought miserable conditions to Puerto Rico.

The U.S. District Attorney for Puerto Rico tried to portray Droz as a terrorist, but she is a freedom fighter.

Nina was sentenced to 37 months in jail and three years of probation. During the hearings, she was denied medication for chronic pain and anxiety. ProLibertad

fears she might be moved to a U.S. prison.

Ben Ramos, an organizer of ProLibertad, told Workers World, “These marches will continue until Nina and Ana Belén are free. Only through community education, mobilization and agitation will our sisters be freed. It is the people who free political prisoners!”

To find out how you can support, visit prolibertad.org. □

In solidarity with Rasmia Odeh and the Palestinian People



Rasmia Odeh

Palestinians' right to fight for self-determination and nationhood against the Israeli settler-colonial regime. This regime has, ever since its founding, been supported, politically and militarily, by U.S. imperialism.

During the many decades Odeh lived in the U.S., with permanent resident status and so-called citizenship, she helped hundreds of Arab women in her Chicago community gain civil, social and human rights in this racist country. So incensed were the Chicago power brokers by her prominence in the Arab community that they opened a campaign to stop her meaningful and heartfelt community work.

After being convicted on fraudulent evidence by a federal court judge in Detroit, Odeh served several months in jail and was eventually released. Rather than retry the original case, the U.S. proceeded to pile new charges onto Odeh.

Not wanting to endure a repeat of this judicial charade, given the biased political

position of the current administration against Palestine, Odeh chose to leave the United States voluntarily and return to the Middle East.

Workers World Party stands firmly in solidarity with Odeh and the Palestinian nation, wherever Palestinians live. WWP has always explained and exposed the role of the Israeli

state, from its illegal, criminal founding to its position as a junior partner aiding U.S. imperialist hegemony in West Asia.

We unequivocally support the global solidarity movement with Palestine. We encourage all political, social and cultural work, including the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, aligned with the struggle of the Palestinian people for their sovereign ancestral right to the land of their forebears.

Workers World Party stands with Rasmia Odeh and against all who attempt to stop her from telling the truth about Palestine. Rasmia Odeh is dear to all hearts that beat for freedom and justice in the U.S. and around the world. □



Spain

Yugoslavia war anniversary

Role of U.S.-NATO aggression

By John Catalinotto
New York

March 24 — Today opponents of the 1999 U.S.-NATO war against Yugoslavia gathered in Ralph Bunche Park, across from United Nations headquarters, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the air attack directed mainly against civilian targets in Serbia. The 78 days of bombs and rockets killed 3,000 people, destroyed hundreds of schools and collapsed bridges and hospitals.

The war and subsequent imperialist intervention in the Balkans completed the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, a multinational state of 20 million people. Yugoslavia had remained sovereign and socialist since its partisans drove out German imperialism in 1945. Now what remains are six small capitalist countries, semicolonies of Western imperialism. Already three of them are NATO members.

In addition, there's the rump region called Kosovo, a province wrenched out of Serbia in violation of international law. There the U.S. military built Camp Bondsteel, its major base serving NATO in the Balkans.

Speakers at the rally had been active opposing the U.S.-NATO war in 1999. Besides reviewing the war crimes of the Western powers and their Balkan lackeys, some pointed to the insidious role of NATO.

NATO expands role during war

Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center who visited Yugoslavia during the bombing, underlined that it was at NATO's 50th anniversary meeting in April 1999—during the bombing—that the U.S. pushed through its strategy of expanding NATO membership and area of intervention. Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary then joined and brought NATO membership to 19 countries.

There are now 29 members, with some on or near Russian borders, plus nine “global partners,” including Colombia. President Donald Trump has announced his intention to invite Brazil to join.

NATO began its expansion with its first open aggression aimed at Yugoslavia. Since then, NATO opened the war against Libya in North Africa and participated in the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, all under U.S. military direction. The military alliance, whose name — North Atlantic Treaty Organization — implies a limited area of responsibility, now intervenes worldwide.

In the period just following World War II, the United States was by far the dominant imperialist state, measured both by its economic and military power. Originally designed to confront the Soviet Union and to prevent workers' revolutions in Western Europe, NATO's structure puts Washington in control. The U.S. president always chooses the NATO commander, and the general in charge is

always from the Pentagon.

While U.S. world economic dominance has constantly decreased, its power of destruction is still preeminent. NATO has been U.S. strategists' choice instrument for keeping the other imperialist powers under U.S. control, something that went without question in 1949 at NATO's founding.

For contributing money and their youth to imperialist military adventures, the ruling classes of the other imperialist powers get a small piece of the loot stolen from the rest of the world. What the “new” members get is a few crumbs. NATO has been turned into a worldwide police force serving imperialism in an

attempt to reconquer colonies liberated during the existence of the Soviet Union.

Other speakers at the rally included former Serbian Information Minister Radmila Milentijevic, historian Barry Lituchy and composer Milos Raickovich, who organized the event. Raickovich called for a Yugoslav delegation at the major anti-NATO march in Washington, D.C., on March 30 to protest the April 1-4 NATO anniversary meeting there. (No2NATO2019.org)

Catalinotto and Flounders co-edited the book, “Hidden Agenda: The U.S.-NATO War Against Yugoslavia,” 2001.



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

March 24 demonstration at the U.N. denounces 1999 war against Yugoslavia, says ‘Kosovo is Serbia.’

