

Racist coup in Bolivia sparks resistance

By Sam Ordóñez

Nov. 15 — Evo Morales, president of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, resigned on Nov. 10, along with the vice president and the majority of his cabinet. This happened after the national police abandoned their defense of the elected government and

joined right-wing protests, and the Armed Forces announced on television that they were calling for Morales' resignation, thus also joining the coup d'état.

It didn't matter that the government had already accepted what the protesters were supposedly asking for: new elections with a new Supreme Electoral Tribunal.



WW PHOTO: STEVAN KIRSCHBAUM

Boston march, Nov. 16, against coup in Bolivia. More U.S. protests on pages 6-7.

Fernando Camacho, ultra-rightist leader of the opposition movement, entered the Palacio Quemado to take a photo kneeling before the flag and the Bible. At his side, a pastor declared, "Bolivia belongs to Christ."

In the following days the situation developed that should not surprise those who know the history of Latin America: The police forcefully repressed protests in working-class neighborhoods and killed at least six people, persecuted civil servants and elected officials of the ruling party Movement Toward Socialism (MAS), and arrested union, peasant and Indigenous leaders.

The coup became a reality when the army and various sectors of the police joined it, but it was also the result of a campaign of terror against the Indigenous majority of the country and all those who supported the "process of change" of MAS. Those who carried out this terror are, apart from the business sector, groups of the extreme right. They have a neocolonialist ideology and include the worst characteristics of evangelism.

After he resigned, Evo Morales first retreated to the Cochabamba region. There he was protected by the coca

growers' union he had led before becoming president. After sheltering 20 MAS members in its embassy, the Mexican government offered asylum to the president, and at the time of this writing Morales is in Mexico City.

Meanwhile, in the streets of Bolivia a great resistance to the coup is developing — to defend democracy and also to reject and resist the racism unleashed by the coup victory.

In the city of El Alto, near the administrative capital of La Paz and famous for its history of overthrowing dictators, the inhabitants, mostly Indigenous peoples, forced the withdrawal of the national police, who had to ask for reinforcements from the army.

In the rest of the country, unions, Indigenous organizations, peasants, feminists and other social movements began to mobilize as well. From various points in the country they are now arriving in La Paz, where marches and roadblocks are increasing.

Members of the coup

"The sign of the cross on the handles of swords." That is the title of the first part

Continued on page 7

WORKERS ON THE MOVE

Seattle: Disabled, elderly people defeat Veolia 4

Portland rally: 'Defend DACA!' 4

'McStrike' for living wage, no sexual abuse 5

Iowa union wins first contract 5

Boycott Wendy's 8

Winning stay of execution

Next step: Free Rodney Reed!

By Gloria Rubac

Nov. 17 — It was a peoples' victory! It was a legal victory! On Nov. 15, Texas' highest criminal court indefinitely stayed Rodney Reed's Nov. 20 execution date. His case was remanded back to trial court just five days before he was to be legally lynched by the state of Texas.

Reed, an African-American man, was wrongfully convicted in 1998 of raping and murdering a young white woman named Stacey Stites. He was sentenced to death after the prosecution withheld exculpatory evidence from Reed's defense team and after the state's witnesses testified to false evidence.

Continued on page 8



Rodney Reed

WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Police out of Oakland schools! 3

Bolivia, lithium and China 9

Violence, racism & football Editorial 10

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Korea 10 Cuba 10-11 Gaza 11
Yellow Vest protests 11

Harvard Act on a Dream protests newspaper’s call to ICE

By **Genevieve Lechat**
 Cambridge, Mass.

Nov. 15 — Harvard College Act on a Dream (AOD) launched the #CrimsonListen campaign today with a petition, boycott, teach-in and surprise action at a ceremony intended to welcome new leadership at the Harvard Crimson, Harvard’s student newspaper.

Undocumented and at-risk im/migrant students and workers had endured a disturbing September incident where the Crimson actually called Immigration and Customs Enforcement to solicit its comment following a militant “Abolish ICE” rally organized by AOD.

AOD is fighting for DACA recipients to be granted permanent citizenship. AOD considered the invited “comment” as collaboration with ICE, in that those who speak out despite their status could be targeted. Student reporters broke protocol by not disclosing their intention to contact ICE when they interviewed AOD rally participants. Crimson leadership doubled down when criticized for this disclosure lapse, pointing to “journalistic standards.”

In the wake of this incident, many have pointed out that the Crimson’s record for seeking comment from agencies protested on campus has been totally inconsistent.

The launch of #CrimsonListen today starkly highlighted the willfully ignorant position of the storied student newspaper leadership amidst the attacks on im/migrants in the U.S. As Black and Brown student editors walked out and joined groups of protesters stationed at each entrance leading to the planned ceremony, a smaller group locked themselves in to engage in champagne horseplay, spraying and sipping at the repurposed “celebration,” while the crowd chanted and affixed placards to the doors.

Four workers representing the Harvard TPS Coalition



Middle of door sign reads “Stop endangering undocumented students.”

joined the action. This group is connected to the university’s dining hall workers, who are represented by UNITE HERE Local 26. The dining hall workers have mounted militant struggles for justice for workers with Temporary Protected Status; they are also in solidarity with immigrant and undocumented students and oppose any collaboration with ICE.

A sign of the boycott’s success is that students say many stories have been scrapped or published without typical sourcing. The Crimson has also been expressing more than usual interest in campus workers’ issues and calling union stewards from Local 26. But union stewards have been refusing these “opportunities” because they will not be scabs for the Crimson to use against their comrades in Act On a Dream. □

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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

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

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

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this week

♦ In the U.S.

Rodney Reed wins indefinite stay of execution	1
Harvard Act on a Dream protests newspaper, ICE . .	2
Black Organizing Project wants cop-free schools . .	3
Mike Africa Jr.: ‘Born on the MOVE’	3
Elderly, disabled people’s victory vs. Veolia.	4
Portland: ‘Defend DACA!’	4
On the picket line	4
McDonald’s workers take on sexual harassment . .	5
‘McStrike’ in eight countries	5
First union contract at Iowa General Mills plant . .	5
U.S. protests say ‘NO to fascist coup in Bolivia!’ . .	6
Activists return to Ft. Benning to Close the SOA! . .	6
Connecting anti-racism to anti-imperialism	7
‘Boycott Wendy’s’	8
NYC protest: Let Gaza live!	11

♦ Around the world

Racist coup in Bolivia sparks resistance	1
Bolivian leaders denounce U.S. role in coup	9
Bolivia, lithium and China’s BRI	9
Koreans say no to Trump	10
Report from anti-imperialist gathering in Cuba . .	10
Yellow Vest protests show anger in France	11
Palestinians resist Israeli renewed attack on Gaza .	11
Cuban medical personnel return from Bolivia	11

♦ Editorial

Violence, racism and football	10
---	----

♦ Noticias en Español

Solidaridad con la resistencia en Bolivia	12
---	----

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Oakland, Calif.

Black Organizing Project wants to remove police from schools

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

At a Nov. 13 rally of over 200 Oakland residents, parents, teachers and students, the Black Organizing Project officially released its “People’s Plan for Police-Free Schools.”

BOP has been organizing in Oakland since 2011 to stop the funding of school police and the deployment of any police in Oakland public schools.

Jessica Black, a BOP organizer, welcomed everyone and gave a short history of the fight to dismantle the Oakland school police department. She outlined the major points of the People’s Plan, including phasing out the school police department by 2020, using the saved funding to hire more counselors and retraining school employees to be responsive to the needs of all students.

Jackie Byers, another BOP member, referred to the last Oakland Unified School Board meeting where teachers and parents were attacked by school and city police for protesting Oakland school closures. She said, “If you can be afraid of going to a school board in fear of being harmed ... or just for raising your voice, imagine what our students face in the classroom every day at the hands of police. They have to face law enforcement at the BART, they have to face law enforcement in public housing, in their communities and in their own schools.”

Byers went on to note that BOP has been calling for the abolition of the police from the schools for a long time. The community activist called upon everyone to join the “Black Organizing Project to finally say enough is enough!”

According to the 11-page People’s Plan, the police have historically profiled and arrested a disproportionate number of Black students in the schools. BOP is calling for the school district to set up a real “sanctuary district” to protect Black and Brown young people in the schools.



Black Organizing Protest protest, Nov. 13.

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

A group of Black students read excerpts of the People’s Plan at the rally. “You cannot allow 73% of students arrested to be Black (who are 26% of students enrolled) and claim to be for equity and putting students first. The district’s commitment to providing ‘sanctuary’ for immigrant students and families rings completely hollow as long as OUSD fails to stop the hemorrhaging of Black students and families from OUSD due to the toxic climate created by policing, criminalization and push-out.”

BOP has been collecting data on this racist policing for nearly 10 years.

Speak-out at board meeting

Following the rally, BOP organizers led the large group, which included members of the Oakland Education Association, the teachers’ union, inside La Escuelita to bring their message to the school board. This was the first scheduled board meeting after teachers and parents were brutalized by the cops.

Family members, activists and students marched up to the podium and took over the regularly scheduled public comment section of the meeting. Despite attempts

by board members to silence BOP and its message, speaker after speaker addressed the board using their own sound system — since the board kept turning off the microphone.

Black Organizing Project members hand-delivered copies of the People’s Plan to board members. Parent after parent took the podium to demand that the board respond to the plan and remove police from the schools.

Mike Africa Jr.

‘Born on the MOVE’

By Monica Moorehead
New York

Mike Africa Jr. presented an engrossing, dynamic one-person narrative, “Born on the MOVE,” for almost two hours here at the Solidarity Center on Nov. 16. He began this emotional, political journey by describing how his mother, Debbie Africa, gave birth to him by herself in secret on Sept. 15, 1978, while she was incarcerated. Debbie Africa along with Mike Jr.’s father, Mike Sr., are members of the MOVE 9, falsely arrested and imprisoned in 1978 for the murder of a white Philadelphia police officer, who in reality was killed by friendly fire.

Debbie Africa, with the assistance of another MOVE 9 member, Janet Africa, was able to keep Mike Jr.’s birth a secret before it was made public during a court hearing. The baby was shown to all 63 inmates on the same cell block to confirm the baby’s birth and to safeguard his life.

MOVE drew the ire of the Philadelphia repressive state starting in 1977 — led by the late commissioner of police and mayor, Frank Rizzo, who militarized the police. On Aug. 9, 1978, the Philadelphia police and fire department attacked the MOVE house with machine gun fire, water cannons and more. MOVE members were savagely beaten, including an eight-month pregnant Rhonda Africa, whose baby was delivered stillborn.

Mike Jr. provided some historical background on the majority Black communal group, which follows the teachings of John Africa. MOVE believes that all people, all animals and all nature should live in harmony and cooperation, void of oppression and exploitation. Mike Jr. named the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Che Guevara, Fred Hampton and Jesus Christ as revolutionaries assassinated for their radical beliefs. He spoke of the reactionary system that only cares about “making money,” “locking people up” and “trying to stop revolution.”

