

Defying cops and army

People of Chile rise up

By John Catalinotto

Oct. 28 — Indigenous Mapuche people, students, workers, retired workers, women, people from all but the most privileged sectors of Chilean society defied the state of emergency and curfew to come out in massive protest Oct. 25, after more than a week of violent confrontations with the authorities.

In retreat, the government ended the state of emergency starting Oct. 28, sending Army troops back to their barracks.

On the other side, some 100 popular organizations called a general strike (paro nacional) for Oct. 30.

Estimates are that 1 million to 3 million of Chile’s 19 million people filled the main squares of Santiago, the capital, and other cities of the long, narrow South American country on Oct. 25. The demonstrators knew that police and/or military had fired not only tear gas — which was everywhere in Santiago — but live ammunition at the young people demonstrating throughout the week. They knew that hundreds were

injured, hundreds of others arrested and some were tortured.

They knew that President Sebastián Piñera had called the protesters “bandits” and said that Chile was “at war” with them. They knew Chile’s army officers had been trained in brutality at the U.S. School of the Americas and had set up a military dictatorship in 1973 that lasted for nearly 20 years. If the people came out into the streets, it was with no illusions.

And still huge numbers came out, bringing not only a combative spirit—you can see it in the photographs and videos—but also their sense of humor while going into battle, knowing they were “the people united” and they “couldn’t be defeated.”

Behind the crisis

Before the crisis blew up, Piñera had boasted of Chile’s stability and prosperity, which obscured rampant inequality and

growing poverty. He unleashed the crisis by announcing a 3.75 percent increase in the Santiago subway fares, a tiny amount of 30 Chilean pesos (less than 5 U.S. cents). (tinyurl.com/y5t8ltm3)

Young people, many of them high school students, stormed the subways and boarded trains without paying the fare. The government responded with police attacks. To the surprise of the authorities, the students fought back, and when they fought, they got the support of the Chilean working class.

Some subway stations were damaged, some buildings and vehicles burned. The president declared a curfew and a state of emergency, and police attacked the youths with water hoses, tear gas and bullets. Piñera and the pro-capitalist media demonized the demonstrators. His Minister of Economy Juan Andrés

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Santiago, Chile, Oct. 25. PHOTO: TELESUR



New York City protest against Greyhound and ICE, Oct. 25. Read more on pages 6-7. WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

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Workers & community united



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Chicago, October 2019.

End sanctions — act of war — on Zimbabwe

October 25 was declared “A Day of Action” by the South African Development Community to end the economic sanctions on Zimbabwe. SADC is comprised of 16 countries in the Southern African region. These sanctions — an act of war imposed by the U.S. and other Western imperialist countries 20 years ago — have caused great suffering and hardships on the Zimbabwean people and their economy. The December 12th Movement organized a support action on Oct. 25 with a march and rally starting at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and ending at the Zimbabwe Mission. Giving a solidarity message at the rally was Stephanie Hedgecoke, an Indigenous member of Workers World Party. Below are her edited remarks.

We stand together on stolen land, the Lenape homeland, in a country built on stolen nations, to say: Stop the illegal, murderous sanctions on Zimbabwe and on the Indigenous peoples of Zimbabwe.

Today even the health of our Mother Earth is under threat by the same forces that stole the lands from the Indigenous peoples in Zimbabwe. Indigenous nations around the world share this history of genocidal assault and capitalist larceny that has built the wealth of the banks. All the riches the imperialists possess — it’s all stolen.

But the Indigenous peoples of Zimbabwe took their lands back, and only they have the sole and absolute right to determine any and all issues of development on their



Demonstration at U.N., Oct. 25.

WW PHOTO: STEPHANIE HEDGECOKE

own lands — not the banks, not the corporations, not the International Monetary Fund, not any settlers!

Workers World Party recognizes the sanctions on Zimbabwe as an illegal war on the people to wreak harm on the people and their lands and erase the right of self-determination. Zimbabwe is owed reparations by the banks and the settlers, who have profited from this past assault and seek to, again, gain control of what is not, and never was, theirs through economic warfare.

These forces see our Earth only for what they can ransack and pillage, and then they use our air and water, the atmosphere and oceans, as dumping grounds. We stand in solidarity with the youth of the world to say: This has to STOP.

In solidarity with the December 12th Movement, we are with Zimbabwe to demand the sanctions, the economic warfare, be ended.

Hands off Zimbabwe! □



Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact: 212.627.2994

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Police violence against Oakland parents, teachers

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

“When parents and teachers are under attack, what do we do? Stand up, fight back!” This was a very popular chant during the 2019 Oakland teachers’ strike, Feb. 21-March 1. Little did anyone know at that time that teachers and parents would be physically attacked by school and city police for opposing school closures and consolidations.

Unfortunately, one of the unresolved issues from the strike centered around Oakland Unified School District’s plans to close and consolidate 24 public schools. So far, the board has only targeted public schools in high-poverty “flatland” areas (leaving untouched schools in the more-privileged “hills”). OUSD’s refusal to provide quality public schools for Black and Latinx students is at the heart of this struggle. Under the coalition name, “Oakland is not for sale!” parents and teachers have united to oppose OUSD’s “blueprint.”

On Oct. 23, the Oakland school board conducted a brutal attack on parents, teachers and the community who have been actively opposing the closures and consolidations. After several weeks of protests during school board meetings, the board decided to unleash its combined police force of school safety officers and Oakland police against the peaceful protests of parents, teachers and community members. The videos of this attack clearly showed the unjustified brutality suffered by community members.

The Oakland Education Association and the California Teachers Association immediately released statements



Oakland teachers strike and student support in 2018 focused politically on stopping the growth of charter schools in the district.

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

condemning this attack. The OEA demanded that OUSD “issue a public apology to our students, parents and educators for the use of police barricades, over-policing, and violence at the Oct. 23 board meeting.” The teachers’ union also demanded that OUSD stop funding Oakland police and instead fund school counselors. This demand is key to a citywide campaign launched by Oakland’s Black Organizing Project.

Many organizations, including United Teachers of Los Angeles, came out against the attack and in support of the Oakland community’s fight to save neighborhood

public schools.

The OEA is calling for the OUSD to enact a moratorium on school closures and consolidations. OEA is holding a vigil against school closures and police violence on Monday, Oct. 28 at 4:30 p.m. in front of the OUSD in downtown Oakland.

Greenspan is a retired Oakland public school teacher and a member of the California Teachers Association. For more information about this struggle, go to facebook.com/oaklandnotforsale/.

Harrisburg, Pa. Hundreds converge to demand end to ‘Death by Incarceration’



A sentence of life without parole condemns those who receive it to die in prison. Pennsylvania has more than 5,300 residents serving Death By Incarceration, the second highest number of any state.

According to prison abolitionists Quinn Cozzens and Bret Grote, 65 percent of people serving DBI are Black, even though Black people are only 11 percent of the state’s population. (abolitionistlawcenter.org, pg. 17, August 2018)

Denying people the possibility of parole, no matter how many decades have passed or how they may have changed, ignores individual human capacity for growth. Twenty five countries have declared life without parole unconstitutional.

Hundreds of family members of incarcerated people, prisoner rights activists and prison abolitionists

rallied on Oct. 23 inside the Pennsylvania State Capitol building in Harrisburg, Pa., to tell their legislators to pass a proposed bill that would give those with DBI sentences the opportunity to go before a parole board and make a case for their freedom.

Among the speakers were Lorraine Haw, a Coalition to Abolish Death by Incarceration member, who lost a brother to gun violence and also a son who is serving a DBI sentence. “Me feeling anger and hatred is not going to bring my brother back,” explained Haw. Referring to her brother’s killer, she continued: “Him spending the rest of his natural life in jail, it’s not going to bring my brother back. I fight for his freedom as hard and as much as I fight for my son’s.”

— Report and photo by Joe Piette

Educator worker actions heat up — Chicago to Massachusetts

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Chicago teachers were still on strike in the third largest school district in the U.S. on Oct. 28.

Chicago Teachers Union Local 1 — 25,000 strong — struck on Oct. 17, and were joined by 7,500 education workers from Service Employees Union [SEIU] Local 73. The city announced a tentative agreement with SEIU on Oct. 28, but still refused to come to terms with the teachers.

In an Oct. 8 interview with Fight Back! News, Sarah Chambers, a special education teacher and member of the 40-person bargaining committee, explained the CTU’s goals: “This strike of more than 30,000 teachers, teacher assistants, clinicians and special ed classroom assistants with CTU and SEIU is about justice for Black and Brown students. ... They deserve all the sup-

port in their schools, [and] support to deal with the trauma they experience living in the oppressive, racist system in Chicago means full-time social workers, nurses and restorative justice coordinators. Our students deserve class-size caps, with special education support, more resources and

fully funded schools.”