My Lai massacre

Veterans For Peace highlight U.S. war crime

By John Catalinotto
New York

Veterans For Peace, New York Chapter, presented an art installation in Manhattan on March 22 that exposed the U.S. war crime known as the My Lai massacre. In the three-day exhibit at the Quaker House on Rutherford Place, artist Mac MacDevitt showed with annotated photographs the horror of the U.S.-ordered slaughter of 503 unarmed Vietnamese villagers on March 16, 1968 — an atrocity subsequently exposed to the world. (tinyurl.com/y6tfngl4)

To anyone still uncertain about the role of current U.S. foreign policy, this look back 51 years ago shows that “humanitarian aid” is the unlikely outcome of any U.S. military intervention anywhere.

Speakers at the exhibit included war resisters Nurse Lieutenant Susan Schnall, Jan Barry and Doug Hofstetter, as well as Vietnamese Ambassador Pham Hai Anh. Mekong Arts and Music and Ngo Thanh Nhan opened and closed the meeting with Vietnamese songs.

J.J. Johnson, who as part of the “Fort Hood 3” served time in prison for refusing orders in 1966 to ship out to Vietnam, gave a talk linking My Lai to current U.S. military and foreign policy. The three Fort Hood, Texas, GIs — Johnson, Dennis Mora and David Samas — were the first military heroes on the U.S. side of that conflict. Their personal courage showed the potential of organizing against the war within the U.S. Armed Forces. Here are excerpts from Johnson's talk:

The Lessons of My Lai

I'm honored to share the stage with this roster of people's champions. My appearance here is a consequence of my good fortune to have met — and organized with — like-minded GIs during the war.

Each of the Fort Hood Three agreed that we could not in good conscience take part in an illegal, immoral and unjust war of aggression. We were able to remain true to our beliefs with the support of our loved ones, a growing and supportive anti-war movement and the courageous example of the Vietnamese people.

The exhibit, which we've gathered here to introduce and celebrate, calls to mind Howard Zinn's “People's History of the United States.” In the past, I've often spoken about what some call “The United States of Amnesia.” But on closer examination, it's clear that so many in our nation aren't victims of amnesia, but rather a highly coordinated system of obfuscation and misinformation.

Those who profit so handsomely from the status quo have no intention of permitting the truth to set us free. The horror of My Lai should never leave our consciousness. Nor should we treat My Lai as an aberration.

We mourn the loss of the 58,000 mostly young men whose names are inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. and those who returned physically and psychologically maimed. But I also mourn the deaths of more than 1 million Vietnamese soldiers, 2 million civilians, the 5.3 million who were injured and the 11 million Vietnamese who were driven from their homes.

I mourn and condemn the poisoning of

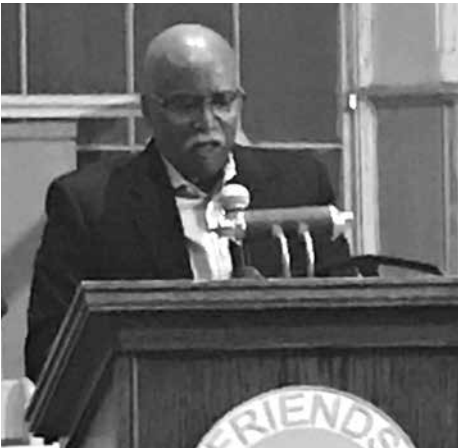
millions with Agent Orange. Last year I visited [Vietnam] and held children who are disabled as they continue to suffer from the poison. The past is prologue, and reparations are in order.

The exhibit challenges us to “remember the past so as not to repeat it.” Of course, the U.S. empire skillfully adapts its aggression and military adventures to forestall protests and opposition. The draft was ended. Many ground troops were replaced by mercenaries. Pilots were replaced by drones, and TV cameras were removed from the battlefields.

Yet, the United States still maintains nearly 800 military bases in more than 70 countries and territories in every continent on the globe. And the U.S., with about 4.4 percent of the world's population, accounts for 37 percent of the world's military spending, which is roughly the amount of the next seven largest military budgets combined. Imagine all the people's needs that could be met with the \$717 billion that's budgeted for war this year!

War and war spending are bipartisan. In 2016, for example, the U.S. military dropped 26,171 bombs. Last year we [the U.S. military] bombed Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya and Somalia. Today, our nation has the blood of thousands on its hands in Yemen and is attempting to overthrow the government in Venezuela.

We [the anti-war movement] should continue to sound the alarm, but we also have much to be optimistic about. Activists from every generation are on the move and in the streets. We salute and demand the immediate release of Veterans For Peace members Tarak Kauff and Ken Mayers



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

J.J. Johnson of the ‘Fort Hood 3’ speaks at the My Lai massacre commemoration, March 22, New York.

[arrested at a protest in Dublin, Ireland, this March]. Their actions, like this exhibit, connect the past to the present.

And as we work with younger activists to combat militarization and its human, financial and environmental devastation, we, too, can draw important lessons from their struggles.

As a trade unionist, I'm inspired by the wave of teachers' strikes. And movements such as Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, Standing Rock hold valuable lessons for our struggles. Last year, high school students organized the nation's largest protest against gun violence. And last week, some 1.4 million children around the world took part in a global climate strike to demand action against the world's greatest danger — the climate catastrophe.

Catalinotto is author of the 2017 book, “Turn the Guns Around: Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions.”

U.S. hands off!

Venezuela fights for all Latin America

Continued from page 1

puppet states. Brazil, however, was until very recently an important ally of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The 2016 parliamentary coup against Dilma Rousseff and the imprisonment of former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who at the time was running in the 2018 election and projected to easily defeat Bolsonaro, were important steps in imperialism's plan to isolate and threaten Venezuela.

The struggle for a continent's future

The list of imperialist operatives running the regime change efforts in Venezuela, including Elliott Abrams, John Bolton and Sen. Marco Rubio, are fully aware of what is at stake. Seizing Venezuela is the first step in conquering what they have called a "troika of tyranny." The next targets are Cuba and Nicaragua.