Supporters of the People’s Plan included the Oakland Is Not for Sale Coalition, consisting of teachers, parents and students, protesting the board plan to close 24 Oakland flatland public schools. The coalition has incorporated the BOP demand of no police in Oakland schools into their campaign.

The board was never able to regain control of their public meeting, so they left to go to their private chambers upstairs. BOP and Not for Sale members turned the meeting into a public forum — indicting the board for racist policing and school closures. The students in the Not for Sale Coalition eventually occupied the board members’ empty seats and held a short meeting highlighting community issues.

Jessica Brown called the People’s Plan “historic.” She challenged the board to join this trend that is happening all around the country. “You can either stand with BOP and be in solidarity that this school district is going to end the school-to-prison pipeline ... or you had better get out of your seats,” Brown concluded.

For more information about this struggle, check out the Facebook page of the Black Organizing Project. The People’s Plan can be found at tinyurl.com/webt8tr/. □



WW PHOTO: HENRY LUNA

Mike Africa Sr., Mike Africa Jr. and Debbie Africa.

Mike Jr. reiterated a number of times that the aim of the repressive state was to kill women, men, children and animals.

Mike Jr. also spoke of the horrific MOVE bombing that took place on May 13, 1985, when the Philadelphia police dropped an incendiary bomb by helicopter on the MOVE house, killing six adults and five children. The bombing ignited the burning of over 60 houses on Osage Avenue.

The adult survivor of the bombing was Ramona Africa, who was almost burned alive. She was unjustly arrested and found guilty of “riot” and “arson” and spent seven years in prison. No one was arrested or convicted for dropping the bomb.

Mike Jr. detailed the great joy that he felt when his mother and father were released from prison, four months apart, in 2018, after spending 40 years incarcerated. Only two of the MOVE 9, Delbert Africa and Chuck Africa, are still in prison, awaiting parole. Merle Africa and Phil Africa died of cancer in prison.

Mike Jr. gave credit to Pam Africa, MOVE member and leader of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, for making him not feel ashamed of being born in prison. □

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Elderly, disabled people’s victory vs. Veolia

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

Disabled and elderly paratransit riders in Seattle have won a victory over the corporate criminal, Veolia corporation, which for years has delivered negligent service to the disabled riding public. King County Metro Transit, which controls the Access Paratransit, just got rid of its contractor, Veolia, after years of public pressure and organizing. The Stop Veolia Seattle organization worked in solidarity with Access drivers and also had the support of the Boston School Bus Drivers union, United Steelworkers Local 8751.

Access, with a large fleet of buses, has been controlled by transnational Veolia since 2008. The Veolia empire is rich and extremely well-connected within the capitalist system, in both public and private enterprises in 48 countries. They specialize in privatization of public services and assets. They have gobbled up government contracts in transportation, water privatization, sewage, trash or “environmental services” and “energy services.”

Veolia has a record of bribery, racist environmental destruction and attacks on unions. There is also a legacy of successful working-class organizing against

Veolia’s destructive practices.

Stop Veolia Seattle has helped organize demonstrations of people with disabilities and the elderly at King County Council where they have spoken out about Veolia’s bad service. To get picked up, riders have had to wait long periods of time out in the rain and cold. At other times the bus will circle the city because of poor routing practices. The King County Auditor’s Office found that the county paid Veolia more the longer that a rider was on the bus; so long trips were incentives.

Veolia’s union busting

In 2008, when Veolia won the lion’s share of the Access contract, they broke the drivers union, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587, and drivers were forced to take wage cuts. Veolia secured a contract with the county which Metro said would save the county \$1 million. After three years, though, the county paid Veolia \$7.7 million more than before—with less service.

A few years later the workers won back a union with Teamsters Local 117. This came right on the heels of the Boston School Bus Drivers’ victory over Veolia in the fall of 2016, a struggle which Stop Veolia Seattle had supported and publicized. Organizers in Seattle credit the Boston victory in

forcing Veolia to allow the union back in Seattle. The Boston struggle beat off the entire political establishment there in league with Veolia, which was involved in a vain attempt to break the Boston School Bus Drivers union.

As the struggle went on groups such as the Transit Riders Union; ADAPT, a civil rights, direct-action organization for disabled people; and Disability Rights Washington joined the struggle and allied with Stop Veolia Seattle.

King County released a Request for Proposals for paratransit in 2017 that didn’t even comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the coalition shut it down. The pressure from the alliance of organizations finally forced the county to dump Veolia this summer. Stop Veolia Seattle held a victory party with many disabled and elderly people. The new contractor for Access will be closely monitored. Veolia will no longer make profits from negligent service to the disabled in Seattle.

Veolia is also a target of the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement due to Veolia’s exploitative contracts with Israel in occupied Palestine. Veolia built a light-rail transit line from illegal Israeli settlements on the outskirts of Jerusalem into the



IMAGE: STOPVEOLIASEATTLE.WORDPRESS.COM

central city, almost completely bypassing closed-in Palestinian neighborhoods.

But after many years of organizing and through groups like Stop Veolia Seattle allied with the BDS movement, and unions and communities around the world, Veolia’s “profits before people” policies have been pushed back.

In August 2015 Veolia announced it was selling all its enterprises in Palestine and Israel because the BDS movement cost it over \$24 billion in lost contracts, marking a major victory for BDS and the struggle to free Palestine from racist, Zionist rule. Veolia has lost many contracts around the world, but will remain a threat “til every battle’s won!” (Lyrics from “Which side are you on?” by Florence Reece) □

Portland: ‘Defend DACA!’

By Lyn Neeley
Portland, Ore.

Members of the Oregon DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) Coalition shared their stories during the “Defend DACA, Home Is Here” rally on Nov. 12. An estimated 250 people gathered to call on the Supreme Court to reject Trump’s attempts to terminate the DACA program. Organizers said, “We are Oregonians and we want to shift the narrative of what undocumented experience is.”

In Washington, D.C., several thousand DACA supporters demonstrated chanting, “Sí, se puede.” Rallies also took place in other cities, such as New York and locations in California. Protesters included DACA recipients, their supporters and teenage immigrants who were too young to qualify for DACA when it was first established in June 2012 by President Barack Obama.

Trump appealed to the U.S. Courts of Appeals to terminate DACA in 2017. The program allowed 800,000 young people brought to the U.S. when they were children to work and study without fear of deportation.

Instead of waiting for a decision from the Courts of Appeals on DACA, Trump requested a review by the U.S. Supreme Court, a process normally reserved for unique circumstances.

Last June, 660,880 DACA recipients and their advocates filed lawsuits against ending DACA. Some of these lawsuits include NAACP v. Trump; Regents of the University of California, et al. v. Dept. of Homeland Security; and Batalla Vidal v. Nielsen. These lawsuits resulted in injunctions that temporarily stopped DACA from ending.

On the day of the Nov. 12 rally, the U.S. Supreme Court began reviewing the lawsuits regarding the “legality” of ending DACA. Their decision is due next spring. Before the hearing, Trump tweeted, “Many of the people in DACA, no longer very young, are far from ‘angels.’ Some are very tough, hardened criminals.” He continued, “If Supreme Court remedies with overturn, a deal will be made with Dems for them to stay!”

A recent Harvard study, “The Long-Term Impact of DACA: Forging Futures Despite DACA’s Uncertainty,” found that 76 percent of DACA recipients had doubled their yearly salaries, due to completion of job training, licensing and certificate programs. (tinyurl.com/v3l4uzb/)

The Oregon DACA Coalition is fighting to protect DACA recipients, their families and all immigrant communities on a national scale. They are calling on the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold the highly successful DACA program and not put immigrant youth at risk of deportation, which endangers the future of hundreds of thousands of members of communities all across the U.S.

Thousands of DACA recipients must submit paperwork costing \$1,000 to remain in their own homes. Without protection, they could lose their jobs, homes, families, along with general safety from being deported. One organizer said, “No one who was raised in Oregon should be forced to pay and prove to the government that they deserve to stay in their home.”

For more information, go to oregondacacoalition.org. □

On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

No to charters, resegregated schools in Little Rock, Ark.

Teachers in the Little Rock School District went on strike Nov. 14 to protest the Arkansas Board of Education’s vote in October to no longer recognize their union, the Little Rock Education Association, when the contract expired Oct. 31. Educators warn that the white-dominated state legislature, which took control of the largely African-American 23,000-student district in 2015 after there were low test scores in several schools, is once again pushing a plan to privatize education [code for charter schools] and resegregate the school system.

“We have no other option at this point,” LiREA President Teresa Knapp Gordon told the Nov. 15 Payday Report: “They use our children as pawns in their privatization scheme, and we, as educators, feel we have a moral obligation to stand up for our students and protect them.”

In addition to demanding restoration of their bargaining rights, the LREA wants to see full local control of the district restored after five years as originally stipulated. However, the state wants to extend that to schools with D and F ratings. But, says social studies teacher Megan Percytmán, “Schools that are rated D or F all have minority populations and are located in communities that are high minority and high poverty. By dividing schools up based on these ratings, it’s creating de-facto segregation in Little Rock.”

“The schools that have the grade of D or F are actually those schools that need us the most as educators,” says Lakeitha Austin, who teaches at a D-rated school. “So to have the D or F schools segregated from other schools and put on a plan different from other schools is just not fair.” It’s blatantly, obviously racist!

St. Louis nurses take union fight to bosses’ corporate gala

On Oct. 17 nurses at SSM Health St. Louis University Hospital not only defeated management’s decertification vote, but the next day they took their struggle to SSM-SLU’s posh corporate gala! Inside the Four Seasons Hotel in downtown St. Louis, SSM-SLU’s corporate leaders, donors and philanthropists gathered to enjoy a lavish dinner.

Outside, SSM-SLU nurses, represented by National Nurses Organizing Committee/National Nurses United, stood in the rain passing out flyers explaining SSM-SLU’s poor treatment of the workers and the bosses’ greedy tactics. Four incognito protesters snuck in and placed fliers on dining tables explaining the nurses’ situation. The disruption was a success, with labor-friendly politicians, United Auto Workers members and other allies joining the rank-and-file fight that night.

The National Nurses Organizing Committee is calling out SSM-SLU Hospital for bad faith bargaining and unprecedented anti-union tactics. These creative nurses are demanding safe staffing levels, workplace violence prevention, competitive pay and family leave. (Labor Tribune, Nov. 4) Let’s support their fight!

Grad student workers protest NLRB’s anti-union ruling

The Trump-dominated National Labor Relations Board proposed a rule Sept. 30 that would reverse the 2016 decision that graduate student workers at private colleges and universities are employees who have the right to vote for collective bargaining. The American Federation of Teachers responded by setting up AFT Academics, which held demonstrations in Boston, Chicago and Washington, D.C., on Nov. 14 to protest the anti-union ruling.

A statement on aft.org noted that graduate workers “teach university level courses, publish work, and do research that brings our institutions prestige, grant money, and lucrative patents — yet we have no real power over the decisions that impact our work and lives.”

To support labor rights of grad student workers, sign the petition on aftacademics.org during the public comment period ending Dec. 16.

Union victory for University of New Mexico faculty

Faculty at the University of New Mexico’s five campuses voted overwhelmingly Oct. 16-17 to unionize with the American Federation of Teachers and the American Association of University Professors. One major reason to unionize was going 20 years without a pay raise!