Community and union support for the Chicago teachers is running high. When Teamsters Local 705 official Juan Campos heard the CTU was planning to strike, he texted union stewards, reminding them: “Teamsters don’t cross picket lines.” Campos, whose local represents about 17,000 workers including UPS drivers in Chicago, said: “Today it’s them, tomorrow it’s us.” (tinyurl.com/yx8q9e04)

“Saturday Night Live” host Chance the Rapper used that high-profile platform on Oct. 26 to rally national support for the striking teachers in his hometown, saying “I fully support you!” A graduate of Chicago public schools, Chance was joined by three other SNL cast members with roots in the city, all wearing red CTU shirts. (tinyurl.com/yxgy9m5x)

Since 2012, the CTU has prioritized rank-and-file activism, advocating for their students and going on the offensive against school privatization and other austerity measures. The success of CTU and its militant tactics significantly influenced the Red for Ed education actions that rocked the U.S. and Puerto Rico beginning in 2018.

A week after the CTU members walked out, teachers in the Dedham Education Association in Massachusetts voted enthusiastically to strike Oct. 24, and by the next morning had set up picket lines at every school in town. Parents and other unionized city employees showed up with coffee and snacks, and other Massachusetts Teacher Association locals arrived for an afternoon rally, as did representatives of the Boston Teachers Union, the Massachusetts Nurses Association and the AFL-CIO.

Former MTA President Barbara Madeloni delivered



Chicago, Oct. 17.

WW PHOTO

messages of solidarity to the Dedham teachers from striking educators in Chicago and from educators who had gone on strike in Oklahoma and West Virginia.

For nearly two years, the DEA had tried for a contract with management to improve working conditions and student support. After a one-day strike and a weekend bargaining session, the teachers reached a tentative agreement with the school district on Oct. 27. (massteacher.org)

Is this the beginning of a wave of more education worker walkouts and strikes?

Watch for WW coverage at workers.org, and check out the International Workers’ Solidarity Network for more news at workersolidarity.net. □



Chicago, Oct. 17.

WW PHOTO

GM strike ends, concessions continue

Solidarity the biggest win

By Martha Grevatt

The 40-day strike of almost 50,000 General Motors workers came to an end on the afternoon of Friday, Oct. 25. The majority of striking United Auto Workers members voted to accept the contract agreed to by GM and union negotiators. The vote was 57 percent in favor, 43 percent opposed.

Under the previous four-year contract, the company had made about \$35 billion in profit. At the strike’s onset, workers made it clear they wanted to win back what they had lost to “save” the company during its 2009 bankruptcy.

At that time a long list of concessions, given up by the workers two years into

their existing contract with GM, were mandated by the U.S. Treasury to secure federal bailout money and keep the company afloat.

What, of all that was lost in 2009, did workers gain back in this contract go-around?

Basically nothing. The raises/bonus formula is close to that of the contract that just expired. The cost of living allowance was not restored. Before 2009, the company had to pay time and a half after eight hours worked in one day and on Saturday — not any more.

Three plants and one warehouse will be permanently closed. One that was slated to be closed, the Detroit-Hamtramck assembly plant (DHAM), will stay open and build a new electric truck. However, fewer workers are required to assemble electric vehicles than gas-powered vehicles. So while GM claims DHAM will retain 2,250 workers, the number could be smaller depending on sales; electric vehicles come with a high price tag.

Workers hired after October 2007 — second tier “in progression employees” — will make the same wages as higher-seniority workers by the end of the contract, but many of them will just be completing the ridiculously long eight-year wage progression from the previous contract. New hires will still be on the eight-year path to top pay — longer if they are laid off part of that time.

Some workers classified as “temporary employees” will be made permanent, but others could be locked in precarious status for an unknown period of time. The company can still hire new temporaries at a lower pay rate and with minimal benefits.

Four parts plants will continue to pay

almost \$10 an hour less than the rest of the company; parts warehouses have their own pay formula.

In other words, divisive multi-tier pay structures are an integral part of the union contract for another four years. This violates a basic principle that unions fought for in the past — equal pay for equal work.

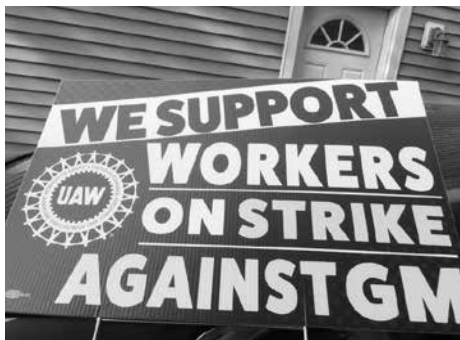
Why did workers vote ‘yes’?

Under a different set of circumstances, workers might have turned the contract down and sent the negotiators back to the table to come up with a better deal. However, as the strike entered its sixth week, savings were being depleted, and the lowest-paid workers had none to begin with. For some, it was hard to turn up their nose at an \$11,000 work bonus to be paid right off the bat.

Early reports from the negotiations stated that GM was pushing to hold raises down, raise health care costs substantially and do nothing whatsoever to improve the lot of temporary workers. If so, the strike pushed back these concessions.

The company utilized every means at its disposal, including the news media, to get workers to see its offer as a good deal. Detroit’s two daily newspapers ran stories every day, leading up to the final vote tally, extolling the virtues of the agreement. UAW leaders made the hard sell through a contract “summary” rather than encouraging every member to read some 350 pages of actual language.

There was no clear indication of what the consequences would be if the tentative agreement was rejected. Would workers stay on strike and for how long? What better deal, if any, would GM acquiesce to? Could the international leaders of the UAW be trusted to fight hard for workers, given



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Lawn signs supporting the strike were on display all around Metro Detroit and other strike-impacted communities.

the evidence of corruption and bribe-taking on the part of top leaders?

Fighting to make the union fight

Given these multiple factors, it is very significant that 43 percent of the strikers — about 17,500 votes — voted against the contract and were willing to extend the strike. A majority rejected the contract in at least 15 plants and warehouses, especially those with lower pay scales or plants slated to close.

The biggest achievement of the strike was the solidarity that grew out of the strike experience. Many rank-and-file militants emerged as leaders. Their main task now is to promote that same picket line solidarity inside the plants and hold management — along with corrupt or weak union leaders — accountable for any abuse, retaliation or disrespect the company tries to get away with.

The biggest strike in 12 years — the longest corporatwide auto strike since 1970 — has ended. But as teachers and education workers, hotel and fast food workers are demonstrating, the strike upsurge is not going away. □



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Rank-and-file strikers picket GM world headquarters in downtown Detroit, Oct. 9.

Harlan County, Kentucky, coal miners win \$5 million

By Johnnie Lewis

Coal miners in Harlan County, Ky., have won a historic victory for more than 1,000 workers fired in July by the bankrupt Blackjewel coal company. In an unusual bankruptcy settlement, the Harlan County miners, as well as others in Kentucky, West Virginia and Virginia, were awarded \$5.47 million in wages the company owed them. Usually workers fired by bankrupt companies get little or nothing.

The miners are still owed millions in vacation pay, retirement and health insurance claims.

This victory was not at all based on the generosity or good will of a federal judge, but solely on the willingness of the Harlan County miners to fight back against Blackjewel. These miners had no union to back them — in fact, there are no union miners left in Kentucky. What the workers did have was the backing of family, friends and communities surrounding the shutdown mines. And because of social media, their struggle was broadcast around the U.S. and the globe.

A few days after the July 29 firings, Blackjewel, along with CSX railroad, tried to move a \$1 million coal train off mine property. Miners heard about this brazen act, and five of them, connecting through social media, went to and stood on the tracks as the train bore down on them. Warned by company security guards that if they didn’t allow the train

through, guards would call the cops and have them arrested, the angry miners stayed on the tracks. When the Harlan County Sheriff’s Department came, followed by the Kentucky State Police, the miners agreed to move — not off, just farther down the tracks.

The miners took photos, texted and called fellow miners, family and friends. As supporters by the carload arrived, the miners kept saying they would leave, but only moved farther down the tracks. Finally, a crowd of people stood on the

tracks. The cops pulled back.

By nightfall, supporters brought food and water. Then camp chairs appeared and tents were pitched right on the tracks. Campers built fires, barbecue grills were unloaded, and local musicians came and played. Cots and bedrolls were set up, and the first night a more than 60-day occupation began. A few days later, the miners allowed CSX to move its empty locomotives out of the area, leaving 100 overflowing coal gondolas stranded.