The conflict is not just between Bolivarian Venezuela, defending its sovereignty and its social base of workers and oppressed, and the specter of the 20th century Venezuela, tightly controlled by a racist oligarchy in the service of U.S. imperialism.

The battle in Venezuela is just one part of a broader war for the entire continent of Latin America.

Recently, anti-imperialist activists and progressive journalists from the U.S. and Canada returned from a U.S. Peace Council delegation to Venezuela. They visited several community projects and met with social movements.

At one point they had a meeting with President Nicolás Maduro, who mentioned that in addition to being a struggle between socialism and capitalism, the current moment was a chapter in a "200-year struggle between Bolívar and Monroe."

James Monroe was the U.S. president from 1817 to 1825. He is only really mentioned in relation to the so-called "Monroe Doctrine," which was at the time little more than a U.S. desire to replace Europe as the economic ruler of Latin America. It took the U.S. ruling class some decades to make this a reality with the 1898 Spanish-American War. This war ended with the seizure of Puerto Rico as a direct U.S. colony and the creation

of "independent" but economically controlled states in Cuba and the Philippines.

From there, the U.S. steadily expanded its hegemony over the region until World War II left the European imperialist countries devastated. From that point forward the Monroe Doctrine took on its current form: "Latin America is the backyard of the U.S., whose word is law."

Simón Bolívar (1783-1830), on the other hand, had several political principles unique among the various Latin American independence leaders. Unlike most of the settler colonial elites who rebelled against Spain, Bolívar was interested in more than selling his country of Venezuela to Britain (later replaced by the U.S.). Bolívar's dream was the "Patria Grande," the "Grand Homeland," a Latin American union no longer dependent on imperialist power.

Bolívar was also unique for opposing slavery, despite being from a relatively privileged class in a country that relied on slave labor. Early on in his military campaign he abolished slavery after receiving troops and equipment from the Haitian revolutionaries, the original independence movement in the hemisphere.

It's no accident that the Venezuelans have chosen the term "Bolivarian" to describe their revolutionary process. Bolívar's ideals pervade every aspect of the revolution, from basing itself in the poorest and most oppressed sectors of society to the grand vision of Latin American unity.

The Lima Group, Monroe's lap dogs

After so many centuries of European and later U.S. domination, the peoples of Latin America are fighters, and relentless ones at that. That's why the U.S. has to resort to dirty wars, economic blockades, sabotage and all the other forms of attack they have used against Venezuela. But they have also used their influence in the region to gather their right-wing puppets into the Lima Group to attack defiant countries in the region.

If the conflict on a regional scale is between Monroe and Bolívar, members of the Lima Group are Monroe's lap dogs. These are right-wing governments completely domesticated by imperialism. While they join together to threaten Venezuela on one hand, on the other they violently

repress their own peoples to ensure profits for North American corporations.

The two Central American countries in the Lima Group, Guatemala and Honduras, are experiencing massive emigration as a result of right-wing policy. In Guatemala, the right wing was put in power through a coup d'état in 1954 and a subsequent civil war. In Honduras the coup d'état was more recent, in 2009.

In both these countries transnational corporations routinely conspire with the state to assassinate Indigenous and campesino leaders like Berta Cáceres in Honduras. Mining companies and large infrastructure projects steal land from Indigenous peoples and destroy the environment. Most people work seasonally on large plantations, harvesting export crops for poverty wages.

In Brazil, Bolsonaro's racist, anti-LGBTQ and pro-military dictatorship politics have opened the door for all kinds of repression and against the land rights of Indigenous peoples in the Amazon. His economic plans are the same as those of the rest of the Latin American right wing: privatization and unchecked neoliberalism. In essence, the state exists only to advance the interests of the transnational corporations and to repress workers and Indigenous peoples.

Colombia has been controlled by imperialist puppets for so long that it is on

the verge of collapse. Government corruption is rampant, most elections have been thinly disguised fixes and paramilitaries control large portions of the rural provinces.

This week, the Colombian army opened fire on Indigenous protesters in the Cauca region. The city of Cúcuta, on the Venezuelan border, had been crafted into a hotbed for covert activity against Venezuela. With the border, along with currency exchange houses, closed, Cúcuta's economy has begun to collapse.

Social movements rising

In every one of these countries, as well as other Lima Group members like Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Argentina, there are growing social movements rising up against the repression and suffering imposed by imperialism. Some of these groups also understand the continental scale of the fight and have mobilized in support of Bolivarian Venezuela.

Every day the battle lines become clearer and the social movements of the Americas take their position. When the struggle between imperialism and the popular masses is as sharp and as widespread as it has now become, there are only two paths left: a return to the brutal military dictatorships of the 20th century or the liberation of the entire American continent, just as Bolívar once hoped. □



Some members of the U.S. Peace Council solidarity delegation supporting Bolivarian Venezuela, in Caracas, March 19.

The illegal occupation of Syrian Golan

By Michael Kramer

March 25 — With a tweet and an executive order, the Trump administration has further isolated itself globally by reversing decades of U.S. policy in calling for "the United States to fully recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights." The area, which is correctly known as Syrian Golan, is located in southwestern Syria. It was seized by Israel during the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War and has been occupied ever since.

Like Palestine, the occupation of Syrian Golan has been brutal. The city of Quneitra and 344 villages and farms were destroyed. Lands were expropriated for military bases and Zionist settlements. A rich and thriving Syrian agricultural community was no more. Over 130,000 Syrians were forced from their homes, resulting in a refugee diaspora today—over 50 years later—of around 500,000 Syrians who are denied their right of return.