Full-time faculty voted 500-305 to unionize, while part-timers and adjuncts gave the AFT and AAUP a 256-26 landslide. The faculty’s organizing committee, United Academics of the University of New Mexico, will set up two bargaining units to start detailing their bargaining strategy. (aft.org, Oct. 19) Congratulations to UNM professors and teachers in their decisive move for workers’ democracy at work! □

Class action lawsuit

McDonald’s workers take on sexual harassment

By Kathy Durkin

While hundreds of McDonald’s workers walked off the job in Michigan on Nov. 12 to demand a \$15 per hour minimum wage, the right to unionize and an end to workplace sexual abuse, a class-action lawsuit was being filed in state court against the multibillion-dollar company.

Michigan McDonald’s workers and the American Civil Liberties Union charged the corporation with enabling a “systemic problem of sexual harassment” in its restaurants across the U.S. For years, employees have filed complaints against bosses who physically assaulted, verbally abused and demeaned them — and then retaliated if they resisted — with reduced work hours, unfair transfers and firings, or forced them to quit. Company officials ignored these grievances.

Jenna Ries, the named plaintiff and former McDonald’s employee, says a manager verbally and physically attacked her for two years at an eatery in Mason, Mich. When she resisted, he threatened to fire her. She constantly feared she would lose her job. Out of solidarity with “countless survivors” of sexual harassment at McDonald’s workplaces, Ries took legal action.

The lawsuit charges that Mason restaurant’s managers ignored heinous harassment and assault, which represents a pervasive “toxic work culture” emanating from the “very top.” It cites McDonald’s CEO Steve Easterbrook’s ouster a week earlier for violating company policy by having an inappropriate relationship with a “subordinate.” No surprise: Easterbrook got a multimillion-dollar exit payment.

The ACLU press release quotes Gillian Thomas, senior staff attorney at the organization’s Women’s Rights Project: “McDonald’s says it is powerless to stop the sexual harassment occurring in its franchise restaurants. That would be

laughable if it weren’t so destructive to tens of thousands of workers being left to fend for themselves. We are taking McDonald’s to court to demand it use its immense power to address [this] pervasive abuse.” (Nov. 12)

Eve Cervantez, an attorney for McDonald’s workers, added: “McDonald’s is among fast food’s worse offenders when it comes to protecting the workers who make the company’s success possible. Employees should not have to endure violations of their humanity and bodily autonomy, as the price of a paycheck.”

Let the workers lead!

The lawsuit seeks \$5 million to compensate workers at the Mason eatery, implementation of “worker-centered anti-harassment policies, worker-led mandatory training,” and “a safe system of reporting [abuse], investigation, discipline and protections against retaliation.” (laborpress.org, Nov. 13) These policies would be implemented in all its franchises — 93 percent of McDonald’s restaurants.

Jamelis Fairley, a Fight for \$15 movement leader and McDonald’s worker in Sanford, Fla., insists that new McDonald’s CEO, Chris Kempeziński, hear worker-survivors’ stories and let them and their advocates direct the solutions. She stresses that nothing can change for the workers without their involvement.

Lois Jones experienced six months of relentless sexual misconduct at a Durham, N.C., restaurant. After reporting it, managers accused her of lying and contemptuously called her “stupid.” Jones strongly advocates unionization to protect fast food workers from abuse.

The effort to combat workplace sexual harassment has intensified since the #MeToo upsurge began two years ago, inspired by the movement’s African-American founder and organizer, Tarana

Burke. Fight for \$15 joined the workers in this struggle.

Courageously, Black, Latinx and im/migrant McDonald’s workers led a 10-city walkout in the first multicity strike in the U.S. against workplace sexual harassment on Sept. 18, 2018. Lacking union membership, they took great risks.

Their bold action inspired many workers. McDonald’s workers continue to fight the scourge of sexual abuse, taking on the world’s second-largest employer. Whether in the streets or in the courts, they keep the struggle going. Their message: No one should have to face sexual assault to earn a living! □

Fast food fightback!

‘McStrike’ in eight countries

By Martha Grevatt

Close to 1,000 McDonald’s and other fast food workers and supporters held a noisy march and blocked traffic in Detroit Nov. 12. They called for an end to sexual harassment, \$15 an hour pay and “unions for all.” The action was part of an international “McStrike” of low-wage workers in selected cities in Brazil, Chile, Canada, Belgium, France, England, Germany and the U.S.

Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib spoke at the Detroit action, saying, “Corporate greed is a disease in this country and you are going to stop it. When you walk out they lose money. ... If there is a place to start this movement it is the city of Detroit.” (fightfor15.org)

Jenna Ries, a plaintiff in a class action lawsuit over sexual harassment at McDonald’s in Mason, Mich. also spoke. Her store manager repeatedly made sexist comments and eventually sexually assaulted her. “Sexual harassment is unacceptable” was the message on a large lead banner in Spanish.



PHOTO: FIGHT FOR \$15
Detroit McDonald’s workers, supporters march Nov. 12.

In London and around England, multiple McDonald’s restaurants were struck to demand “£15 an hour, guaranteed hours and a union.” Workers there threatened more strikes if conditions and pay do not improve.

The Starbucks Coffee Union in Chile carried a banner reading, “I am a student, also a worker.” In Germany the chant was “fast food workers united.” Belgian workers expressed solidarity with workers in Detroit.

In all the actions workers were loud and determined, telling McDonald’s bosses what they want and that “if we don’t get it, shut it down!” □

Workers win first union contract at Iowa General Mills plant

By Mike Kühlenbeck
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

The workers at the General Mills plant here ratified their first union contract on Nov. 14, after a hard-fought battle with the company. Members of the Department Store Workers Union (RWDSU) Local 110, the General Mills workers have been seeking better pay, better treatment and job security.

On Oct. 31, during contract negotiations, General Mills offered the approximately 520 workers what they called their “last, best and final offer,” which did not secure any of the key provisions the workers were demanding. Instead, the workers were offered an “empty contract,” according to a Nov. 1. RWDSU press statement.

“The contract also seeks to install unfair scheduling practices and third-party subcontracting that could move jobs from Cedar Rapids to non-union facilities nearby or abroad,” the statement read.

When the vote took place at the Local 110 Union Hall on Nov. 6, 99 percent of the membership voted it down. After the results were announced, the union negotiating committee agreed to meet with representatives of the company the following morning.

General Mills worker Tim Sarver, who has been with the company for over 37 years, described what had been happening at the union hall during that week as “the true definition of solidarity. ... Our members stand strong at General Mills.

By standing together and showing the company the real impact this could have on our families, we have shown what having a union is all about. This contract has the potential to change the lives of so many in our community.”

In a RWDSU statement on Nov. 15, Vice President Roger Grobstich said they worked hard to avoid a strike. Since the company agreed to come back to the table the following day, it was an admission that “they know their workers are critical to their own success. Cedar Rapids, Iowa, was built on cereal, and General Mills cereal needs to ensure our city continues to thrive. This worker-led negotiations committee has shown our city what it means to stand up to corporate America tonight. They are doing so to protect their jobs, their families, and our local economy.”

If General Mills had refused to accept their core conditions, the workers would have walked out.

General Mills workers join the RWDSU

The possibility of a strike had been looming at the plant for quite some time, long before the Nov. 6 vote.

General Mills, headquartered in Minneapolis, employs over 40,000 workers worldwide. The company is known for producing popular name-brand cereals, fruit snacks and other foods commonly found on store shelves.

The company website talks about “putting people first” when it comes to careers at General Mills. Based on the actions of

the company from years past, they have been putting their profits over workers and their families.

In the spring of 2018, 625 full-time positions were eliminated. The plant had been increasing its reliance on low-paid labor supplied by temporary agencies. This caused great concern to full-time employees who feared their jobs would be “undercut” or eliminated altogether. The company was “bleeding” employee benefits, and General Mills reduced workers’ allowed absences from five days to three.

The workers voted to join RWDSU on Jan. 9. Affiliated with the Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), which represents over 1.3 million workers in the U.S. and Canada, RWDSU also represents workers at the Quaker Oats plant in Cedar Rapids and Coles Quality Foods in North Liberty.

By standing in solidarity and rejecting General Mills’ final offer, the workers forced the company back to the bargaining table to avoid a strike.

Workers win new contract

A tentative contract agreement was reached Nov. 8. The worker-led negotiating committee “worked tirelessly to secure a strong contract that stops the bleed out of long-held needed benefits,” according to a RWDSU press statement, and recommended the workers vote in favor of it. The new three-year contract was ratified Nov. 14.

In addition to annual hourly wage



RWDSU banner
PHOTO: RWDSU WEBSITE

increases and a ratification bonus, contract provisions include an additional six days paid time off each year, maintaining long-held benefits, scheduling that preserves the three-shift system, limiting the number of temporary employees, adding new full-time entry-level positions and grievance procedures with just-cause language for discipline. General Mills will also be required to “meet and confer” with the union prior to any subcontracting or in case of a projected plant closure.

After the contract was ratified, Sarver said, “I am thrilled to know we will all be going to work tomorrow with the peace of mind of a strong union contract. Over 500 families can sleep well tonight knowing their needed benefits are secure for the next three years. The strength of our union during these first contract negotiations was extraordinary. I am proud to say that a union contract is now part of every balanced breakfast that comes from our General Mills plant.” (KWVL.com, Nov. 14) □

U.S. activists unite to say ‘NO to fascist coup in Bolivia!’

By Workers World staff

As news of the U.S.-backed coup d’état in Bolivia and the Nov. 10 forced resignation of President Evo Morales hit the airwaves and social media, activists around the globe took to the streets to demand Morales’ return to office. Protests began on Nov. 11 in multiple cities in the U.S., home to many of the multinational corporations behind the coup. A second round of demonstrations was organized for Nov. 16 in support of the heroic resistance of the Bolivian people, especially Indigenous activists and workers, against the coup.

Chanting “Evo Morales, we’re with you! No to the U.S.-backed coup!” activists rallied at Park Street Station on the Boston Common on Nov. 16. An emergency coalition of anti-imperialist, pro-socialist, peace and justice groups; students and youth climate activists; and trade unionists came together in staunch defense of President Evo Morales and the workers and Indigenous peoples of Bolivia.

The demonstration was cosponsored by the Committee for Peace and Human Rights, which has held weekly anti-war vigils in Boston since the first Gulf War in 1991, along with Workers World Party.

Sam Ordóñez, of Fight for Im/migrants Everywhere (FIRE), led the rally. He spoke of his family being forced to flee U.S.-backed fascist repression in Guatemala and how these same conditions are now being imposed on the people of Bolivia by the U.S.-CIA-backed military coup and dictatorship. Juan Gonzalez, representing the Council of Mayan Elders, reminded the crowd, “We are on Indigenous land and this entire hemisphere is stolen land.”

Speakers represented Indigenous and im/migrant rights; workers struggles in Colombia, El Salvador and Venezuela; disability and union rights; and the local student climate strike movement. Dario Zapata of Colombianos por la Paz urged the crowd to support the upcoming national strike in Colombia on Nov. 21 in defense of workers and human rights. Jill Stein, 2016 presidential candidate for the Green Party, also spoke.