Like hundreds and thousands of fed-up

non-union workers, such as those at Amazon, Wayfair, Uber and Lyft, and fast food workers striking for a living wage, these coal miners showed that a militant, determined fightback, along with global community support, will win victories — “Til every battle’s won,” as the old labor song, “Which Side Are You On?” goes.

Lewis (she/her) is a retired member of Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 400.

Change is essential! Build Workers World!

As a newspaper that promotes revolutionary socialism, it’s essential to welcome change — especially long overdue change. Like throwing Christopher Columbus into the dustbin of world history with other false idols of colonialism and imperialism.

A movement has been afoot for several decades to eliminate Columbus Day, the second Monday in October, and rename it Indigenous Peoples’ Day. This country, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, was built on stolen lands. Indigenous Peoples’ Day calls attention to U.S. genocidal policies of warfare, massacres, smallpox blankets and forced assimilation.

Indigenous Peoples’ Day also commemorates and honors the great



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

historical, cultural, social, economic and political contributions that Native nations and peoples have made across this country.

If you agree that it’s essential for

Workers World to salute the importance of change this month, then it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program, which since 1977 has helped put out the paper. Members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give to friends for a donation of a minimum of \$75 or \$100 or \$300 (only \$25 a month). There’s no limit on your generosity!

Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/; it’s easy to set up monthly deductions. Know we’re grateful for your help in building Workers World — for today and for the future! □

WW COMMENTARY

The real enemies of the planet

By Deirdre Griswold

A map of the world, recently circulated online, claims to identify the world’s worst offenders responsible for the climate crisis. It named energy ministers in scores of countries — rich and poor, imperialist and oppressed — as equally the culprits for the biggest challenge facing humanity.

The map was no doubt a sincere attempt. But it has a basic flaw.

It is not energy ministers who have been pushing fossil fuels over more sustainable forms of energy. It is the powerful oil, gas and coal industry.

This is why today the U.S., with only 5 percent of the world’s people, consumes 20 percent of the world’s energy supply.

It is why the U.S. produces, per person, four times the greenhouse gas emissions of China, even though China has the world’s largest population and has become the world’s largest manufacturer.

Rockefellers, Gettys — fossil fuel dynasties

For well over a century, families like the Rockefellers and Gettys in the U.S. built enormous fortunes on the backs of miners and oil workers who dug up or pumped out the fossil fuels that have powered capitalism’s ongoing industrial — later the high-tech — revolution.

Beginning less than a decade after the U.S. Civil War ended, newly acquired oil and coal money played a major role in the emergence of an extravagant lifestyle for the super-rich in a few big cities, especially New York. Industrialists and their bankers began to overtake landowners in a surge of wealth that they flaunted shamelessly, aping the opulent customs of the decadent European ruling classes.

Between 1873 and 1875, the U.S. suffered one of what were then becoming recurrent economic depressions. It was in that period that the Rockefeller family fortune began to skyrocket, as they bought crude oil at ever-lower prices and then sold it for a healthy profit. (See “The Rich and the Super-Rich” by Ferdinand Lundberg.)

That was nearly a century and a half ago. Since then, the Rockefellers and other powerful industrial and banking families — the Rockefellers used their vast oil wealth to “diversify” and became powerful bankers on Wall Street — have run the United States, lock, stock and barrel. Most of the time they have been satisfied with doing it behind the scenes, leaving public pronouncements to the politicians whose loyalty they can count on. But occasionally they even run for public office.

John D. Rockefeller founded Standard Oil in 1870. His grandson, Nelson

Rockefeller, became governor of New York state from 1959 to 1973 and was vice president from 1974 to 1977 under President Gerald Ford. But every administration, whether Democrat or Republican, has had to follow an agenda approved by the super-wealthy families of the fossil fuel industry.

Oil wars and counterrevolutions

U.S. foreign policy in particular has reflected the dominance of the oil billionaires. There is no question that this is what has driven the horribly destructive U.S. wars in the Middle East and Northern Africa, where so much of the world’s oil is extracted. And it didn’t start with the current wars.

Back in 1953, the CIA mounted an operation that overthrew the elected government of Iran, headed by Mohammed Mossadegh, who had nationalized the country’s oil industry. The CIA operation was led by Kermit Roosevelt, a grandson of Theodore Roosevelt.

Once the U.S. had installed the Shah to run Iran, and it seemed this oil-rich country was safely back under the thumb of U.S. corporations, Kermit Roosevelt became an executive of Gulf Oil.

But the triumph of the oil billionaires was not permanent. By 1979, the Shah was overthrown in a revolution that once again nationalized Iran’s oil and toppled

the monarchy. That’s why today the U.S. is threatening another war against Iran.

‘System change, not climate change!’

The oil billionaires who have toppled governments abroad while dominating U.S. politics at home are not ready to allow a little thing like global warming and climate change interfere with their profits. They are driven by the insatiable need of capitalism to produce profits now, not some time down the road.

That is why the fervent pleas of the climate movement get only a mournful “What a shame” response while business goes on as usual. Even when water rises around their ocean-front estates and their ski chalets have to manufacture snow, the super-rich ruling class have bigger worries: What’s going to happen to their investments?

To really fight for and win a sustainable future, we have to understand who the real enemies are. And many, many people in the environmental movement do understand. The growing popularity of the slogan “System change, not climate change” is a testament to this awareness.

The enemies of our movement are the class of billionaires who have profited off our labor while powering their economy with the fossil fuels they have appropriated. Liberating the working class is a precondition to liberating the planet. □

As oil companies destroy Houston

Community challenges Valero

By Mirinda Crissman
Houston

In Houston, a city choked by oil refineries and regulatory capture, people are fighting back against one of the largest contributors to the climate crisis. Regulatory capture is when a regulatory agency, founded to advance the public interest, instead promotes the commercial or political aims of the industry it is supposed to regulate.

This struggle has many obstacles. Oil corporations have stacked the bureaucratic deck in regulatory bodies like the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. When companies violate laws, putting the public in harm’s way, the worst they face is a fine from the TCEQ—and that happens less than 10 percent of the time.

Not only are multibillion-dollar oil companies causing serious health issues and even premature death for people living near their plants, they now contribute to the substantial increase in the number and strength of hurricanes that have destroyed cities and displaced many.

Houston is particularly positioned in this struggle. The largest city in the U.S. by area, around 640 square miles; it is the fourth largest U.S. city by population. Houston is connected by massive and ever-expanding highway systems due to a rapidly increasing driving population in a city with meager public transportation.

Houston’s latest highway expansion will increase the number of already hundreds of thousands of cars on the road, causing more air pollution. Pollution has been shown to affect primarily working-class communities of color,

while highways have destroyed homes and schools and displaced people in historic Black freedmen’s towns like Independence Heights.

Pollutants flood oppressed communities

The Houston Chronicle reported Oct. 24 that pollution after Tropical Depression Imelda, which brought 40 inches of rain in 72 hours, was particularly gnarly, although after any flood the petrochemical plants pollute with little to no consequence. “Initially, about a dozen facilities reported unauthorized releases from Sept. 18 through 21, triggered by electrical outages, the failure of floating roof tanks and equipment malfunctions caused by flooding from the storm. ... Together, these companies concentrated in Harris, Jefferson and Brazoria counties reported releasing toxins, including cancer-causing 1,3 Butadiene, benzene and ethylene oxide.”

These chemicals are not safe for humans at any levels, but the companies have yet to provide any response to the people affected by them.

Oil executives and shareholders reside in Houston’s west and north sides. Most of the refineries are in the east end of Harris County, near the Houston Ship Channel. According to the Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services, the community directly in harm’s way includes “a dense and significant population of people of color, particularly Latinx, and low-income residents, as well as large numbers of community members who face increased vulnerability to health effects from air pollution due to their young or old age.

Community confronts Valero

On Oct. 8, the TCEQ held a public hearing about Valero’s operating permit renewal number 1381, which would allow the continued release of highly toxic hydrogen cyanide at Valero Refining-Texas, L.P. in Houston’s Manchester community. The hearing was at the community center across the street from the plant.

One of the first to speak during the question and answer session, Manchester resident Armando Hernandez asked the panel of Valero and TCEQ representatives why his brother, father and friends have all gotten sick and died. He stated that Manchester residents were people, “not laboratory rats.” The panel and room were silent after his plea for help.

A teacher at nearby Furr High School, Sandra Palacios, brought dozens of her students and all their research with them to confront the panel and hold them accountable. Palacios pointed out that the permit application was incomplete—and that high school researchers are held to a higher standard than Valero. She also mentioned that the bilingual outreach for the public hearing consisted of a tiny ad in the local Spanish newspaper with an incorrect date.