Today approximately 25,000 Syrians, mostly followers of the Druze religion, live among four villages, the largest being Madjal Shams, in Syrian Golan. They are the definition of steadfastness and resistance and are exemplified by Zionist prisoner Sidika al-Maqt, who is from Madjal Shams. After serving 27 consecutive years

of imprisonment, he was released in 2012. He was re-arrested in 2015 and sentenced to another 14 years!

On Dec. 14, 1981, Israel declared that it had annexed Syrian Golan. Three days later the United Nations Security Council unanimously (including the U.S.) adopted Resolution 497 which declared the annexation "null and void and without international legal effect." For this reason alone (and there are others), the Trump administration's



A child holds a Syrian flag at a rally in the village of Madjal Shams, in Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan, March 23.

moves are in complete violation of international law.

According to Al-Marsad (golan-marsad.org), a human rights organization based in Syrian Golan, "Today there are approximately 23,000 settlers, living in over 34 illegal settlements, profiting from the Occupied Syrian Golan's abundant natural resources. The Occupied Syrian Golan is a rich volcanic plateau with extremely fertile soil. The region is home to a huge variety of valuable natural resources, making it an ideal location for settlements and settlement industries. Since the occupation began, the Israeli authorities have aimed to implement policies which control the valuable resources in the region, in particular the land and the water."

The day after Trump's tweet, Syrian residents in the Occupied Syrian Golan held a protest extensively covered in the Israeli press, possibly as a reality check to settlers throughout all Zionist-occupied lands. Amal Safadi, a 54-year-old librarian, eloquently summed thing up: "Our blood is Syrian. If you take a blood test for a child, it will read Syrian." (ynetnews.com)

The writer is a member of Veterans For Peace. He served in the Israel Defense Forces from 1972-75 and took part in the illegal occupation of Syrian Golan.

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Climate change is driving social change

The terrible news on unfolding climate change can have opposite effects on people: despair, lassitude and denial — or angry energy.

The ranks of those in this country who buy into the lie, promoted by the fossil fuel industry and repeated by opportunist politicians like Trump, that denies climate change are thinning out, as evidence of its reality mounts. Sometimes it hits in their own backyards, whether it's fierce storms or wild fires or floods.

The young in particular, for whom the future is a big chunk of their own lives, are driving the movement demanding governments and corporations take meaningful steps to turn around what seems like an unstoppable slide into climate chaos.

And more and more, people in this movement are targeting capitalism as the problem and socialism as the answer. It's about time — and there IS still time.

What can bring about change

Over the last century and a half — a period when the industrialization of the planet led to massive amounts of

greenhouse gases accumulating in the atmosphere like a great blanket warming the Earth — we have seen people organize and do what seemed impossible when they are convinced that their collective interests outweigh their own personal needs and desires. Tragically, this ability to sacrifice and struggle has been made use of by the ruling classes of the imperialist world, who have indoctrinated people by the hundreds of millions to fight and die “for their country.”

In fact, the 20th century's world wars, as well as devastating “police actions” — think Vietnam and Korea — were driven not by noble sentiments of democracy and freedom, but by the ferocious need for markets and profits built into the capitalist system.

Learning otherwise — as have so many GIs who were forced into the Vietnam War and now visit that socialist country in friendship — is a shattering but necessary experience.

In recent decades, when capitalist governments call on the masses of people for more sacrifice, cynicism has replaced enthusiasm. And understandably so.

But cynicism is the absence of belief or conviction.

It is what you do, not what you scoff at and don't do, that changes the tide of history.

An anti-capitalist movement is developing all over the globe in response to the crimes of imperialism. One of its urgent issues is climate change. Can enough be done to stop global warming before the “tipping point” is reached which, scientists warn, would make it irreversible?

Obviously, this will take mass mobilization on a grand scale. It will take thoughtful and organized restructuring of the way we humans live, work and get enjoyment out of life. Such restructuring is completely at odds with a profit-driven economic system.

Uniting the forces for socialism

The working class potentially has the power and organization to paralyze capitalism, bring down its repressive state and mobilize for the planned, socialist reconstruction of society to benefit the producers, not the exploiters.

And it needs allies among those people not directly exploited at the point of

production but suffering from capitalism in every other way. The struggle for a sustainable system, socialism, can unite these class forces.

Right now, the greatest energy for social change is coming from those most exploited and oppressed by this system. It is the peoples of Africa, Central and South America and the Caribbean, much of West and East Asia and the Pacific, who have contributed the least to global warming but are suffering the most from its consequences.

The recent cyclone that hit Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, killing more than 600 people at a minimum and devastating hundreds of thousands, is a case in point. So is the hurricane devastation of Puerto Rico that continues. But we must also include the massive floods in the U.S. Midwest, where those most affected are always the poor, who lack adequate shelter and can't afford flood insurance.

Despair won't get us anywhere. The only effective response to global warming is to fight like hell for workers' power and socialism. □

Eyewitness Venezuela

Chavista people's power resists U.S. attack

By Sara Flounders
Caracas

Flounders, a co-director of the International Action Center, was part of the solidarity delegation from North America organized by the U.S. Peace Council.

March 17 — During nine days in Venezuela, the U.S. Peace Council's delegation witnessed the danger posed by U.S.-organized sabotage of the country's electric power. We also witnessed how such an attack can boomerang, as the masses of people, working in their local organizations, are mobilized in sync with the Bolivarian state apparatus to resist.

Water can't be pumped without power, which was out for most of the week. There were long lines of people collecting water to drink, cook, wash and flush toilets. The government sent water trucks to street corners and to central distribution sites for emergency distribution, while the electrical service was being restored.