Endorsing organizations included United American Indians of New England, Suffolk University Marxist Student Organization, Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, Mass. Peace Action, Workers World Party, Party for Socialism and Liberation, United National Antiwar Coalition, United for Justice with Peace, International Action Center, Answer, Team Solidarity — the



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE



PHOTO: MICHAEL PETRELIS



PHOTO: RUSSELL LUM

Voice of the Boston School Bus Drivers union, Green Rainbow Party — Greater Boston Chapter and the Boston May Day Coalition.

Chanting “USA-CIA, Hands off Bolivia!” demonstrators took to the streets for a spirited march to the John F. Kennedy Federal Building in Government Center, to draw attention to the U.S.-CIA’s criminal involvement in the military coup against Indigenous leader and socialist President Evo Morales.

In New York a rally was held at Columbus Circle in Manhattan on Nov. 16. Sponsoring groups were Answer, Workers World Party, December 12th Movement,

IAC, PSL and Struggle—La Lucha.

On Nov. 11, around 75 Philadelphia activists came together for a protest against the coup. The action started with a rally at City Hall and ending with a march and an impromptu demonstration inside the 30th Street Amtrak train station. The event was cosponsored by Party for Socialism and Liberation and Workers World Party.

On Nov. 16, Philadelphia activists from Black Alliance for Peace, Philly Boricua Committee, MOVE, Coalición Fortaleza Latina, International Action Center, Workers World Party and Party for Socialism and Liberation joined for a

solidarity rally titled “No coup in Bolivia! U.S. out of Latin America!” This united demonstration at City Hall called out the long history of U.S. imperialism in the Americas, with speakers connecting the U.S. role in the genocide of Indigenous peoples, the colonization of Puerto Rico and the theft of parts of northern Mexico, as well as the need for U.S. workers to see themselves as part of a global class.

Numerous passersby joined the demonstration as speakers connected the conditions for workers in Philadelphia, the poorest of the 10 largest cities in the U.S., to the struggles of workers in Bolivia, Haiti, Venezuela and beyond. The demonstrators also demanded that FMC, a major lithium mining corporation headquartered in Philadelphia, keep its hands off Bolivia’s natural resources. This action showed the potential for broader unified actions against U.S. wars, sanctions and coups.

In Durham, N.C. a crowd of 30 anti-imperialist demonstrators gathered downtown Nov. 13 to demand an end to the coup against President Evo Morales and an end to U.S. interference in Latin America. A simultaneous rally was held in Raleigh.

Over 100 people came out Nov. 11 in San Francisco to demand “Stop the U.S.-backed fascist coup in Bolivia.” The protest, which was organized by Answer attracted many organizations, activists and artists from across Latin America who denounced the coup and demanded that Bolivian President Evo Morales be returned. Organizations giving solidarity messages included the Task Force on the Americas, Coalition for Peace in Colombia and Workers World Party.

On Nov. 12, in Portland, Ore., around two dozen people gathered at Terry D. Schrunk Plaza to speak out against the recent coup in Bolivia. Holding signs opposing U.S. imperialism and the lies spread in corporate media, the demonstration attracted people finishing another rally that supported DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipients and opposed Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s racist war on im/migrants.

In Seattle a demonstration on Nov. 16 against the U.S.-engineered coup against the Morales-led government of Bolivia was held downtown. The action, called by Answer, included at least five other participating organizations.

Contributing writers: Nathaniel Chase, Judy Greenspan, Joshua Hanks, Phil Hauser, Jim McMahan, Betsey Piette, Maureen Skehan and Scott Williams.

Activists return to Ft. Benning to Close the SOA!

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Columbus, Ga.

On Nov. 16, 1989, six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her 16-year-old daughter were murdered by a special battalion of Salvadoran soldiers whose leadership was trained at the School of the Americas housed at Ft. Benning in Columbus, Ga. This atrocity was just one of many being committed by the right-wing government against social justice movements in El Salvador.

The 1989 massacre prompted the establishment of SOA Watch, a grassroots organization dedicated to exposing the role of the U.S. government in maintaining oligarchic structures throughout the

region for the benefit of U.S. corporations. The following year the first march to shut down the School of the Assassins — as it is known in Latin America — was held at Ft. Benning. Over the past 30 years, tens and tens of thousands of people, many coming back year after year, have marched, sung and committed various acts of civil disobedience to bring attention to the criminal legacy of the SOA.

This year, from Nov. 15 to 17, veterans of this struggle were joined by high school and college-age youth to continue the campaign to close the SOA. There were nightly vigils at the concertina-wired gates to Ft. Benning, a day-long series of panels and discussions, and the Sunday processional with the solemn intoning of the names and

ages of victims killed in the violence instigated by SOA-trained military.

The SOA, a military training facility founded in 1946 as part of the U.S. Cold War foreign policy to deter any threats to imperialist domination of the region, over the years established relationships with key figures in the armed forces of South and Central American countries.

The list of SOA graduates who engaged in massacres, assassinations, torture and disappearances of Indigenous, union and community leaders, and who launched coups and became military dictators, is long. From El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala to Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia, there is an SOA connection to the repression and brutality committed



PHOTO: SOA WATCH

against the masses of people.

The knowledge that at least seven leaders of the coup in Bolivia against democratically elected Indigenous President Evo Morales were SOA graduates — such as General Williams Kaliman Romero who trained at SOA in 2003 — underscored the continuing need to win the demand: “Close the SOA!” □

‘You can’t call yourself anti-racist if you’re not anti-imperialist’

The following slightly edited remarks against the fascist coup in Bolivia were made by Makasi Motema on behalf of Workers World Party at a Nov. 16 protest held at Columbus Circle in New York City. Along with WWP, the protest was sponsored by Answer, International Action Center, December 12th Movement, Party for Socialism and Liberation and La Lucha.

Solidarity is about consistency.

Solidarity is about making sure the politics you hold inside of your home match the politics you hold outside of your home.

It’s about making sure the politics you hold in your community match the ones you hold outside your community.

You can’t say you practice solidarity if you have one kind of politics inside your country and a different kind of politics outside your country.

You can’t be an anti-racist in the U.S. unless you are an anti-imperialist overseas.

That’s not consistent. That’s not what solidarity looks like.

Because if you’re anti-racist, you know that the U.S. police attack, murder and lie about Black and Brown people in our streets.

And if you’re anti-imperialist, you know that the U.S. military attacks, murders and lies about Black and Brown people all over the world.

There is no difference.

So it’s time for us on the left to get our politics right.

It’s time for us on the left to get consistent.

It’s time for us on the left to show solidarity.

Because you can’t call yourself anti-racist if you’re not anti-imperialist.

You can’t call yourself an ally of Black and Brown lives over here if you condone the overthrow of Black and Brown governments over there.

You can’t speak about justice and then repeat the lies of the U.S. State Department.

In order to truly understand solidarity, you must understand that when you see the words, written by the New York Times, saying, “This was not a coup,” you should also remember the words of the New York Post, saying, “He [referring to a turnstile jumper in NYC arrested by police] was reaching toward his waistband.”

The people of Bolivia understand solidarity.

They understand that the capitalist class will stop at nothing to steal the resources of Black, Brown and Indigenous people who dare to struggle together.

They understand that white-supremacist violence does not respect borders.

They understand that their fight is our fight and that our fight is their fight.

That’s why, as we speak, the people of Bolivia are organizing and mobilizing.

They are rallying to fight back.

They are willing to do whatever they need to do to toss out the coup plotters and their imperialist masters.

So what do we need to do?

We here, in the imperial core, have a tremendous responsibility.

We too must organize. We too must unify our



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Makasi Motema speaks in New York City on Nov. 16.

communities and our class.

We too must struggle. And we too must win.

Because, and this is no exaggeration, the entire world is depending on us.

The entire world hopes and prays that people of conscience within the U.S. will one day bring this great, lumbering machine of imperialism and exploitation to a grinding halt.

That one day, the people of the world will have the freedom of self-determination without the threat of exploitation.

But that one day will only come when we show TRUE solidarity and commit ourselves to unite, to organize, to struggle with every muscle fiber in our bodies.

The choice and the responsibility are yours. □

Racist coup in Bolivia sparks resistance

Continued from page 1

of “The Open Veins of Latin America” by Eduardo Galeano, and it fits the coup in Bolivia. By its own public comments, the “civic” movement led by Camacho — which is really a fascist movement — demands the “return of Bolivia to Christ.”

The core of this movement is the alliance between the country’s old colonial elite, businesspeople and evangelical churches. These groups overlap, and their objective is the restoration of the criollos — European-identified settlers — and their neocolonial version of Christianity.

The initial acts of the coup leaders, after Evo resigned and before appointing an interim president, were to remove the Wiphala, the flag of Indigenous Andean peoples, from government buildings and to take photos kneeling before the Bible and the national flag. In their celebrations this movement’s members burn the Wiphala and attack the original peoples’ symbols, which they call “satanic.”

When the coup plotters finally named a senator, Jeanine Añez, “interim president,” she proclaimed herself president while surrounded by the military. She did this in a nearly empty legislative chamber with no quorum or majority political bloc present. They were absent because two-thirds of the elected representatives are from MAS and the police prevented them from entering.

Añez is linked through her spouse to Colombian Uribeism — named after the death-squad former Colombian President Álvaro Uribe. She entered the palace holding a Bible larger than her head.

On the other hand, the coup needed, and received, the collaboration of the National Police and the Armed Forces to materialize. This collaboration was the key difference between the Bolivian coup and the failed coup attempt in Venezuela earlier this year.

It is proof of the idea that Russian

revolutionary leader Lenin elaborated: the bourgeois state — and in the Latin American context one can also speak of the neocolonial state — at the critical moment will serve only bourgeois interests.

It was obvious that the country’s police forces did not sufficiently change their character during the years (2006-19 of Morales’ presidency) of MAS’ process of change. At the critical moment, they served their old oligarchic masters. After the coup materialized, they removed the Wiphala from their uniforms and began a campaign of anti-popular terror in the streets.

Williams Kaliman, who was then commanding the Bolivian armed forces and who “suggested” to Morales that he resign, was trained at the School of the Americas — which has since changed its name without changing its character. This is the U.S. military academy that trains Latin American officers and has produced the worst dictators, war criminals, and facilitated genocide on the continent.

Bolivian media also discovered that a group of graduates of that academy, including several members of the high command, had already conspired to overthrow the government. (tinyurl.com/yf7estss/)

Morales’ government had closed the foreign military bases in the country, and in 2008 stopped sending its military to train in the United States. Morales even started an anti-imperialist school, but apparently it wasn’t in time, and the lackeys of imperialism were able to stay in high command.

The only good thing is that these lackeys are now unmasked, and their true intentions are undeniable. It falls to the people, in the process of organizing resistance to the coup, to develop their own armed forces originating from the masses of people. Only then will these armed forces be able to serve as the basis of state power free from oligarchic and imperialist influence.