Palacios’ students followed their teacher’s lead, catching Valero representatives in at least one lie over a mistake in their paper: Valero’s lead community relations specialist Michael Walter and Valero attorney Arnoldo Medina contradicted one another. A senior student, identified as Ms. Cabrera, called out Valero for not using its \$93.9 billion in annual profits to have accurate frontline detectors and



Austin, Texas, protest, 2011. WW PHOTO

better means of rapidly communicating with the majority Latinx community in case of emission events.

Cabrera listed the harmful and fatal effects of multiple chemicals Valero’s plant releases regularly and warned that this was just the beginning of her and her community’s fight against both Valero and the TCEQ. She saw clearly that this struggle is not a contained one, as “air spreads out” and affects everyone—although locals feel it most acutely.

Not only do oil corporations like Valero, Exxon, Shell and many others owe reparations to the Houston residents they are poisoning and lying to, they owe reparations to climate refugees displaced by a climate crisis that is only heating up. These egregious crimes against humanity are steeped in oil and blood.

Also heating up is the anger of oppressed peoples, who know what they are facing is unjust and fatal. But the struggle to do more than survive is a powerful one, generating the movement for a new future free from fossil fuel production. □

Protests across the U.S. tell G

By Workers World Staff

Demonstrations targeting Greyhound for its collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement took place in a national day of action in cities across the U.S. on Oct. 25. The coordinated actions were in response to a call from a coalition of organizations, including Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere (FIRE), Laundry Workers Center, Street Vendors Project and People’s Power Assemblies/ NYC. The coalition has been organizing for months to challenge Greyhound.

Every day in cities from coast to coast, ICE, the Department of Homeland Security and Customs and Border Patrol agents freely board buses with Greyhound’s permission and attempt to identify and detain migrants. While Greyhound is not required to allow these agents onto its buses, the company has done so voluntarily.

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1700, the union that represents Greyhound drivers, mechanics and terminal workers, has courageously spoken

out to condemn the company’s complicity in the Trump administration’s racist war against im/migrants.

In a statement issued Oct. 19, Local 1700 President Karen Miller wrote: “With greater frequency over the past two years, Border Patrol agents across the country have been boarding our buses and asking our passengers, especially customers of color, to show their papers. Passengers who are unable to provide documentation showing that they are authorized to be in the United States are then taken off the bus and processed for possible deportation.”

Buses are for transportation, not deportation!

In **New York City**, activists from FIRE, the Laundry Workers Center, PPA/ NYC, the Ministry of Solidarity with the Peoples at Holyrood Episcopal Church/ Iglesia Santa Cruz, Street Vendors Project, Workers World Party, the Internationalist Group and numerous migrant communities rallied at the George Washington Bridge Bus Station. They demanded an

end to ICE and Border Patrol searches on Greyhound buses and for the closure of migrant detention camps.

A militant rally in front of the station featured speakers from Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, India and Mexico. The speaker from the Laundry Workers Center stated that their members are out on the street because they cannot support the separation of families. They demanded immediate closure of the camps. Larry Holmes, a leader of Workers World Party, called for a “people’s impeachment on the street” to tell Greyhound to get fascist ICE off the buses.

The speakers’ energy permeated the crowd. After the rally, the crowd marched inside the station and distributed “Know your rights” information to passengers and drivers preparing to board Greyhound and local buses. Marchers chanted, “Ice off the bus! ICE out of NY!” These words resonated throughout the route of march, especially when people passed an incoming Greyhound bus. People are ready to keep demanding “ICE off the Buses!”

because they believe in the campaign — and that people’s power will win. They are ready for the next action.

The demonstration received overwhelming support from passengers and drivers inside the station, as the demonstrators rallied around the slogan, “Buses are for transportation, not deportation!” There was a great response from the primarily in/migrant community residing around the station in Washington Heights.

International Workers’ Solidarity Network protests

In **Buffalo, N.Y.**, protesters gathered outside the Greyhound station to demand safe travel for refugees and im/migrants and an end to ICE’s collaboration with Greyhound. Many passersby stopped to talk, expressing agreement with protesters and asking how they can help with the campaign. The International Workers’ Solidarity Network/ Buffalo called for the action, which was supported by activists from Queen City Socialists and Industrial Workers of the World.

Children and women lost, people dead in ICE custody

According to a report by the American Civil Liberties Union released Oct. 24, over 5,400 children have been separated from their families by U.S. immigration authorities at the Mexican border since July 2017.

While a federal judge in San Diego on June 26, 2018, ordered that the children be reunited with their families, the ACLU report cites the difficulty of locating the children due to the government’s inadequate tracking system.

Calling the Trump administration policies “shocking ... inhumane and illegal,” ACLU attorney Lee Gelernt said: “Families have suffered tremendously, and some may never recover.” (aclu.org, Oct. 24)

Earlier in October, lawyers from the Refugee and Immigrant Center

for Education and Legal Services, reported that Immigration and Customs Enforcement moved 700 women from a Texas detention center, but did not report their new locations to their attorneys or families. Many of the women had serious and deteriorating health issues. RAICES director Andrea Meza stated, “I’m really fearful that their conditions could worsen. I don’t want them to be another ICE press release about death in detention.” (msn.com, Oct. 9)

At least seven immigrants have died in ICE detention centers in 2019, and six minor children died in Border Patrol centers because they did not receive proper medical care.

— Report by Betsey Piette



People of Chile rise up

Continued from page 1

Fontaine Talavera added insult to theft: “If you wake up earlier,” he told commuters, “you can have the benefit of the lower fare.”

The people just grew angrier and sided with the students. After a week of battles, Piñera was forced on Oct. 19 to rescind the fare increase.

The Citizen Pulse survey of Activa Research “Crisis in Chile,” carried out Oct. 22-23, revealed the mobilizations have 83 percent popular approval, and 80 percent reject Piñera’s regime.

People now chant, “It’s not 30 pesos, but 30 years,” meaning the period since the end of the Augusto Pinochet military dictatorship. Elected governments were then reintroduced, but they maintained free-market, pro-rich economic policies. While the Pentagon helped train Chile’s military officers, free-market guru Milton Friedman at the University of Chicago trained Chile’s economists to privatize everything and impose austerity to make sure Chile paid its debts to the imperialist banks.

What’s next

Piñera still commands the Army and the police and can order their use against the masses. According to most reports,

there is no single party or organization, or even a coalition, directing the protests, which makes victory difficult. It also makes compromise difficult. The people

are demanding that Piñera’s government resign and that the neoliberal inequalities end.

Chile’s elite have already shown they will resort to the most vicious repressive measures, when their theft of the workers’ labor and their pillage of the country’s natural resources are threatened.

One good sign, still only a small one, is that an ordinary soldier, David Veloso Codocedo, refused orders to go to Santiago to police the Oct. 25 demonstration. It’s a small start, but a start that at least some Chileans are encouraging by defending this soldier at his trial.

The size and energy of the demonstrations in Chile, which have reverberated throughout Latin America, have added a political crisis to the capitalist economic crisis that has begun to spread worldwide. This struggle, which is just beginning, is directed at neoliberalism — that is, the most unfettered, pro-rich capitalism. It will inevitably be directed against capitalism itself to resolve the desperate needs of the poorest workers in Chile. □



Sign in middle reads, ‘Chile is so united that I’m marching with my ex.’ Sign on left reads, ‘I’m her ex’ and the one on the right, ‘I’m her current [partner].’

Greyhound: 'ICE off our buses!'

The International Workers' Solidarity Network/**Philadelphia** held an informational picket line and speakout outside the Greyhound Bus Terminal in Center City. There, they distributed fliers advising bus riders that they had the right to not cooperate with ICE agents. For over an hour demonstrators denounced Greyhound for cooperating with ICE's illegal practice of boarding buses and searching passengers without warrants. Speakers stressed that Greyhound drivers and other workers are not to blame.

Many people coming in and out of the bus station stopped to ask what the protest was about and welcomed an informational flier. Several people stayed to listen to speakers, and some even joined the picket line. One older Black worker took a pile of placards displaying pictures of im/migrants who died in ICE custody to show to a friend in the station. When he returned, he explained that the pictures clarified that this was a matter of life and death. Five hundred fliers were distributed in an hour, and they were well-received. Channel 10 news/Telemundo, a local English/Spanish news station, covered the event.

A modest but strong rally was held at the **Durham, N.C.**, Greyhound station. Participants included members of the Temporary Protected Status Committee, Extinction Rebellion, FIRE and the Durham Workers Assembly. Also joining was Miguel Staten whose nephew,

DeAndre Ballard, was killed by security guards. Duke University students were there. When demonstrators refused to leave for the first hour, Greyhound officials repeatedly sent their goons to chase them out. The activists responded by staying on the sidewalk on Greyhound property for another hour.