As important as the government's quick repair was, however, it succeeded because the government and the population mobilized to resolve the everyday problems caused by the power outage. This mobilization also helped resist and balance the sanctions and shortages the imperialist governments have imposed on Venezuela.

Community councils

Some background on the community councils: Caracas is in the mountains. Cable car metros go to the mountainous neighborhoods or barrios that surround downtown. This was a big accomplishment of the early days of the Bolivarian Revolution — to break the forced isolation in these working-class suburbs or shantytowns.

In two of the larger barrios the delegation visited — Catia, a poor mountainside

district with 1.5 million people, and January 23, where the late president and revolutionary leader Hugo Chávez is buried — it looked like there was 100 percent support for the revolutionary process.

Electric attacks also impacted plumbing, elevators, gas lines and more. Keeping everything running is based on the work and collective determination of the local community councils.

A community council is a self-organized group of about 200 families. They apply for government recognition, and direct government aid is distributed through these councils. People are elected at each level to these councils. Eight to 10 community councils make up a commune. The councils elect commune representatives to the National Constituent Assembly, a popular alternative to the reactionary National Assembly.

There are 500 communes. They are based in all the poor and working-class communities and represent thousands of organized community councils. These coordinate their efforts to find workable solutions to the shortages, which the imperialists' internal sabotage has created in their efforts to sow chaos and confusion.

The communes have created a functioning popular power base or network throughout the country. Involving everyone in problem solving solutions for immediate emergencies has empowered the population and energized people to see this as a historic challenge.

People's militias, armed groups made up of the masses, function through these organs of popular power and coordinate with the Bolivarian Armed Forces. Tenacity and determination are their watchwords!

Food distribution

The government organization known as CLAP delivers boxes of essential food supplies to community councils that serve 6 million families. Almost all poor,

working and out-of-work families receive staple supplies of corn flour, cooking oil, beans, coffee, sugar, personal hygiene and paper products.

Of Venezuela's total population of 32 million, these 6 million families make up more than two-thirds of the people. Even the young hosts in the COSI solidarity organization need and rely on these basic supplies. COSI is the International Solidarity Committee (Spanish: Comité de Solidaridad Internacional), established in Venezuela in 1970.

The people are preparing now for the next U.S. attack through their community councils, which are telling them to store food, water and batteries.

Food production

Of course, the government has to have food in order for CLAP to distribute it. The economic sanctions and actual theft of Venezuela's wealth have prevented the government from purchasing food abroad. The longer-term solution requires producing more food at home.

The head of the Ministry of Urban Agriculture, Madeline Arias, explained how Venezuela will produce 25 percent of its food needs this year, using backyards, empty lots and small greenhouses.

Venezuela plans small agricultural production that is 100 percent organic and sustainable, and that goal requires the latest scientific advances. The Venezuelans are learning about small agriculture solutions from Cuban, Vietnamese and Korean experts who have had to deal with near-famine conditions created by U.S. wars and sanctions.

There is an all-out effort to develop urban gardens to provide low-cost vegetables and fruit. The plans include up to 1-acre gardens on rooftops and in



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center.

backyards and up to 3-acre gardens in empty lots. Also, fish farms are being developed to create protein and fertilizer from more than 260 large fish ponds. Rabbit raising is planned. It's easy and clean, provides high protein, and you can feed rabbits vegetable scraps.

And there are other, larger local farming efforts that are also 100 percent organic.

In addition to the government's quick recovery of electric power, the people are experiencing the power of their own organizations, which are integrated with the defense of the country. □

ALGERIA

Hundreds of thousands say no to poverty and repression

By G. Dunkel

Beginning Feb. 22, hundreds of thousands of Algerians took to the streets of every city in Algeria — from Oran and Tlemcen in the west, through Algiers and Tizi Ouzou in the center, to Constantine and Skikda in the east — to tell President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and his family that Bouteflika was not going to get a fifth term in office.

Even in the south of Algeria, in towns and cities scattered in oases plunked here and there in the Sahara, from Ouargla to Ain Salah passing by Adrar and totally isolated Illizi, thousands of people came out into the streets demanding “no” to a fifth term for Bouteflika.

Any of the candidates for parliament brave or foolhardy enough to be on the streets where demonstrations were taking place were met with cries of “Resign!”

Besides demanding that Bouteflika retire, angry denunciations flowed from the hard life Algerians face: high unemployment, inflation, police surveillance, the arbitrary behavior of government officials, and corruption which produces a burning sensation of frustration, rancor and humiliation. (tinyurl.com/y2cv586h)

YouTube videos of recent protests on Place Maurice Audin in the center of Algiers show this huge, wide square completely filled with people and signs, banners and placards. Signs were in Arabic, French, Tamazight (known as Berber), Spanish and English. There was music, singing and organized chanting. Men and women — some wearing a hijab, some without any head covering — and families were all mixed together.

While there are a number of opposition parties, ranging from the Algerian Party for Democracy and Socialism (PADS),

which considers itself communist, the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) to the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), they have not played a significant role in calling this month of nearly daily protests.

Youth and students have coordinated through social media, bringing out students at all 48 Algerian universities, and the Union Confederation of Productive Forces (COSYFOP: Confédération Syndicale Des Forces Productives), which called a 4-day general strike, had more impact.

Even after Bouteflika had announced that he was not going to run for a fifth term, protests continued, especially after he said he was going to continue in office. The way Algerians summed it up was wry but expressed a steely determination: We protested for five weeks for elections without Bouteflika, now we have Bouteflika without elections.

In the past, big outpourings of mass discontent in Algeria have been met with vigorous, and sometimes bloody, repression. But these protests have been so massive and so widespread that the Algerian state held back, although some of the early protests were met with tear gas and baton charges.