The Constitution of 2009

The fascist movement that formed the vanguard of the coup could not have generated the necessary chaos for the coup without a social base. As was evident, this base was motivated by strong racism and a desire to massacre the Indigenous peoples and destroy their cultures.

In this context, it must be understood that one of the most important achievements of the process of change, perhaps over and above economic growth, was the establishment of the Plurinational State with the Constitution of 2009.

The first clause that provokes the anger of the heirs of the colonial elite is that for the first time it established a legally secular Bolivia. That is why the coup plotters now enter with the Bible in hand.

Along with the separation of religion and the state, this Constitution decrees the equality of 36 Indigenous languages and Spanish as official state languages. Every territory has at least one official Indigenous language in addition to Spanish. Indigenous nations gained explicit representation in the legislature. Under it, judicial offices are elected by vote.

This Constitution breaks with centuries of colonialism and neocolonialism that have dominated the entire continent, and for the first time created a framework for a state that was not controlled by colonial elites.

Lithium, other natural resources, economic factors in coup

The 2009 Constitution decrees that the country’s natural resources are the exclusive domain of the Bolivian people, administered by the state. It also declares a maximum limit on private land ownership.

Bolivia has one of the largest reserves of lithium, whose value is on the rise because it is the essential raw material

for batteries used in electric cars. In general, it is indispensable for solutions to the climate change crisis proposed by “green capitalism.” A few weeks before the coup, Morales had cancelled an agreement with a German firm to develop its lithium reserves and had begun negotiating with China.

There is no doubt that the climate crisis requires technological solutions that depend on lithium, but the question is who should benefit from its development: the people who with their labor extract it from the earth and — according to the government’s industrialization plans — process it, or the transnationals, in this case mainly German imperialist corporations?

The oligarchy of the country, even if it manages to put aside its racism, becomes enraged again when it remembers the mines lost in nationalization. It shouts and prepares its coup when it sees what it considers its profits “wasted” on educational programs, a universal health system and financing the emancipation of the country from the International Monetary Fund.

Lithium is only part of the wealth of the Bolivian subsoil. Hydrocarbons and minerals are also important. The same can be said of Bolivia’s agricultural products.

But whatever the resource, the desire of the oligarchy is the same throughout the continent: to sell mineral and agricultural resources to the transnationals, to lower salaries and therefore the quality of life to its minimum level, and to keep the difference for themselves.

Consequently, the resistance that is being organized in the face of the coup, in addition to defending the rights of the original peoples, represents the class struggle and the opportunity to create a new state power outside the control of the oligarchy. This resistance thus deserves the support of the working class around the world as well as all anti-racists. □

‘Boycott Wendy’s’

Farmworkers with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and their allies marched in midtown Manhattan Nov. 18 demanding real transparency and verifiable human rights protections in Wendy’s produce supply chain.

CIW built the Fair Food Program, a unique worker-led monitoring and enforcement campaign that has ended sexual harassment, forced labor and other long-standing human rights violations in the Florida fields and beyond.

All the largest fast-food companies — McDonald’s, Burger King, Subway, Taco Bell and Chipotle — along with nine major food retailers, including Whole Foods and Walmart, have joined the program.

But for years, Wendy’s has refused to open its supply chain to the Fair Food Program. Instead it uses widely discredited, for-profit social auditing companies to monitor its suppliers’ operations, which effectively deny



workers, who harvest Wendy’s produce, a voice if their rights are violated and leaves them vulnerable to rampant sexual assault, widespread violence and systemic wage theft.

Chanting “Boycott Wendy’s” and “Wendy’s escucha,

estamos en la lucha,” protesters took their demands for farmworker rights to 280 Park Avenue where they picketed the hedge fund Trian Partners, Wendy’s largest institutional shareholder.

— Report and photos by Brenda Ryan

Next step is to free Rodney Reed!

Continued from page 1

Just hours after the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles voted unanimously to recommend to the governor that Reed be given a 120-day stay of execution on Nov. 15, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals issued an indefinite stay of execution.

The court cited concealed information, false testimony and possible innocence in its last-minute decision to stay the execution. Reed’s case had captured national and international attention in the last few months with the help of almost daily vigils, protests, marches and rallies.

After well-known celebrities began speaking out against his execution, there was an avalanche of support from politicians from both major bourgeois parties, athletes, civil rights organizations and just everyday people who saw the Reed case as just one more lying, racist attack on a person of color.

Finally, after over 21 years, all the evidence that will prove that Reed could not have committed the murder will be heard in a court of law.

Over two decades of torture

Reed, along with his parents, siblings and whole extended family, has had to endure the painful trauma of living on death row and waiting for Texas to murder him.

Reed’s mother, Sandra Reed, his father, Walter Reed, and his five brothers have fought and fought for two decades. They survived an execution date in 2015.

After Reed’s father died in 2015, his mother and brother, Rodrick Reed, have spearheaded the family’s efforts to get justice. For the last several months, Rodrick and his spouse, Wana Akpan Reed, have traveled the country speaking out for Rodney.

From the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court to New York to Ohio, they have spoken at events in Austin, Dallas and Houston. They’ve held press conferences, marched, rallied and held countless actions in their hometown of Bastrop.



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Following the indefinite stay, Rodrick Reed posted on his Facebook page: “It feels so good to finally breathe. But this fight is not over with! While we celebrate this victory, we cannot lose momentum or motivation. I think to myself every day, I wonder what Rodney is doing right now? Remember this: Rodney will be removed from death watch

area and returned to his 60-square-foot cell for 23 hours a day, seven days a week, being fed through a tiny slit like a caged animal. We have to keep fighting hard while we have this powerful momentum. Rodney needs to be freed. Period. We are focusing 100 percent of our energies on bringing Rodney home alive. . . . We miss Rodney so bad it

literally hurts. I miss my brother. I know my brother wants exoneration before freedom. But we just want him home.”

Even though many celebrities have come out for Reed, it is the grassroots activists who have worked for the last 20 years to bring justice for Reed. It is the community rallies, university meetings, marches and vigils that have brought out families, students and activists.

There were 130 planned rallies across the country this weekend, and activist Shaun King, with Action PAC, sent word they were still on after the stay was announced.

Alamo Heights High School students in San Antonio gathered in the town plaza on Nov. 16 where Magoli Garcia, 17, and her classmates rallied. She thought of the protest in her humanities class after they watched documentaries such as “13th” that explored slavery and how that flowed directly into the U.S. prison system. She told the San Antonio Express News, “Even though we’re small,” she said, “we’re mighty, and we want to be heard.” (Nov. 16)

In Houston on Nov. 17 people gathered at the federal courthouse and marched to City Hall. The rally chair explained the latest news and encouraged everyone to keep up the fight. A high school debate teacher said she was going to have her students learn about the death penalty.

In Austin on Nov. 17, activists again gathered outside the governor’s mansion in an emotional rally. Rodrick Reed spoke. He thanked everyone for all their work and sacrifices and said on a Facebook live feed, “This isn’t victory. We won a small battle, but the war is still going. Victory will be when Rodney comes home to his family and we can be whole again. We are planning a lot more actions; we’re just getting warmed up. So, lace your boots up tight and get ready to fight! Free Rodney Reed!”

Rubac is a longtime leader of the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement in Houston.

Invest in Workers World!

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Bolivian leaders denounce U.S. role in coup

By John Catalinotto

Nov. 18 – Despite massacres in the major cities of El Alto, La Paz and Cochabamba that killed 24 people in the last five days, the resistance to the pro-imperialist coup regime has grown and spread to other areas and major cities in Bolivia, including Santa Cruz, which is a stronghold of the Bolivian rich.

During the week since a combination of a racist, anti-Indigenous mobilization and a police-military mutiny forced President Evo Morales from office on Nov. 10 and caused him to take asylum in Mexico, the following has become clear:

U.S. imperialism played a central role in financing and coordinating the coup movement. That was a charge Morales made in an interview from Mexico on Nov. 17, saying, the coup was planned in the U.S. Embassy and he “fell into a trap.” Morales also accused the Armed Forces of being lined up with the “neoliberal forces” and the “oligarchy,” but not the entire military, mainly the commanders.

The coup makers are caught in a contradiction: They want to look legitimate, but they can’t allow the legislature to function under constitutional rules. Morales’ Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party has a two-thirds majority

in the legislature and refuses to recognize self-appointed head of state Jeanine Añez, a reactionary evangelist who publicly insults Indigenous peoples.

The coup regime plans to use brutal force to stay in power even while it attempts to give its rule a constitutional cover. It even pronounced an edict Nov. 15 offering impunity to police and troops for killing Bolivian civilians — an hour before the massacre in Cochabamba. Añez has threatened to charge MAS legislators with promoting “subversion.”

Despite the murders, mass resistance to the coup continues to grow, especially among Bolivians who identify as Indigenous and organized workers from all peoples. Defying the threat to their lives, mobilizations from the Indigenous city of El Alto announced plans to blockade adjacent La Paz, the administrative capital. Anti-coup protesters still head toward the capital from other cities. In Cochabamba, protesters burned down a police headquarters.

Demands of the resistance

While it is unclear if there is a unified national leadership in the resistance, there seems to be general agreement to demand that Añez resign, that she and coup leaders Carlos Mesa, Fernando

Camacho and some others be expelled from Bolivia, that the Armed Forces return to their barracks, and that new elections be scheduled within 90 days.

The reactionary, pro-imperialist role of the Organization of American States has been exposed. The charge of “electoral fraud” in Morales’ Oct. 20 victory at the polls was a completely invented pretext that has been spread extensively by the imperialist-controlled media.

As Morales pointed out in his Nov. 17 interview, the OAS audit found irregularities in only 0.22 percent of the polling places. That’s 1 in 500 and that wouldn’t have affected the outcome.

In other countries around the world there have been demonstrations supporting the return of Evo Morales to preside over Bolivia and an end to the repression of the popular movement. Some of the largest have been in São Paulo, Guatemala City, Caracas, and in Buenos Aires.

Civil war?

Speaking from Mexico, Morales has said that he wants to do everything possible to prevent a civil war in Bolivia. He has called upon the armed forces to refuse to shoot at Bolivians. And he has offered to participate in negotiations.

Given how far U.S. imperialism and its Bolivian lackeys have gone in their attempt at counterrevolution, it is hard to imagine how they would suddenly offer concessions. That means the best way to avoid civil war would be if the rank and file of the Bolivian military — which is majority Indigenous peoples — would refuse to shoot at the popular movement and revolt.

There have been some reports of friendly interaction between the protest marches and the troops. Nothing reported so far has shown a decisive break within the military and troops joining the popular movement. Videos have shown, however, that the masses of the people are appealing to the troops to join them.

The responsibility of anti-imperialist forces outside Bolivia is to follow the example of those in the other Latin American capitals and do everything possible to assist and support the still growing resistance of the Indigenous peoples and workers of Bolivia.

Sources for this article were reports by Marco Teruggi, most of which have been published on workers.org, and other reports published in resumenlatinoamericano.org.

A motive for the imperialist-backed coup?