An action was held in **Atlanta** at the Greyhound station, a very small facility in a distressed area downtown near the Atlanta Immigration Court and the now-closed Atlanta City Detention Center. As activists distributed a "Know-your-rights" flier, a concerned Greyhound driver asked them what to do if ICE stops her bus. She promised to share the leaflet with other drivers.

Greyhound security officers claimed protesters couldn't picket on the sidewalk because it was company property. They threatened to call the police. The activists responded that they had a right to pass out information about the company's policies and suggested that Greyhound ask the police to bring the city ordinance that gives the company a public sidewalk. The Greyhound cops went back inside, and no city cops arrived at the scene.

Houston FIRE confronts Greyhound

Greyhound was expecting activists as the FIRE (Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere) protest gathered at the downtown **Houston** bus station on Oct. 27. The company's security was

tight, so activists were not able to get inside the building to distribute fliers to travelers. Police were called but left after they realized FIRE was legally protesting, leafleting and using a bullhorn. Every passenger who entered or exited the station heard the message: "Border Patrol off Greyhound Buses Now!" The station's front doors were open, so the chants reverberated inside for all to hear.

Many passengers expressed surprise that Greyhound allowed Border Patrol agents to enter their buses to ask for documents and to arrest passengers who could not quickly prove they were in the U.S. legally. A man who was from Italy was surprised that a company would treat their clients so disrespectfully. An elderly woman told FIRE activists that since Greyhound "doesn't like Hispanics, I'm going across the street to the other bus company." FIRE members vowed to return to the station to continue pressuring Greyhound to provide transportation and not allow deportations from their buses.

In **Oakland, Calif.**, a small but mighty demonstration took place in front of the Greyhound bus station to demand "Get ICE off your buses!" Participants included members of the Task Force on the Americas, FIRE, Alameda County Peace and Freedom Party, East Bay Sanctuary Covenant, Democratic Socialists of America, Jewish Voice for Peace, Workers World Party, and Communist Workers League/Bay Area. Some retired unionists

participated, as did an East Bay Latino poet and activist from Xochipilli, Latino Men's Circle. Greyhound sent security guards to make sure demonstrators were not blocking entrances. They weren't.

The action received a great response from people about to catch a Greyhound bus. Everyone was outraged about what Greyhound is doing. One Oakland resident said he had recently been in El Paso, Texas, where Border Patrol agents stopped the bus he was on and harassed people about their papers. The local Latinx station Telemundo and Fox channel KTVU covered the protest.

Workers World Party staged a demonstration at Pioneer Courthouse Square in **Portland, Ore.**, calling attention to the collaboration between ICE and Greyhound. Participants denounced the racist war on im/migrants and the imperialist-created im/migrant crisis. The protest built on previous actions, including a demonstration at the Portland Greyhound terminal several weeks ago. Activists vow to continue agitating on this issue for as long as needed to combat the ongoing war on migrants. The demonstration was part of the national day of action.

Nathaniel Chase, Siddika Degia, Ellie Dorritie, Judy Greenspan, Joshua Hanks, Dianne Mathiowetz, Betsey Piette, Gloria Rubac and Dante Strobino contributed to this article.



PHOTO: BOBO DIALLO



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN



PHOTO: JOHN RUDOFF

Beyond the Brexit circus

By Manuel Raposo

Raposo is a Portuguese Marxist and analyst. This article was published Oct. 23 on the website jornammudardevida.info. Translation by John Catalinotto.

Party politics in Britain, power struggles between Britain and the European Union, and U.S. pressure from the outside aiming to break up and weaken the EU have all contributed to turning Brexit into a circus. But to stop the analysis there would restrict it to looking at the surface of the matter and reverse cause and effect.

There is a real difficulty in divorcing Britain from the EU without great losses to both sides. Why? Because European capital has merged to such an extent over the last 50-60 years that separating the British economy from the rest of the EU economy leaves a huge hole in the network interconnecting all European capital. Globalization has actually taken place in Europe, and to reverse it is an impossible task. That is the root of the problem that has blocked Brexit.

British big business does not want Brexit, nor does any other big international capitalist enterprise operating in Britain — many of them are already trying to withdraw from the island when faced with the prospect of a break. For obvious reasons the majority of the big bourgeoisie of Britain, therefore, do not want Brexit. This ruling-class attitude is what drives the resistance within the House of Commons, which is called upon to approve the exit agreements. And considering the statements made immediately after the 2016 referendum in the House of Lords, where the cream of the dominant aristocracy-bourgeoisie sits, the bourgeois opposition is even clearer.

Brexit, in fact, expresses the illusion, the utopia, of the petty bourgeoisie and of many impoverished British workers. These sectors think they can rid themselves of the strangling domination of internationalized capital — in order to live in peace with "their" national capital — holding the illusion that they can domesticate it, in both the literal and figurative sense.

It is therefore not Germany or France's

evil machinations, nor the British Parliament's stubbornness, that complicate the Brexit agreement. No, it is the very logic of self-defense for Europeanized capital, merged, without borders, that demands wide room for maneuver and common supranational rules — on top of and at the expense of definitively outdated national interests. Finally, it is the logic of European imperialism which, the more unified it is, the stronger it will feel to compete with the other imperialist powers.

Challenges to revolutionaries

This reality poses new challenges to the revolutionary left and the socialist revolution in Europe, challenges that Brexit's separatism only fogs. European workers must now face capital and a bourgeoisie with a European dimension, with European means of action, united in a common front against labor. Consequently, the class struggle, with all its special national characteristics, must take place today on a European scale, if it wants to attempt what is crucial: the overthrow of capitalism.

The delay in establishing international links between the mass of workers living in different countries (European and global) is preventing it from meeting the challenge. And this delay is also responsible for the nationalist and fascist deviations that many proletarians get pulled into — because they see no other way, because they do not believe in their own strength to confront a unified capital that builds a common entity against them.

The sympathy that some left-wing forces show for Brexit (in Portugal the Communist Party, for example) suffers from the same illusion that led English voters to want to leave the EU: the naive belief that they could thus be rid of the evils of globalized capital and start dealing with "their" capital and "their" bourgeoisie. This illusion will cost the British dearly because of the sharp drop in living standards, already announced, and the anticipated greater dependence on the USA. It is also expensive, politically speaking, for all European workers who believe in the virtues of a return to the past as Brexit claims to be. □

The Venceremos Brigade

50 years of solidarity with Cuba

By Jean Bowdish

The Venceremos Brigade has been sending volunteers annually to revolutionary Cuba since 1969. Brigadistas work alongside the Cuban people to learn about the gains of the Revolution and to challenge the 1963 travel ban prohibiting U.S. citizens from going to that country. This year is the 50th anniversary of the founding of the oldest Cuba solidarity group, which has international participation.

The U.S. government has been actively opposing the Cuban Revolution since 1958 when President Dwight Eisenhower ordered an arms embargo to prevent the overthrow of the hated President Fulgencio Batista regime by Fidel Castro’s 26th of July Movement and allies.

The U.S. has made many failed efforts to crush revolutionary Cuba — the Bay of Pigs attempted invasion in April 1961, the blockade during the 1962 so-called Missile Crisis, and multiple congressional acts to stop trade or shut down support for Cuba.

On Nov. 7, Cuba will again bring a resolution to the United Nations to end the continuing U.S. trade embargo/blockade of the country. Every year since 1992, Cuba has introduced this resolution, and every year the pro-Cuba measure is passed nearly unanimously, with typically only the U.S. and Israel voting no.

Despite the U.S. attacks, the Cuban people and Revolution continue to grow. Facing fuel and food shortages, and lack of building materials, Cuba still finds ways to create more housing, and make sure everyone in the country has food, medical care, education and access to transportation. In addition to expanding

efforts for alternate sources of energy, Cuba has developed model programs for evacuation, safety and support in the face of hurricanes.

Venceremos Brigade 2019

The Venceremos Brigade was created during the Revolution’s tenth year to support Fidel’s call for a 10-million-ton sugar cane harvest. The harvest was planned to counteract the U.S.-imposed blockade after the Missile Crisis.

Over 200 U.S. youth went to Cuba on the first brigade. Since then over 10,000 people have participated in the VB, working primarily in agriculture and construction.

On this year’s VB50 trip, 155 people came to see the progress Cuba has made. Sixty of the brigadistas had been on earlier brigades, including three people from the first VB. The remaining 95 brigadistas were primarily youth of color from around the U.S. The length of time each was on the island ranged from five days to three weeks. This writer was one of the brigade participants.

The Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) organized an extensive program of work, study and travel for the brigadistas. The first 10 days were based at the International Camp Julio Antonio Mella. Though this trip emphasized developments in Cuba, brigadistas also did work like cleaning the camp, improving the grounds and picking beans.

At the Artemisa Martyrs Memorial, we heard from a panel of combatants who included Victor Dreke, who fought alongside Che Guevara in the campaign against Batista. The Committee for the Defense of the Revolution in Caimito hosted the brigadistas for a night of community



WW PHOTO: BILL SACKS

Cuban children at the “Moncada” school or Escola City on July 26.

performances that included much dancing and singing.

Throughout these days there were many presentations/discussions covering Cuban life, from the electoral process to race relations to LGBTQ progress and challenges, from women’s roles to trade unions and education. There were opportunities to travel to Che’s memorial in Villa Clara, Las Terrazas biosphere reserve in Artemisa Province, the town of Viñales in Pinar Del Río province or Varadero beach on the Hicacos Peninsula.

Brigadistas could also choose to visit CNEURO (Center of Neurosciences), founded in 1969 as one of the first groups in the world to use informatics for analysis of the brain’s electrical activity; LABIOFAM (Laboratorios Biologicos Farmaceuticos), recognized internationally for its work on veterinary vaccines; or CIGB (Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology), a leader in Cuba’s biopharmaceutical industry.

These trips gave brigadistas the opportunity to explore the many advances Cuba has made despite attempts by the U.S.

government to undermine the country at every level.

For the official celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Brigade, ICAP hosted the VB50 in their garden courtyard in Havana. The president of ICAP, Fernando González Lloret, acknowledged the steadfast solidarity shown by the VB, saying: “Cuba is not, and will never be, alone.” González Lloret was one of the Cuban Five unjustly imprisoned in the U.S. for nearly 16 years on phony espionage charges.

Learning the history of revolution

After the initial 10 days, some brigadistas departed, with the remaining participants traveling to different destinations in the eastern part of the country. Some went to Camagüey, Bayamo and Céspedes Square to learn the history of the country’s liberation from Spanish colonialism. Others travelled to Los Cayuelos where the Granma yacht landed the first, small group of fighters for the Revolution in 1956; and to Fidel’s mountain combat headquarters at La Plata in the Sierra Maestras. The final group went on to Santiago de Cuba to visit the Moncada Barracks where revolutionaries stormed Batista’s troops on July 26, 1953; they also visited other historic sites, including Fidel’s grave and Guantánamo — which is much more than a small U.S.-occupied territory used as a prison.

Workers World Party has supported the Cuban Revolution since its beginning. This year five WWP members went on Venceremos Brigade 50, including two who were on their second and third brigades.

Bowdish was a WWP member of the VB50 delegation.

Spain Communist groups defend imprisoned Catalan leaders

Below is a joint declaration in response to the sentences of 9-to-13 years each issued following the “trial” of nine Catalan political leaders and the massive protest in Catalonia on Oct. 18, endorsed by four communist groups that organize throughout the multinational Spanish state. Although pro-capitalist parties lead the Catalan movement, these communist organizations nevertheless defend the Catalan people’s right to self-determination, explaining that only by defending this democratic right can they build a movement uniting the working class from all the different peoples ruled by the central Spanish government. The groups — Communist Initiative, the Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain, Red Network and Proletarian Union — endorsed the call, which was published Oct. 24 on redroja.net. Translation by John Catalinotto.

The verdict of the “procés” [trial of Catalonia’s political pro-independence leaders], as well as the repressive actions before and after it, demonstrate that these actions are the reflexive response of the [Spanish] State to any organized questioning of the current bourgeois order in Spain.

The communist organizations adhering to this manifesto declare our solidarity with those in Catalonia, who, realizing the impossibility of gaining by legal means their legitimate aspirations to self-determination, organized the referendum [October 2017] that gave rise to this ignominious sentence. This people, that has sustained the organization and mobilizations during these years of harsh repression, today manifests its absolute rejection of a federal political oppression that was reactivated

with the sentence of the Constitutional Court against the reform of the Statute in 2010. The Catalan people can count upon our full solidarity and support, because they defend not only their own democratic rights; through their struggle, they are at the same time defending the freedoms and rights of the popular classes and of all the peoples of the Spanish State.

This harsh sentence shows the exhaustion of the current project of domination by consensus between the different parties that emerged from the regime of 1978. The current economic crisis on the one hand increases the intrinsic need for the accumulation of big capital, forcing more and more the imposition of an increasingly reactionary state; this is shown by the gag rule, trials such as that of Alsasua [2016 conviction of and long sentences given to eight Basque youth in charges stemming from a bar fight involving off-duty Civil Guard officers], media censorship, etc. On the other hand, it drives the Catalan bourgeoisie to impose its own political agenda. The tendency toward reactionary political measures under imperialism leads to the denial of democracy and, with it, denial of the right to self-determination.

The working class and especially communist organizations would commit a grave error if we were to think that this matter did not affect us. Today the State directs this sentence against [Catalan] independence leaders; tomorrow that same State will try to crush any kind of response organized by the working class and popular sectors against cuts in salaries, rights and freedoms, such as those that the next government — led in all probability by the [Socialists] PSOE — will bring us.

Making it known that our objective is to attain socialism through the revolutionary struggle of the working class, and because we are clear that “democracy” does not abolish class oppression, we affirm that the solidarity and united action of the workers of the different nations cannot be achieved without recognizing the right of self-determination of the peoples as a basic democratic principle, nor can socialism be achieved without the education of the working masses in the struggle for democratic rights.

With this sentencing, which condemns [the nine] leaders of a democratic and legitimate process to [a total of] 100 years in prison for the efforts to achieve a right recognized by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms of the United Nations, that of self-determination, the Spanish State demonstrates the impossibility of achieving self-determination through any legal means under this regime.

Therefore, it is essential that the movement of students, workers, men and women of all ages, which these days is being expressed with energy and vigor, be transformed into disciplined organization, united in principles and political line, to achieve a certain victory against bourgeois governments and enemies of both the Spanish people and the Catalan people. The General Strike on Oct. 18 was the first step.

The Marxist-Leninist communist organizations that subscribe to this Communiqué also aspire to this step, and we will work to make it possible for all the trade

union centers to jointly call a general strike throughout the whole Spanish State, demanding amnesty for all political prisoners and defense of democratic rights.

**They came, by Martin Niemöller
[German anti-Nazi pastor]**

*First they came for the Communists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Communist*

*Then they came for the Socialists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Socialist*

*Then they came for the trade unionists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a trade unionist*

*Then they came for the Jews
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew*

*Then they came for me
And there was no one left
To speak out for me*

For the right to self-determination of peoples!

Immediate freedom for political prisoners!

For the socialist republic! □

Iniciativa Comunista - Partido Comunista de los Pueblos de España - Red Roja - Unión Proletaria



The four groups endorsing the call defending Catalan leaders.

Pentagon's plans to stay in Syria and Iraq are in disarray

By Sara Flounders

The U.S. Department of “Defense” plans to keep its troops in Syria. This may come as a surprise to those who assumed that dumping support for the Kurdish militias meant the Pentagon finally intended to withdraw.

The sudden convenient execution of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi by U.S. forces on Oct. 27 rips apart the justification that U.S. troops are needed to combat reactionary Islamic State group (IS) forces. Despite years of bombing Syria, the U.S. never attacked the thousands of tankers stealing Syria's oil while its northern oil fields were under IS control.

The Pentagon is “considering how we might reposition forces in the area in order to make sure that we secure the oil fields,” U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper told a meeting of NATO defense ministers on Oct. 25. (defenseone.com, Oct. 25) This serious escalation involves “half of an Army armored brigade combat team battalion that includes as many as 30 Abrams tanks,” along with roughly 500 U.S. troops, and “would include some mechanized units.”

Mechanized forces, including tanks that are not presently in Syria, will require hundreds of U.S. troops to deploy, supply and protect the projected tanks and armored units.

While cynically claiming to withdraw from endless U.S. wars, President Trump tweeted: “We’ve secured the oil and, therefore, a small number of U.S. troops will remain in the area. Where they have the oil. And we’re going to be protecting it, and we’ll be deciding what we’re going to do with it in the future.” (time.com, Oct. 26)

That arrogant statement shows that the flagrant piracy of Syria's resources is more open than ever before.



U.S. troops pelted with rocks, rotten fruit near Syria-Turkey border.

PHOTO: THE SUN

So what is actually on the drawing boards of military strategists is how and where to reposition troops and prepare for another escalation.

All U.S. efforts failed

However, U.S. efforts to dismember Syria are increasingly in disarray. Attempts to overturn the elected Assad government have failed. The brutal tactics included 16 years of sanctions, eight years of financing hundreds of thousands of mercenary forces, and finally five years of bombing and direct military intervention.