Accumulation of grievances

Beginning the third week of March, cracks began to appear. The National Liberation Front (FLN), Algeria's ruling party, officially abandoned its support for Bouteflika's bid for a fifth term, saying it supported the protesters. The army chief of staff also indicated that the army supported the protests. (tinyurl.com/y3ojsvv9)

Algerian web services began to run pictures of cops marching in the protests in their uniforms, and a few days later pictures began appearing of soldiers, even

officers, also marching. (tinyurl.com/y4wlxb76)

While the United States is careful not to be seen obviously poaching in France's backyard, the State Department's website does say: “Algeria is a strategically located and capable partner with which the United States has strong diplomatic, law enforcement, economic, and security cooperation.” The Algerian army is also participating in Flintlock 2019 organized by Africom. (tinyurl.com/y6aqfuypp)

France is also deeply interested in what is happening. Hundreds of thousands of Algerians, some with deep ties to their homeland, others like the harkis — Algerians who fought for the French in their War of a Million Martyrs 1954-62 — who are more ambivalent, live and work in France. The economic ties between France and Algeria are old, deep and very significant. Over half of Algeria's international trade is with the European Union.

In the 1990s there was a bloody and

costly civil war in Algeria between armed groups owing their political allegiance to the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) and the Algerian army, whose political direction came from the FLN.

The FIS lost, but the scars remained. The Algerian army selected Abdelaziz Bouteflika in 1999 to manage the transition to a more stable political system, which still left the same small group of officers and businesspeople in charge. High prices for oil — Algeria's main export — and vigorous police repression enabled the system to overcome any protests.

But given the fall in oil prices and the lack of real economic development, the accumulation of grievances finally brought out hundreds of thousands of Algerians.

The Algerian people are conscious of their revolutionary history, and they are in the streets demanding not just the resignation of President Bouteflika but real changes in the system. □



Anti-government protest in Algiers on March 15.

Corea, Vietnam y la máquina de guerra de los Estados Unidos

Continúa de la página 12

En cambio, fue Mike Pompeo, Secretario de Estado de Trump, a quien el Times llamó "el adulto en la sala" y lo describió como "el principal arquitecto de las continuas negociaciones de Trump" con la RPDC.

¿Pero cuál fue la posición de los Estados Unidos presentada por Pompeo en las conversaciones? Fue que la RPDC debería renunciar a todas sus armas nucleares, materiales e instalaciones a cambio de poner fin a las sanciones económicas de Estados Unidos.

¿Qué quieren los coreanos? El fin del estado de guerra que sigue siendo la política oficial de los Estados Unidos hacia Corea. Solo hubo un acuerdo de alto el fuego en 1953. Bajo el estado de guerra que todavía está vigente, los Estados Unidos continúan estacionando casi 30,000 soldados en Corea del Sur, y podrían lanzar un ataque al norte en cualquier momento.

¿Quiénes son los verdaderos maníacos de guerra en el mundo? A partir de 2017, los EUA poseían casi 7,000 armas nucleares, muchas de ellas desplegadas en todo el mundo, listas para ser lanzadas desde aviones, submarinos y bases de misiles. Sin embargo, la clase dominante aquí,

después de años de amenazar a la RPDC con la devastación nuclear, está actuando sorprendida de que los coreanos hayan desarrollado la tecnología para defenderse con armas nucleares.

¿Cómo pueden los EUA esperar que los coreanos acepten una oferta para poner fin a las sanciones, que en realidad son una violación del derecho internacional, destinado a matar de hambre a la población de la RPDC, cuando no contienen una sola palabra sobre cómo abandonar la presión militar contra país?

La conclusión obvia es que la "oferta" de los EE.UU., elaborada por Pompeo, estaba destinada a hacer estallar las conversaciones. Pero ninguno de los principales medios capitalistas dirá esto. Tampoco lo hará ninguno de los líderes del Partido Demócrata, que critican la reacción súper reaccionaria de Trump sobre otras cuestiones y su flagrante racismo y sexismo, sino que se alinean con la administración a cerca de Corea.

De hecho, la clase dominante de los EUA y el Partido Demócrata han criticado a Trump desde la derecha, por difícil que parezca, cuando se trata de decir algo positivo sobre Corea del Norte.

Es un procedimiento estándar en todos los medios corporativos de EUA para presentar a la RPDC en los términos más

insultantes, utilizando las mismas frases comunes una y otra vez. También repiten sin cesar la misma mentira: que las tropas estadounidenses están en Corea del Sur para defender a las personas que están aterrorizadas por el norte.

Pero esa mentira destruida durante los Juegos Olímpicos del año pasado en Corea del Sur, cuando era obvio para todo el mundo que la gente del sur acogía con entusiasmo a los equipos atléticos del norte y del sur que marchaban juntos bajo una bandera común.

Relaciones entre RPDC y Vietnam

El viaje de Kim Jong Un a Hanoi tuvo otro lado que ha recibido pocos comentarios en los medios corporativos aquí. Pero fue importante para la gente tanto de Vietnam como de Corea y para las personas de todo el mundo que luchan por el socialismo.

El viaje a Hanoi fue el primero de un líder de la RPDC desde que Kim Il Sung, el legendario liberador de Corea del gobierno colonial japonés y organizador de su resistencia a la guerra de los Estados Unidos de 1950-53, visitó Vietnam en 1964. El líder coreano se reunió en ese momento con el igualmente legendario Ho Chi Minh, líder de la lucha por liberar a Vietnam del dominio

colonial francés y luego de los invasores estadounidenses.