Bolivia, lithium and China’s BRI

By Joshua Hanks

Details are still emerging about the recent coup in Bolivia, which removed President Evo Morales from power. Under Morales, the first Indigenous president in Bolivia and in South America, the government nationalized key industries and raw materials, directing profits to social programs that benefited the poor, largely Indigenous population. The results were overwhelmingly positive, greatly reducing extreme poverty in one of the world’s poorest countries.

One reason for the coup could involve Bolivia’s friendly relationship to the People’s Republic of China.

Morales visited Beijing in June 2018 and met with President Xi Jinping to discuss further deepening of ties between the two countries. Morales said then, “China’s support and aid to Bolivia’s economic and social development never attaches any political conditions,” adding that Bolivia expected a closer strategic partnership in the future and was joining China’s Belt and Road Initiative. (Xinhua, June 19, 2018)

The global trade and infrastructure project covering 68 percent of the world’s population, the BRI features investments many times larger than the U.S. Marshall Plan that helped rebuild Western Europe after World War II. It’s intended as an outlet for China’s excess industrial capacity while stimulating economic growth in poor countries. The BRI would establish a new international economic order based on mutual respect and noninterference, outside the grip of Washington and Brussels.

This summer, “Bolivia made its first-ever shipment of beef to China as China seeks to find sources of agricultural imports other than the U.S. China also has purchase agreements with Bolivia

for its quinoa, coffee and soy.” (Xinhua, Aug. 30)

The BRI has been a regular focus of attacks by the Trump administration, especially from Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and the rabid war hawk and recently ousted national security adviser John Bolton.

In an interview last year with right-wing talk radio host Hugh Hewitt, Pompeo called China’s infrastructure projects “something that I think would be bad for each of those countries and certainly presents risk to American interests.” (Washington Examiner, Oct. 16, 2018)

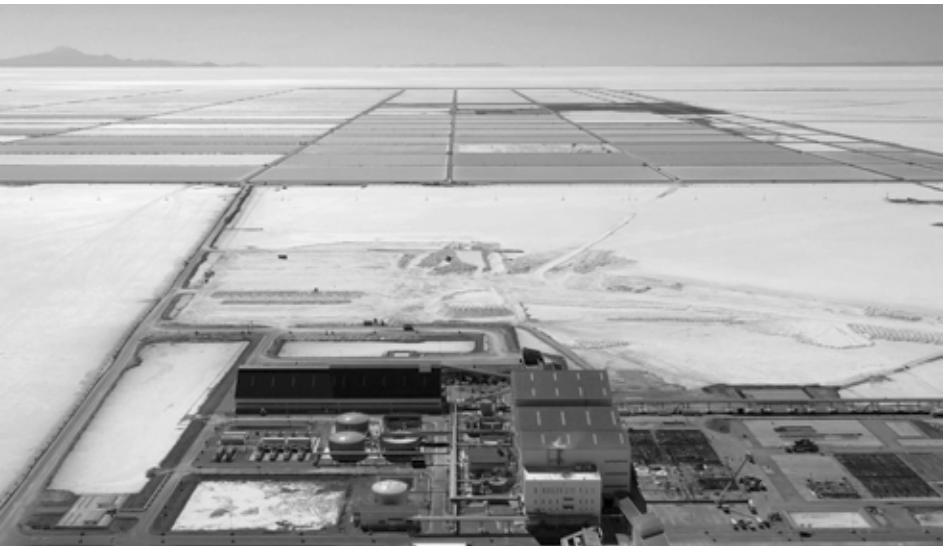
This same Mike Pompeo said in an April 15 speech at Texas A&M University: “What’s the cadet motto at West Point? You will not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do. I was the CIA director. We lied, we cheated, we stole. It’s — it was like — we had entire training courses. It reminds you of the glory of the American experiment.” (Video on YouTube)

Strategic role of Bolivia’s lithium

While China’s BRI investments and trade deals with Bolivia are diversified and include many agricultural goods, undoubtedly Bolivia’s most important resource is lithium. Lithium, used to make batteries for everything from smartphones to electric cars, is one of the key elements powering the rise of high-tech, low-carbon economies. Lithium demand is expected to more than double by 2025.

Bolivia has nearly 70 percent of the world’s lithium reserves.

China has positioned itself as a key player in the high-tech sector, with the city of Shenzhen taking the lead as China’s Silicon Valley. Rapidly transforming from a sleepy fishing village in the 1970s to a futuristic megalopolis that rivals nearby Hong Kong in terms of population and



State-owned lithium extraction complex at Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia.

PHOTO: PABLO COZZAGLIO

economic output, Shenzhen alone has more electric buses than the entire U.S. and a massive fleet of all-electric taxis.

In addition to becoming a center of the high-tech green economy, Shenzhen aims to be a “socialist model city” that “will be the world’s first modern powerhouse not built on the road of capitalism, but by practicing socialism with Chinese characteristics,” wrote He Lifeng, minister of China’s National Development and Reform Commission, in a Sept. 10 article in People’s Daily.

China is investing heavily in Bolivia’s lithium sector, using its state-led economic model to do so. Bolivia’s lithium reserves are at a high altitude and require industrial processing, but Bolivia lacks the needed capital and technology.

Xinjiang TBEA, a publicly owned Chinese company, recently won a contract to jointly develop lithium sources in Bolivia’s Coipasa and Pastos Grandes regions, with Bolivia’s nationalized lithium mining company controlling a 51 percent share in the venture.

Morales has stated that the country’s

development of its lithium reserves must benefit the Bolivian people and that the government is “determined to industrialize Bolivia and has invested huge amounts to ensure that lithium is processed within the country to export it only in value-added form, such as in batteries.” (TeleSUR)

By contrast, the imperialist West has traditionally extracted raw materials while suppressing industrialization in colonized countries, keeping them poor and underdeveloped. The imperial core countries maintain a monopoly on the high value-added industries that rely on raw materials extracted from colonized countries, selling back finished products at an inflated price. Bolivia under Morales sought to break this colonial pattern and use its resources to benefit its people, not foreign imperial powers.

Utilizing a state-led economic model, Bolivia worked closer and closer with China, provoking the consternation of Western imperialists who seek to snuff out any alternative to the neoliberal capitalist world order. □

Violence, racism and football

Cleveland is a midwestern city of roughly 400,000 people. Not much that happens there makes national news. But even the New York Times covered the Nov. 14 brawl between members of the Cleveland Browns and the Pittsburgh Steelers in the National Football League.

With the Browns leading 21-7 and only eight seconds of play left, the game’s outcome was certain. Browns defensive end Myles Garrett tackled Steelers quarterback Mason Rudolph, bringing him down after a pass had already been thrown. Rudolph tugged on Garrett’s helmet and tried to deliver a knee to the groin. In retaliation, Garrett pulled Rudolph’s helmet off.

While Rudolph’s teammates were restraining Garrett, the quarterback charged Garrett, who swung Rudolph’s helmet and hit him on the head. Browns defensive tackle Larry Ogunjobi shoved Rudolph. Steelers center Maurkice Pouncey kicked Garrett in the head.

Garrett has been widely attacked for using Rudolph’s helmet “as a weapon.” Browns quarterback Baker Mayfield and Coach Freddie Kitchens immediately denounced Garrett’s behavior, but Kitchens later pointed out that Garrett “understands what he did” and was “embarrassed.” Garrett apologized “to Mason Rudolph, my teammates, our entire organization, our fans and the NFL” the very next day after the incident. (Yahoo Sports, Nov. 15)

Pouncey’s comment defending his own conduct in the melee — that Garrett “could have killed” Rudolph — has become a common refrain. That was possible, according to specialists in sports medicine, but highly unlikely. In fact

Rudolph did not sustain any injury from the hit to his head.

The NFL suspended Garrett for the entire season, postseason and perhaps even extending into next season. Pouncey and Ogunjobi were also suspended for three games and one game, respectively.

Rudolph, who by many accounts instigated the fight, was not suspended or even ejected from the last few seconds of the game. Max Kellerman, a white cohost of the popular ESPN program, “First Take,” commented Nov. 15 that this was obviously unfair, stating that Rudolph should have gotten at least a one-game suspension.

Black ESPN commentators — most notably the Emmy-award-winning Michael Wilbon, co-host of “Pardon the Interruption” — along with USA Today echoed Kellerman’s views.

The players union is appealing all three suspensions.

Few dare call out racism

Garrett, Pouncey and Ogunjobi are Black. Rudolph is white. Yet few voices in the sports world, even those decrying the lack of fairness, dare to utter the word “racism.” The inconsistency in imposing penalties was somehow due to favoritism toward quarterbacks — or toward the Steelers. But whatever the motive, it’s hard to conceive that the players would not view the NFL’s actions as racism.

Sports commentator Pete Smith wrote: “The lack of action against Mason Rudolph, the one who started everything that would transpire and escalated the situation, is troubling and now raises questions about race.” For merely suggesting that racism might be a factor in

the disparity in punishment, Smith drew critical comments online. Others commended him. (Sports Illustrated, Nov. 15)

This is not an isolated incident. Racism has permeated the NFL since its founding in 1920. While 70 percent of NFL players are Black, when it comes to “leadership” only five out of 32 quarterbacks and only two head coaches are Black. The Washington, D.C., and Kansas City team names are still racist slurs against Indigenous people. Colin Kaepernick has been barred for the last three years from playing for taking a knee during the national anthem to protest racist police brutality.

Professional sports is a lucrative source of profits under the capitalist system of exploitation. That’s why the NFL mirrors all the evils of capitalist society, including sexism as well as racism. As Smith also points out, “While this [Nov. 14 fight] is an isolated incident, violence against women is an epidemic. Numerous players across the league are making millions of dollars playing every week while victims [of their sexist assaults] are subjected to reliving nightmares in their lives as stadiums full of people are cheering.”

A pervasive culture of violence

Capitalist culture is also reflected in the overriding culture of violence in the NFL that the Browns-Steelers scuffle epitomizes. Winning a football game depends on defense as well as offense. That means physically tackling the opponent. Other than hockey, boxing and wrestling, few sports demand as much aggressive physical contact.

The old adage, “It’s not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game,”

has never been true when capitalist team owners’ profits go up and down based on winning or losing. Winning is everything to them. When winning depends on aggressive behavior, doesn’t that foster a culture of violence? How else to explain the seemingly irrational flaring of tempers, which hurt the players involved, their team and their fans?

If Myles Garrett can be chastised for endangering another player, what about the team owners, who demand players risk their health and safety every time they play? The longterm health consequences of repeated head trauma are well-documented. Denied decent health care, retired players suffer needlessly from lifelong injuries.

The multimillionaires and billionaires who own the teams and ultimately “call the shots” tend to be reactionaries. Browns owners Jimmy and Dee Haslam are brother and sister-in-law and political supporters of Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam — who was instrumental in defeating the union at the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga. Art Modell, who owned the original Browns and moved the team to Baltimore, was a long-time Republican Party supporter. Jerry Jones and Robert Kraft, the billionaire owners of the Dallas Cowboys and New England Patriots, respectively, are proud Trump supporters.

Professional athletes, even the highest-paid, are workers under capitalism. They have a right to safe working conditions, including stress management. They have a right to a nondiscriminatory work environment.