Every tactic was used to inflame national, ethnic and religious division. U.S. bombers targeted schools, hospitals, bridges and industrial centers.

But Syria was able to maintain military resistance and national unity while gaining international assistance. U.S. forces are no longer able to hold the one-third of Syria in the oil-rich north, nor the corridor that included a substantial U.S. military presence in Iraqi Kurdistan, allied with Kurdish militia units.

The former head of the U.S. Central Command, retired Gen. Joseph Votel, admitted that framing the issue as defending the oil fields from IS is “largely

unfounded.”

“We looked at the oil fields in the context of their strategic value,” he said, adding they would be “a good negotiating leverage point” for eventual discussions between the government in Damascus and the Kurdish militia. (New York Times, Oct. 25)

Iraq refuses more U.S. troops

The Iraqi military publicly contradicted Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who had said all U.S. troops leaving Syria would go to western Iraq and would continue to conduct operations from there.

The Iraqis issued a statement that U.S. troops did not have permission to stay in Iraq. Withdrawing U.S. troops were publicly pelted with rocks and potatoes in both Qamishli, Syria, and Irbil, Iraq. (CBS News, Oct. 22)

The Pentagon had been forced to pull out of Iraq in 2011 after overwhelming popular resistance to the more than 150,000 U.S. occupation forces. Even the Iraqi Parliament, whose members had been vetted and approved by U.S. occupation forces, refused to grant a Status of Forces agreement to the U.S. military.

In 2014, supposedly to protect Iraq from the sudden emergence of IS, U.S.

troops had gone back into the Kurdish region of Northern Iraq. Now calls are increasing for their withdrawal.

Trump's tweets back in February, when he said that U.S. troops would stay in Iraq as a base for operating in Syria and for monitoring Iran, created a furor among all Iraqi political currents.

U.S. imperialism has been in Iraq for more than three decades, since the Iran/Iraq War. It has tried in every way to envenom antagonisms between Arab and Kurdish national groups and Sunni and Shia religious groups.

The Pentagon presently has more than 5,000 military personnel and thousands of contractors in Iraq. In addition, there are hundreds of projects run by nongovernmental and civil society organizations funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development programs, the National Endowment for Democracy and other U.S. government and corporate entities, along with U.N. agencies. All these programs supposedly provide humanitarian relief from years of U.S. occupation. But they really keep Iraq divided and dependent.

In past years U.S. officials declared they were involved in Syria and Iraq to defend democracy, or to defend one national grouping against another, or to combat the threat of IS terror.

U.S. strategists pulled into their imperialist coalitions members of the European Union, Britain, the Gulf monarchies, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Jordan and Turkey. All that has collapsed.

Whether this latest scheme will succeed any more than the past 16 years of destructive wars remains to be seen. But it will be challenged on every front by forces that are politically sophisticated and wise to U.S. imperialist plans. It is essential to stay focused on the demand “U.S. out of Syria and Iraq!” □

Erdogan wants nuclear weapons

By Manlio Dinucci

Published Oct. 21 in the Italian newspaper, Il Manifesto. Translation by John Catalinotto.

“Some countries have nuclear missiles, but the West insists that we cannot have them. This is unacceptable.” This statement by President Erdogan reveals that the current crisis goes beyond that which began with the Turkish offensive in Syria.

In Turkey, during the Cold War, the United States deployed nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union. In 1962, in agreements with the USSR to resolve the Cuban missile crisis, U.S. President John Kennedy promised to remove these weapons from Turkey, but this was not done.

After the end of the Cold War, about 50 U.S. B61 nuclear bombs — the same kind as those deployed in northern Italy at Aviano and Ghedi — directed mainly against Russia, remained in Turkey, at the Incirlik air base. With that deployment, both the United States and Turkey violated the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Turkish pilots, within the framework of NATO, are trained — like the Italian pilots stationed at the Ghedi base — to attack with B61 nuclear bombs under U.S. command. The Pentagon plans to soon replace the B61s also in Turkey — as in Italy and other European countries — with the new B61-12 nuclear bombs, also directed mainly against Russia.

In the meantime, however, following the Turkish purchase of Russian anti-aircraft missiles S-400, the United States removed Turkey from the list of places where it will deploy F-35s, which are the main carriers of B61-12 bombs. Turkey was supposed to have purchased 100 F-35 aircraft, of which it was a co-producer. “The F-35,” declared a White House spokesperson, “cannot coexist with the anti-aircraft system S-400, which can be used to learn the capabilities of the fighter.” (whitehouse.gov, July 17)

That is, Russia could use what it learns through the S-400 anti-aircraft system to strengthen its defenses against the F-35. By supplying Ankara with S-400 anti-aircraft missiles, Moscow has at least for the

meantime managed to prevent the U.S. from deploying 100 F-35s on Turkish territory, where they would be ready to attack [Russia] with new U.S. B61-12 nuclear bombs.

At this point, it seems probable that, among the options considered in Washington, there is that of transferring U.S. nuclear weapons now in Turkey to another country deemed more reliable. According to the authoritative Bulletin of Atomic Scientists (USA, Oct. 17), “the Aviano air base may be the best European option from a political point of view, but it probably does not have enough space to receive all of Incirlik's nuclear weapons.” Space could, however, be provided, given that renovation work has already begun in Aviano to accommodate B61-12 nuclear bombs.

Against this background there is Erdogan's declaration that, using the threatening presence of the Israeli nuclear arsenal as his excuse, Turkey intends to have its own nuclear weapons.

It's no easy project, but doable. Turkey has advanced military technologies,

supplied in particular by Italian companies, especially Leonardo [aircraft, helicopter, military industry]. It has uranium deposits. It has experience in the field of research reactors, supplied in particular by the United States.

Turkey has started the construction of its own nuclear electronics industry, purchasing some reactors from Russia, Japan, France and China. According to some sources, Turkey could have already procured, on the “illegal nuclear market,” centrifuges for uranium enrichment. Erdogan's announcement that Turkey wants to become a nuclear power, interpreted by some as a bluff to give his regime more weight in NATO, should not be underestimated.

Erdogan's announcement uncovers what is generally hidden in the media debate: that is, that in the turbulent situation caused by aggressive war policies, the possession of nuclear weapons plays an increasingly important role. It prompts those who do not already possess nuclear weapons to obtain them. □

No easy victories

The African Marxist and liberation leader of Guinea-Bissau, Amílcar Cabral, once said, most famously, “Tell no lies. ... Claim no easy victories.”

Today’s revolutionary activists looking at Latin America and the Caribbean should keep that phrase in mind as they review the month of October 2019. Massive popular struggles set back rightist regimes. Electoral advances turned into what are at least partial or temporary wins for the working class and poor of the hemisphere. Some enormous mass struggles are filled with potential. Still, all these are just the opening battles in a long period of struggle.

The overall picture is this: The capitalist/imperialist system dominates the world. This system has been in crisis, in recession, at least since 2008. The recession has reduced the need for raw materials, which reduces the prices of exports from many Latin American countries. This in turn reduces these countries’ ability to pay interest on their loans from imperialist banks that they need to keep social programs functional.

Imperialist financial entities like the International Monetary Fund want no part of social programs. They demand instead that governments impose austerity, privatizations, anti-popular measures. Where center-left governments resist or delay squeezing the masses, the imperialists and local oligarchs have deposed them, using elections, the courts and even coups: in Paraguay, Honduras, most recently in Ecuador and Brazil and by elections in Chile and Argentina. And they keep trying to overthrow the governments in Nicaragua and Venezuela.

In the past few weeks the laboring masses have said: “No more!” In Haiti, a historic leader in the struggle for emancipation in this hemisphere, the people are demanding the government resign. In Ecuador, a national general strike forced a president — who betrayed his own party along with the people — to pull back on an anti-popular decree. In Chile, massive demonstrations defied police and army terror and forced the president to retreat. All these struggles are still alive and

undecided. (They are covered in other articles in this issue of Workers World.)

In Bolivia, the popular President Evo Morales was reelected on Oct. 20, getting just the 10 percent margin necessary to win the first round of the contest. Morales faces a possible coup in the coming days by the country’s oligarchs and is mobilizing the masses who support him to stop the coup. Just as with President Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela, U.S. imperialism sees Morales as an enemy, and will try to undermine his government.

Argentina’s Oct. 27 election deposed the incumbent neoliberal enemy of the people, Mauricio Macri, in the first round, by 48 percent to 40 percent. This puts back into office the political forces continuing the center-left government that was in before Macri’s 2015 win, including Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, this time as vice president.