El 1 de marzo, Kim Jong Un depositó coronas de flores en el Mausoleo de Ho Chi Minh y en el Monumento a la Guerra de Vietnam en Hanoi, un memorial para todos aquellos que murieron luchando por la independencia y el socialismo en la guerra con los Estados Unidos. El presidente vietnamita Nguyen Phu Trong organizó un banquete para Kim Jong Un y la delegación de Corea.

Ambos países asiáticos estaban divididos por las potencias imperialistas occidentales. Ambos han sufrido horribles pérdidas humanas y materiales a manos del Pentágono. Ambos tienen que descubrir cómo sobrevivir y fortalecer su desarrollo socialista en un mundo aún dominado por el imperialismo.

La gente de Vietnam y Corea está haciendo todo lo posible para avanzar. La pregunta es: ¿Qué puede hacer el pueblo de los EUA para frenar las manos de los maníacos de la guerra como Bolton, así como a los “adultos en la habitación” más engañosos pero igualmente peligrosos, como Pompeo, para que las guerras libradas solo por obtener beneficios para super rica clase gobernante nunca vuelvan a suceder? □



WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

President Nicolás Maduro, marzo de 2019.

Ante nuevas amenazas norteamericanas, Venezuela lucha por la liberación de un continente

Por Sam Ordóñez

23 de marzo — Esta semana se reunieron los presidentes Donald Trump de Estados Unidos y Jair Bolsonaro de Brasil. Los dos presidentes de extrema derecha parecieron hacerse buenos amigos, proclamándose “en contra de la ideología de género” y otros eslóganes neofascistas.

Pero la verdadera razón por la visita del mandatario brasileño quedó muy obvio: preparar una nueva fase de agresión contra Venezuela. Antes de reunirse con Trump, Bolsonaro visitó a la CIA, y en rueda de prensa Trump habló de la posibilidad de incorporar a Brasil en la OTAN, la alianza militar del imperialismo.

La expansión anterior de la OTAN sólo fue posible gracias a la 1999 guerra que fracturó a Yugoslavia. Parece ser que el imperialismo tiene toda la intención de provocar una nueva guerra en América Latina, en particular contra Venezuela, para cumplir sus objetivos estratégicos.

Trump no es el único responsable de tomar una decisión así, pero los Estados Unidos tienen la fuerza militar y la economía más grande de toda los otros miembros de OTAN. Tampoco sería Brasil el primer país Latinoamericano en la OTAN, ya que Colombia se incorporó el año pasado como “socio global.”

Colombia tiene una larga historia de cooperación con el imperialismo, y es uno de los títeres más fieles del imperialismo. Pero Brasil en su momento era un importante aliado de Venezuela revolucionaria.

El golpe de estado contra Dilma Rousseff en 2016 y el encarcelamiento del ex-presidente Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, que en 2018 era el candidato con más probabilidad de vencer a Bolsonaro, fueron pasos importantes que tomaron los imperialistas para aislar y amenazar Venezuela.

La batalla por el destino de un continente

Los agentes del imperialismo que actualmente dirigen el esfuerzo de cambio de régimen en Venezuela, como

Elliott Abrams, John Bolton, Marco Rubio, y otros, tienen muy claro sus objetivos. Primero conquistar a Venezuela, y después Cuba y Nicaragua. Hasta nombre les dieron: la famosa “troika de la tiranía.”

El conflicto no es sólo entre la Venezuela bolivariana, soberana y orientada al poder popular, y la fantasma de la Venezuela del siglo pasado, dominada por una oligarquía racista y completamente servil al imperialismo norteamericano. En Venezuela se está luchando una batalla por todo el continente latinoamericano.

Recientemente regresaron activistas anti imperialistas y periodistas progresistas de Estados Unidos y Canadá que viajaron a Venezuela como parte de una delegación del Consejo de Paz de EUA. Visitaron a varios proyectos comunales y se reunieron con líderes sociales.

En un momento se reunieron con el presidente Nicolás Maduro, que ofreció comentario sobre el conflicto actual. Mencionó que el conflicto, además de ser un conflicto entre el socialismo y el capitalismo, forma parte de “una lucha de 200 años entre Bolívar y Monroe.”

Monroe era un presidente de Estados Unidos que es famoso más que nada por la llamada “Doctrina de Monroe,” que en su momento era un deseo de dominar todo el continente americano, en lugar de los europeos. Este deseo tardaría unas décadas en hacerse realidad, con la guerra contra España en 1898 que incorporó a Puerto Rico como colonia norteamericana y a Cuba y las islas Filipinas como estados “independientes” pero serviles.

De allí creció el poder hegemónico estadounidense hasta que la Segunda Guerra Mundial causó pérdidas enormes para el imperialismo de los países europeos. En ese momento volvió la doctrina de Monroe expresada de su forma actual: “América Latina es nuestro (norteamericano) patio trasero, y aquí mandamos sin preguntas.”

Por su parte, Simón Bolívar no era un simple líder independentista como los criollos que se alzaron contra España para enriquecerse vendiendo sus países a Inglaterra y luego Estados Unidos. El

sueño de Bolívar era la Patria Grande, una unión continental que no dependía del imperialismo.

También Bolívar tenía una alta conciencia política, ya que se oponía a la esclavitud. Famosamente por esto ganó el apoyo en forma rifles, cañones y tropas de la revolución haitiana, la primera revolución independentista, liderada por esclavos sublevados, del hemisferio.

No es por accidente que el proceso venezolano se llama la revolución “bolivariana.” Los ideales de Bolívar se ven en todos los aspectos de la revolución, desde su base en los sectores más pobres y oprimidos a su gran visión de unidad e integración latinoamericana.