But under capitalism, these rights are hard to come by. □

Koreans say no to Trump

By Deirdre Griswold

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea has rejected the latest proposal by the Trump administration for a summit meeting.

On Nov. 18, the DPRK Foreign Ministry said in a statement: “Three rounds of DPRK-U.S. summit meetings and talks were held since June last year, but no particular improvement has been achieved in DPRK-U.S. relations. And the U.S. only seeks to earn time, pretending it has made progress in settling the issue of the Korean peninsula.

“We are no longer interested in such talks that bring nothing to us. As we have gotten nothing in return, we will no longer gift the U.S. president with something he can boast of. If the U.S. truly wants to keep a dialogue with the DPRK, it had better make a bold decision to drop its hostile policy toward the DPRK.”

When Donald Trump met with Kim Jong Un, leader of the DPRK, in Singapore in June 2018, it appeared to be a breakthrough in relations between the two countries. Certainly, Trump used the meeting to grandstand, projecting an image of a courageous leader ready to break with the past and resolve difficult issues.

He repeated the gesture this February, meeting Kim in Vietnam. And in June, Trump went to the demilitarized zone dividing the north and south of Korea,

daringly putting his foot across the line of demarcation.

But it was all for show. The U.S. has done nothing since then to lower its very real hair-trigger threat of war on the peninsula.

The February summit in Vietnam was broken off when Trump and his hawkish “security adviser,” John Bolton, handed Kim a document that called for “fully dismantling North Korea’s nuclear infrastructure, chemical and biological warfare program and related dual-use capabilities; and ballistic missiles, launchers, and associated facilities,” according to the British news agency Reuters.

Imagine the outrage in the U.S. imperialist military/diplomatic establishment if the scenario had been reversed — if Kim had handed Trump a document demanding the U.S. dismantle its doomsday weapons that are used to threaten the whole world!

The DPRK has no bases abroad. It is involved in no foreign wars. Its weapons are purely defensive — an absolute necessity in a country that knows what it’s like to be attacked by the U.S. From 1950 to 1953, every building over one story was bombed by the U.S. in one of the most uneven wars in human history.

The DPRK survived because of the people’s iron determination to defend their socialist system. That’s what U.S. imperialism can’t understand — or defeat. □

Int’l gathering reinforces anti-imperialist solidarity

By EMQ
Havana, Cuba

Nov. 11 — The Anti-Imperialist Meeting of Solidarity for Democracy and against Neoliberalism (Encuentro Antimperialista de Solidaridad por la Democracia y contra el Neoliberalismo) was held at the Havana Convention Center Nov. 1-3.

The conference was attended by more than 1,200 delegates from around the world, with nearly 100 coming from North America. Notable large delegations included movement representatives from Puerto Rico, Argentina, Brazil and Chile, as well as delegates from as far away as Vietnam and New Zealand.

The meeting was opened by Fernando Gonzáles, a “Cuban Five” hero of the Cuban people and president of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP). The meeting was closed by President of the Cuban Republic Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez; Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of the Cuba; and President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Nicolás Maduro Moros. Also attending were the Second Cuban Communist Party Secretary José Ramón Machado Ventura and Esteban Lazo, president of the Cuban National Assembly of People’s Power and the Council of State.

Powerful addresses were made by a number of delegates, including Glesei Hoffman of the Workers Party of Brazil; Dr. Hannah Bisiw of the National Democratic Congress of Ghana; Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves of Saint

Vincent and the Grenadines; and a representative of the Communist Party of China. All stressed that coordination and unity against neoliberalism and in defense of democracy were urgently needed. The assembly declared the year 2020 as a year of left counteroffensive. The struggles to Free Lula in Brazil (he was freed Nov. 8) and to win independence for Puerto Rico were also raised.

Six breakout sessions took place, including “Solidarity with Cuba and other just causes” held at the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM), “Integration, identities and common struggles” and “Strategic communication and social struggle/decolonization and the culture war.”

Gail Walker of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization represented the U.S. delegation at the front podium and had the honor of introducing the closing plenary speakers.

In his closing remarks, President Díaz-Canel said in part, “A special greeting to all who resist and have come to the Cuban capital, which has always been, and will be, a meeting point for those who defend peace and solidarity among peoples. The new generation of Cuban leaders, trained and educated by the historical generation of Fidel and Raúl, are revolutionaries, socialists, faithful to Fidel and Martí, and we will not yield a millimeter in our positions in favor of independence, sovereignty and social justice. And as a link with the peoples who struggle and resist, we will always uphold solidarity as a fundamental principle to which we owe so much.” (en.granma.cu, Nov. 4) □



Pyongyang, capital of DPRK, leveled to the ground by U.S. bombs during Korean War (left); Modern day Pyongyang due to socialist reconstruction (right).

Yellow Vest protests show anger remains

By G. Dunkel

Some 40,000 Yellow Vest supporters came out in the French streets Nov. 16 to protest in Paris as well as in Lille in the north and Marseilles and Toulouse in southern France, according to organizers. It was the one-year anniversary of the start of their movement.

While the weekly Saturday Yellow Vest protests had stopped, workers and the poor in France showed they are still angry. The demonstrations were militant; many were vigorously and quickly attacked by the cops, who declared them illegal.

Yellow Vest people employed some innovative tactics. In eastern Paris, together with delegations from Extinction Rebellion, a Queer activist coalition, immigrant rights activists, housing activists,



People in Bamako, Mali, in solidarity with Yellow Vest movement, Dec. 2018.

plus union activists, they occupied the Golden Arrow (La Flèche d’Or), an unused concert hall, setting up a “People’s House.”

President Emmanuel Macron’s government has spent \$19 billion in tax breaks and subsidies for lower-income workers in France. This represents an annual average of about \$900 per family—that is, not much.

During the weekly Yellow Vest protests throughout much of last year, cops severely and deliberately injured over 2,000 people, blinding dozens. Few cops face charges for these vicious attacks—and certainly no one who gave the orders for them.

Macron spent months holding town-hall style meetings through areas of France where support for the Yellow Vests was the strongest to try to weaken support for the movement.

Macron has remained true to his role as an investment banker for Rothschild & Co. He has removed the wealth tax that was directed toward the wealthiest of the wealthy. He is trying to “reform” France’s retirement system so people have to work longer, pay more into it and get lower pensions. He has cut spending on social services and medical care, especially emergency services.

When French TV asked protesters on

Nov. 16 why they came, the most common answer was that nothing essential had changed. Macron still favored the rich and attacked the long-standing gains of the workers and the poor. A significant number of protesters demanded “the end of capitalism.”

Impact of the Yellow Vests

The newspaper Le Monde occupies the same space in French journalism as the New York Times does here. Le Monde quoted a protester who put the Yellow Vest movement in the international context: “Anger is growing worldwide as workers are becoming enslaved.” (Nov. 16)

Besides its impact in France — where over 60 percent of the public support its demands, even if they have reservations about its tactics — the Yellow Vest movement has had a major impact on Francophone West Africa.

In Mali, when people’s militias set up nighttime patrols to protect their communities against raids by Boko Haram affiliates, they wear yellow vests to show whose side they’re on. When a demonstration against extending the term in office of parliamentarians was held in Bamako, Mali’s capital, participants wore yellow vests. Djibril

Camara, one of the organizers, explained: “We are wearing the vests because we were inspired by what is happening in France.” (maliactu.net, Dec. 6, 2018)

The French TV channel, TVMonde5, has a special report on the impact. (tinyurl.com/ryba9yr/, in French)

The report starts with a quip from the Ivory Coast army that it is prepared to send a brigade to Paris to help the French army put down the “unrest,” in return for French “help” in Yamoussoukro, the capital of the Ivory Coast. It goes on to interview Guy-Marius Sagan, a spokesperson for the Senegalese FRAPP (Front for an Anti-Imperialist Popular and Panafrican Revolution) and Yacouba Katilé, secretary general of the National Union of Malian Workers (UNTM). Both Sagan and Katilé express support for the Yellow Vest struggle for their democratic rights and against French authoritarianism.

The Yellow Vest protests on Nov. 16 are seen in France as a warmup for the union-called general strike on Dec. 5 against Macron’s so-called retirement reforms and his cuts to education and medical care. There appears to be real feeling that the union movement and the Yellow Vest movement have to be amalgamated. □

Palestinians resist Israeli renewed attack on Gaza

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Israel began pounding the Palestinian area of Gaza on Nov. 12 with scores of air raids and artillery attacks. The assaults renewed an ongoing Israeli military campaign against Gaza that had been in a lull in recent months.

Gaza has been described as the largest open-air prison in the world, after nearly 2.1 million residents suffered 12 brutal years of an Israeli-imposed state of siege. During this time Israel has limited or cut off complete access to food, water, electricity and medical supplies, leaving the Palestinian people there hungry, thirsty and in danger.

Now Israel has renewed its outright targeting of Palestinian political and military leaders in their homes. On Nov. 12, Israel claimed it had assassinated the top local commander of the Islamic Jihad, Bahaa Abu Al-Ata, in his house in Gaza City. His spouse, Asma Abu Al-Ata, was allegedly also killed.

The Israeli Defense Force asserted this was a “surgical airstrike” and that it also was “investigating” whether Gazan civilians were killed in the dozens of other airstrikes and bombardments in November.

In fact, scores of civilians have been killed in recent attacks on Gaza and

hundreds wounded. Housing units, agricultural lands, poultry and vegetable farms have also been targeted and destroyed by the air raids. This tactic of destruction, along with genocidal murder, has been employed by the Israeli government since 1948 in an attempt to subjugate or drive out Palestinian resistance to colonization and occupation.

Arab members of the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, accused right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of renewing and escalating the attacks on Gaza in order to secure his political survival. Netanyahu received a severe setback in recent Israeli elections, narrowly losing reelection.

Gaza continues to fight for its liberation. The day following the predawn attack on Al-Ata, Palestinians fighters fired a barrage of some 200 rockets into Israeli territory. Al Jazeera Arabic’s Wael Al-Dahdouh, reporting from Gaza on Nov. 13, said there is a “high degree of anger” in the city. “The overnight [Israeli] operation reminded people in Gaza of previous assassinations that targeted Palestinian activists and high-level commanders from Palestinian resistance groups in their homes.”

Previous resistance in Gaza has also been fierce, most recently in the year-long Great March of Return, lasting from March 2018 through March 2019. Every Friday

thousands demonstrated at the border fence imposed by Israel, demanding their right to return to their Palestinian homeland. The majority of Gaza’s population descended from those violently expelled from their homes and villages in 1948 when Zionist militias drove out 750,000 Palestinians in order to seize land for Israel’s creation,

New York City protest

Let Gaza live!

A couple of hundred activists held an emergency rally in New York’s Times Square on Nov. 15 to protest recent Israeli massacres in Gaza of 34 Palestinians, including eight children. The rally included continual chants, mic check, brief speeches and a militant march down Broadway to Herald Square.

Participating groups included NY4Palestine, Within Our Lifetime — United for Palestine, American Muslims for Palestine, Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, Al-Awda NY, The Palestine Right to Return Coalition, International Action Center, Workers World Party, CodePink: Women For Peace, Struggle — La Lucha for Socialism, Jews for Palestinian Right of Return, and Labor for Palestine.