El Grupo de Lima, los perros falderos de Monroe

Después de tantos siglos de dominio, primero desde Europa y luego desde el norte, los pueblos de América Latina son fuertes y luchadores. Es por eso que los Estados Unidos recurre a la guerra sucia, la guerra económica, el sabotaje y todas los otros ataques que han usado contra Venezuela. Pero también, mediante el control que tienen en la región, han juntado a sus títeres derechistas en el Grupo de Lima para atacar a los países independientes de la región.

Si a gran escala la guerra es entre Monroe y Bolívar, entonces el Grupo de Lima son los perros falderos de Monroe. Son gobiernos de derecha completamente domesticados por el imperialismo, que con una mano se juntan para amenazar a Venezuela y con otra reprimen con máxima fuerza sus pueblos para garantizar las ganancias norteamericanas.

En centroamérica los dos países del Grupo de Lima, Guatemala y Honduras, están viviendo un éxodo al norte, provocado por la política de la derecha. En Guatemala la derecha llegó al poder gracias al golpe de estado de 1954 y la guerra civil que siguió, en Honduras el golpe de estado ocurrió en 2009.

En ambos países el gobierno y las grandes empresas conspiran para asesinar a líderes campesinos e indígenas, como

Berta Cáceres en Honduras. Las minerías y los megaproyectos roban la tierra de los pueblos originarios y destruyen al medio ambiente. Los sueldos son miserables y suelen ser estacionales por trabajar las cosechas en las grandes fincas.

En Brasil, la presidencia de Bolsonaro, racista, homofóbico, y amante de la dictadura militar, ha abierto las puertas a toda forma de represión y de ataques contra los derechos y tierra de los pueblos originarios de la Amazona. Sus planes económicos son las típicas políticas de la derecha: la privatización y el neoliberalismo desencadenado. Es una política donde el estado existe sólo para servir los intereses de las empresas transnacionales y reprimir a los trabajadores y los pueblos originarios.

A Colombia por poco se le puede llamar un estado, ya que la corrupción es descontrolada, la democracia hace años que no existe, y domina el paramilitarismo en las provincias. Esta semana el ejército colombiano abrió fuego contra los pueblos originarios que protestaban en la región del Cauca. Cúcuta, pueblo fronterizo con Venezuela, ha sufrido un colapso económico desde que se cerró la frontera en febrero, porque había sido transformada en un pueblo de contrabandistas para debilitar a Venezuela.

En todos los países mencionados y otros del Grupo de Lima como Chile, Perú, Ecuador y Argentina hay grandes movimientos sociales que se levantan para combatir las condiciones de vida impuestas por el imperialismo. Pero algunos también entienden que la guerra es continental, y se han visto movilizaciones en apoyo a Venezuela en varios de estos países.

Cada día las líneas de batalla son más claras, y los movimientos sociales de las américas van tomando posición. Cuando la lucha entre el imperialismo y los pueblos es tan profundo como lo es ahora sólo hay dos opciones: una vuelta a las dictaduras militares del siglo pasado, o la emancipación del continente americano completo, tal como lo imaginó Bolívar. □

Corea, Vietnam y la máquina de guerra de los Estados Unidos

Por Deirdre Griswold

La última reunión cumbre entre Kim Jong Un, el líder supremo de la República Popular Democrática de Corea y el Presidente de los Estados Unidos, Donald Trump, terminó abruptamente en Hanoi el 28 de febrero sin ningún acuerdo.

Si bien Trump, con su ego sobredimensionado y su comportamiento impredecible, había querido obtener crédito por algún tipo de acuerdo de paz, él mismo sentó las bases del fracaso de la reunión con sus citas de John Bolton y Mike Pompeo, ambos duros contra la RPDC.

El 28 de febrero de 2018, Bolton escribió un artículo para el Wall Street Journal

titulado “El Caso Legal para Golpear a Corea del Norte Primero”. En otras palabras este se merece el título de maníaco de la guerra. Tres semanas después, Trump nombró a Bolton para que fuera su asesor de seguridad nacional.

Al momento del nombramiento, hace un año, muchos de los medios de comunicación capitalistas de aquí criticaron a Bolton. Simon Kuper, del Financial Times, escribió el 4 de abril: “Un belicista está a punto de comenzar a trabajar a pocos pasos de Trump en una Casa Blanca sin procedimientos”. Un artículo en The American Conservative (!) se titulaba “A Loco en El Consejo de Seguridad Nacional”. Una pieza en la revista Salon se titulaba: “El

sediento de sangre John Bolton ansioso por matar a los norcoreanos”.

¿Dónde están ahora estos críticos burgueses? ¿Dónde está el New York Times? Su editorial sobre el nombramiento estaba titulado: “Sí, John Bolton realmente es así de peligroso”. (23 de marzo) Sin embargo, sus informes ahora, con el colapso de las conversaciones, están culpando a “grandes egos y malas apuestas” en ambos lados. Al parecer, se han olvidado las amenazas de EUA de lanzar una guerra nuclear contra la RPDC.

El papel de Pompeo

Supongamos que representaba a un pequeño país que había sido devastado

por el ejército de los Estados Unidos a principios de la década de 1950, cuando la Fuerza Aérea de los Estados Unidos bombardeó todos los edificios por encima de dos pisos en Corea del Norte y millones murieron. Cuando usted, como persona responsable, lea que un belicista sediento de sangre ahora está asesorando al presidente de los Estados Unidos, ¿no haría todo lo posible por fortalecer las defensas de su país?

Bolton sigue siendo el asesor de seguridad nacional del presidente, pero no acompañó a Trump a la reunión con Kim Jong Un. ¿Cómo podían los coreanos sentarse con él en la misma habitación?

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