— Report and photo by Sara Flounders



Cuban medical personnel return home from Bolivia

The following edited article was written by Yenya Silva Correa and posted Nov. 19, 2019 on the English website of Granma, the official voice of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee. Go to tinyurl.com/txpvtpb to read the entire article.

These past few days, doctors lending their services in Bolivia and Ecuador have returned to the homeland, leaving behind their patients, families with few resources, but very grateful to those who treated their ailments, living as neighbors in their communities.

“We have lived days of deep sadness, of harassment, of physical mistreatment,” said Dr. Nirza García Valdés, a General

Surgery specialist, who worked in the Bolivian department of Santa Cruz, referring to the period immediately following the coup against President Evo Morales Ayma.

“But even in the moments of greatest danger, we did not weaken. We stayed in our positions until the last moment, supporting the health of the sister Bolivian people until it was no longer possible to continue,” said García, a native of Bayamo, in the province of Granma.

“We return victorious. We do not feel defeated. We come with our heads held high, with our mission accomplished, because no coup, nor any regime that may take charge of Bolivia’s fate, can erase our

impact.

“The lives saved are there, the grateful patients are there, and the results achieved by Cuba and its international collaboration will always be there.”

Alfredo Escobar Bernal, gastroenterologist, thanked the Cuban government for not abandoning brigade members to suffer the consequences of the coup in Bolivia on their own.

When the coup was consummated, he explained, he was in Santa Cruz and lived moments of uncertainty, along with other colleagues, given the tension that eventually triggered very serious confrontations among Bolivians.

“There were situations in which we

felt the support of people who recognize the value of Cuban collaboration, but at other times, supporters of the coup took advantage of our presence to defame Evo Morales and his government.

“I had no doubt that, at all times, we were protected by our country’s authorities through diplomatic channels, and by personnel responsible for the medical mission. They were always aware of our safety.”

As of November 18, 431 health professionals had returned to the country from Bolivia, with the arrival of another group expected shortly. Also returning are members of the Cuban medical brigade in Ecuador, where the government cancelled the bilateral agreement in this sector. □



El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

Fred Goldstein utiliza las leyes de la acumulación capitalista de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué el capitalismo global ha llegado finalmente a un punto de inflexión.

LowWageCapitalism.com

Solidaridad con la resistencia en Bolivia

Por Sam Ordóñez

15 de noviembre—El día 10 de noviembre renunció Evo Morales, presidente del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, junto con el vicepresidente y la mayoría de su gabinete. Vino después de que la policía nacional abonó su cargo y se unió a las protestas de la derecha, y las Fuerzas Armadas anunciaron en la televisión que pedían su renuncia, uniéndose también al golpe de estado.

No importaba que el gobierno ya había aceptado lo que supuestamente pedían los manifestantes: nuevas elecciones con nuevo Tribunal Supremo Electoral.

Fernando Camacho, líder del movimiento opositor, entró al Palacio Quemado para tomar una foto arrodillado ante la bandera y la biblia. A su lado, un pastor declarando que “Bolivia es de Cristo”.

En los días siguientes se desarrolló una situación que no debe sorprender a los que conocen la historia de América Latina: la policía reprimiendo con toda fuerza a las protestas en los barrios populares causando por lo menos seis muertes, persecución de los funcionarios y oficiales electos del partido gobernante Movimiento Al Socialismo (MAS), y deteniendo a los líderes sindicales, campesinos, e indígenas.

El golpe se hizo realidad con la traición del ejército y varios sectores de la policía, pero fue también resultado de una campaña de terror contra la mayoría indígena del país y todos los que apostaron por el “proceso de cambio” del MAS. Los que llevaron este terror son, aparte del sector empresarial, grupos de la extrema derecha con una ideología neocolonialista y las peores características del evangelismo.

Evo Morales se retiró a la región de Cochabamba, protegido por el sindicato de cocaleros que antes de ser presidente había dirigido. Después de refugiar a 20 miembros de MAS en su embajada, el gobierno mexicano ofreció asilo, y a la hora de escribir Evo Morales está en la Ciudad de México.

Mientras tanto, en las calles de Bolivia se está desarrollando una gran resistencia al golpe, para defender la democracia pero también en rechazo contundente al racismo desatado por la victoria del golpismo.

En la ciudad de El Alto, cercana a la capital administrativa de La Paz y famosa por su historia de derrocar dictadores, los habitantes, en su mayoría indígenas, forzaron



Cada día hay una manifestación desde El Alto hasta La Paz. La resistencia sigue.

la retirada de la policía nacional, quienes tuvieron que pedir refuerzos del ejército.

En el resto del país, los sindicatos, organizaciones indígenas, campesinos, feministas, y otros movimientos sociales empezaron a movilizarse también. Desde varios puntos en el país llegan a La Paz, donde las marchas y los bloqueos de carretera van aumentando.

Integrantes del golpe

“El signo de la cruz en las empuñaduras de las espadas”. Así se titula la primera parte del libro, “Las Venas Abiertas de América Latina”, por Eduardo Galeano, y así fue el golpe en Bolivia. El movimiento “cívico”, en realidad fascista, liderado por Camacho quiere, por sus propios comentarios públicos, “devolverle” Bolivia a Cristo.

El origen de este movimiento es la alianza entre la vieja élite colonial del país, los empresarios, y las iglesias evangélicas. En realidad son grupos con gran coincidencia, y su objetivo es la restauración de los criollos y su Cristo neocolonial.

Los actos iniciales de los dirigentes del golpe, después de que renunció Evo y antes de nombrar un presidente interino, fueron quitar la Wiphala de los edificios gubernamentales y tomar fotos arrodillados ante la Biblia y la bandera nacional. En sus festejos sus integrantes queman la Wiphala y atacan a los símbolos de los pueblos originarios que consideran “satánicos”.

Cuando finalmente los golpistas nombraron Jeanine Añez al “presidente interino”, que se autoproclamó rodeada de militares en una cámara legislativa sin quórum ni banco mayoritario presente, eligieron una mujer vinculada al uribismo colombiano por su marido y que entró al Palacio levantado una Biblia mas grande que su cabeza.

Por otro lado el golpe no pudo materializarse sin el apoyo de la Policía y las Fuerzas Armadas. Esta fue la diferencia clave entre este momento y el golpe fracasado en Venezuela, por lo que se deben notar algunas cosas.

Es una prueba de la idea que elaboró Lenin: el estado burgués, y en el contexto latinoamericano se puede hablar también del estado neocolonial, en el momento crítico servirá los intereses burgueses.

Lo primero es que quedó obvio que los cuerpos policiales del país no cambiaron suficientemente su carácter durante los años del proceso de cambio. En el momento que les convenía, regresaron a las faldas de sus viejos amos oligarcas. Y cuando se materializó el golpe, quitaron la Wiphala de sus uniformes e iniciaron una campaña de terror en las calles.

Williams Kaliman, el comandante de las fuerzas armadas bolivianas, fue entrenado en la Escuela de las Américas, una academia militar de EEUU que ha producido los peores dictadores, criminales de guerra, y genocidas en el continente, así como muchos de los oficiales. Medios bolivianos descubrieron también que un grupo de graduados de esa academia, incluyendo varios miembros del alto mando, ya habían conspirado para derrocar al gobierno (tinyurl.com/yf7estss/).

El gobierno de Evo había cerrado las bases militares extranjeras en el país, y dejó de enviar sus militares a entrenar en EEUU. Incluso inició una escuela anti-imperialista, pero por lo visto no fue a tiempo, y los lacayos del imperialismo pudieron mantenerse en el alto mando.

Lo bueno es que ahora esos lacayos están desenmascarados, y sus verdaderas intenciones son innegables. Le cae al pueblo, en el proceso de organizar una resistencia al golpe, elaborar sus propias fuerzas armadas originadas en las masas populares que podrán servir como la base de un estado libre de influencia oligarca e imperialista.

La constitución de 2009

El movimiento fascista que formó la vanguardia del golpe no habría podido generar el caos necesario para el golpe sin una base social. Como se evidenció, esta base se motivaba por un fuerte racismo y un deseo de masacrar al indígena y destruir sus culturas.

En este contexto hay que entender que uno de los logros más importantes del proceso de cambio, quizás por encima del crecimiento económico, fue el establecimiento del Estado Plurinacional con la constitución de 2009.

La primera cláusula que provoca la rabia de los herederos de la élite colonial es que por primera vez estableció una Bolivia legalmente secular. Por eso es que los golpistas ahora entran con biblia en la mano.

Junto con la separación entre religión y el estado, decreta la igualdad de 36 idiomas indígenas y el español como lenguas oficiales del estado. Todo territorio tiene como mínimo una lengua indígena oficial además del español. Las naciones indígenas ganaron representación explícita en la legislatura y los puestos judiciales ahora son electos por voto.

Esta constitución rompe con los siglos de colonialismo y neocolonialismo que han dominado el continente entero, y por primera vez formaron un estado que no estaba controlado por las élites coloniales.

El litio y los recursos naturales, factores económicos del golpe

La constitución del 2009 se decreta también que los recursos naturales del país son el dominio exclusivo del pueblo Boliviano, administrado por el Estado. Declara un límite máximo en la propiedad privada de la tierra.

Bolivia tiene una de las reservas mas grandes de litio, cuyo valor está en alza por ser materia prima esencial de las baterías que usan los carros eléctricos. En general es indispensable para las soluciones a la crisis del cambio climático que propone el “capitalismo verde”. Unas semanas antes del golpe, Evo Morales había cancelado un acuerdo con una firma alemana para desarrollar sus reservas de litio, y había empezado a negociar con China.

Sin duda la crisis climática requiere soluciones tecnológicas que dependen del litio, pero la pregunta es quien debe beneficiarse de su desarrollo: el pueblo que con su labor lo extrae de la tierra y, según los planes de industrialización del gobierno, lo procesa, o las transnacionales, en este caso principalmente las alemanas?

La oligarquía del país, cuando logra dejar de lado a su racismo, se enrabia nuevamente cuando se acuerda de las minas perdidas en la nacionalización. Grita y prepara su golpe cuando ve lo que consideran sus ganancias “malgastadas” en programas educativos, un sistema de salud universal, y financiar la emancipación del país del FMI.

El litio es solo parte de la riqueza del subsuelo Boliviano, también son importantes los hidrocarburos y los minerales. Lo mismo se puede decir de los productos agrícolas.

Pero sea el recurso que sea, el deseo de la oligarquía es el mismo en todo el continente: vender los recursos minerales y agrícolas a las transnacionales, bajar los sueldos, y por lo tanto la calidad de vida, a su nivel mínimo, y quedarse con la diferencia.

En consecuencia la resistencia que se está organizando ante el golpe, además de defender los derechos de los pueblos originarios, representa la lucha de clases y la oportunidad de crear una nueva fuerza pública fuera del control de la oligarquía. Por lo tanto, esta lucha merece el apoyo de la clase obrera de todo el mundo, así como de todos los antirracistas. □



La Paz, Bolivia, 29 de octubre.