The reaction of many in Argentina’s communist left has been more or less like this: “Great, let’s celebrate Sunday night and start mobilizing the masses on

Monday morning to battle the IMF and the Argentine capitalists.” The whirlwind of mass struggle from Chile is contagious.

There is a reason for the reluctance of the Argentine communists to “claim an easy victory.” The people of Latin America and the Caribbean are fed up with unfettered neoliberalism and the outrageous inequalities it generates. The problem is that within the framework of capitalism, no one can resolve the problems imposed on these countries by world imperialism.

We must defend the rights of the people of this hemisphere to select their own governments, and help them to the extent that we can to get the imperialist boot off their necks.

We must also realize that as long as capitalists control the banks, the media and, most importantly, the repressive state apparatuses in these countries, the crisis imposed by world imperialism is inescapable. Neither the local capitalists, nor their backers in Washington, Brussels and Tokyo, will just hand over the power. This is just the beginning of a long class war. □

Algeria

Masses in streets still demand justice

By G. Dunkel

On a cold and rainy Oct. 25 in much of Algeria, tens of thousands of people came out for the 36th successive Friday demonstration. They demanded the government free all protesters the cops had arrested in previous demonstrations, plus free and fair elections, and that interim President Abdelkader Bensalah, his prime minister Nouredine Bedoui and all other corrupt holdovers from the previous regime leave office.

Their chants were militant and angry — “Thieves, sell-outs, robbers” were the most popular invectives — and “System must go.”

The marchers had held protests through the Algerian summer’s ferocious heat, when temperatures often topped 100°F. Rain and chill were not going to stop them.

Many protesters told the press that they foresee a massive demonstration in Algiers on Nov. 1, which is the 65th anniversary of the start of Algeria’s War of Independence from French colonialism.

The Oct. 26 issue of El Watan newspaper quotes



Pro-democracy protest.

a marcher in Constantine: “We will have hundreds of thousands in Algiers on Nov. 1 to worthily celebrate the 65th anniversary of our Revolution and to demand once again the departure of the system, of Bensalah, of Gaïd Salah [the head of the army], of Bedoui and all their ilk. We will say we have had enough of the authority of

generals. It is time for Algerians to have a civil state, to live in a free and democratic republic.”

The army plans elections on Dec. 12. No one from the Hirak, as the opposition movement calls itself, has filed as a candidate. The Friday protests started when then President Abdelaziz Bouteflika declared he would run for a fifth term, and they forced him out of office on April 2. The interim president canceled elections that were set for July when nobody signed up to run.

This time the army, which is running the government, scared up enough candidates, but they were all officials or retirees of the thoroughly corrupt and despised former regime. Rigged elections were the hallmark of Bouteflika and his predecessors.

Along with Algiers, major demonstrations were also held in Oran, Constantine, Annaba, Tlemcen, Mostaganem, Jijel, Chlef, Blida, Aïn Defla, Dellys, Bouira, Tizi Ouzou, Bejaia, Biskra, Mascara, Sidi Bel Abbès, Mila, Tipaza, Oum El Bouaghi, El Tarf, Guelma, Skikda, El Oued and Sétif — those are almost all the main cities in Algeria. □

Haitian masses say

No dialogue, no delay, President Moïse must leave

By G. Dunkel

Since the middle of September, the Haitian masses have made one point over and over again: President Jovenel Moïse must leave — and take all his hangers-on and all his cronies in the Parti Haïtien Tèt Kale (Haitian Party of Baldheads) with him.

The masses in Port-au-Prince, and the other major cities in Haiti like Gonaïves, Cap-Haïtien and Jeremie, are living on the edge of famine, as the protests have disrupted all kinds of deliveries, including food. Many people aren’t working. Water and health care are scarce. Most schools have either never opened after the summer break or closed since.

The United States Embassy, which had a big hand in making Moïse president after receiving only 18 percent of the vote, is proclaiming its support of “dialogue” or “establishing a schedule for an orderly transition.”

But students and teachers demonstrating Oct. 25 emphatically answered the U.S., according to the online news service AlterPresse. Georges Wilbert Franck, head of a student and teachers union, said: “We don’t have to



Translation of Kreyol banner: ‘Stuff has to be changed in the country!’

take the orders of the American embassy.” A sign at the demonstration, composed primarily of youth, read: “The voice of the people is the voice of liberty and welfare.”

Haïti Liberté’s lead article from its Oct. 23-29 edition comments on the strength of the “daily rain of demonstrations,” long and massive, through the streets of Port-au-Prince and other Haitian cities. Over and over again, the Haitian masses make the demand that, at a

minimum, the president must leave.

The arrests of protesters, and the repression and murder that the cops and the “bald-headed” militias have used — between 10 and 30 people have been shot dead — have not driven people from the streets.

On Oct. 13, and again on Oct. 20, huge marches were called by musicians and artists to demand Moïse’s departure. Protestant churches also called their followers out on Oct. 20 and Petionville, a big suburb of Port-au-Prince, was overstuffed with protesters.

On Oct. 21, it was the turn of students, their parents and teachers to march, demanding that Moïse resign and schools reopen. On Oct. 22 the Catholic hierarchy, which traditionally has tried to remain apolitical, called its followers

out in another massive protest.

There are more national protests scheduled for the week beginning Oct. 28. A number of coordinating committees have sprung up, with different constituencies and different scenarios for the coming transition.

But one thing is clear. The people have seized on one demand with precise clarity: Moïse must leave. □

COMMENTARY

Ecuador's uprising, visible and invisible

By Michael Bento
Quito, Ecuador

The writer is of African descent from the United States, currently living in Quito.

For more than 10 days at the beginning of October, Ecuadorians across the nation revolted against President Lenín Moreno's austerity Decree 883 announced to satisfy part of the U.S.-backed, U.S.-based International Monetary Fund's loan conditions.

As part of a \$4.5 billion loan agreement with the IMF, the Moreno administration agreed to slash government spending, reduce labor protections, and in essence, subject the Ecuadorian people to yet another failed neoliberal experiment. Under Moreno's tenure the government has fired thousands of public sector employees and reduced social spending, leading to over 400,000 unemployed, and reducing the number of people making a living wage to under 40 percent.

The latest round of austerity in the 883 decree, which included elimination of the fuel subsidy, proved to be the last straw for the Ecuadorians.

To give a perspective of how much misery this decree was set to inflict, imagine if the price of a gallon of gas in the U.S. rose from \$3 to over \$5 overnight. In Ecuador, not only the cost of travel but of every commodity transported to market began to rise in the days following the decree. Since just over a third of the population here earns a living wage, for a broad swath of the people the decree meant starvation.

President Moreno announced the decree on Monday, Oct. 1, and the transit workers union called a strike the next day. Taxis and buses stopped and workers barricaded the main roads leading in and out of major cities throughout the country, including the capital Quito. That evening black blocks and groups of protesters, composed mainly of students, began trying to take spaces throughout the city.

The police began to crack down heavily with copious bombardments of tear gas and flashbang grenades. When the transit union called off the strike that Friday, Oct. 4, the protests continued and the Indigenous movement began to mobilize.

Indigenous groups arrive in Quito

Indigenous communities had been in the streets since the proclamation of the decree. When the president declared a state of exception, essentially declaring martial law, Indigenous communities declared their own state of exception, barring police and the military from entering their territories and reinstating their traditional systems of justice. By Oct. 4, tens of thousands of Indigenous people were on the march from their rural territories to major cities across the country, with the bulk of people converging on Quito.

When the first groups began to arrive on Monday, Oct. 7, the government evacuated the capital for Guayaquil near the country's Pacific Coast.

Indigenous women marched hundreds of miles from the valleys to the capital of Quito, over 9,000 feet above sea level in



PHOTO: ECUADOR TODAY

Tens of thousands of Ecuadorians protest pro-IMF policies of Moreno in Quito, Oct. 9.

the middle of the Andes, with their children strapped to their backs, along with all their essential belongings. The network of solidarity that sustained the over 10,000 Indigenous people arriving in Quito was marvelous. Universities, which had suspended classes, repurposed themselves as soup kitchens, clinics and shelters, using whatever vacant property they had to house people. During the day volunteers cooked, cleaned dishes and sorted through the flood of donations of clothes, toiletries and necessities nonstop.

The siege of Parque Arbolito

Parque Arbolito, on the edge of Quito's city center and blocks away from the National Assembly, was turned into a forward operating base for the movement, with the park's cultural center, which served as a shelter during the night, being converted into the Indigenous assembly during the day. Speeches were made to rally groups before a march, and Indigenous leaders publicly debated strategy and tactics while issuing accords as to the next steps.

The park has a long history of Indigenous struggle, and in the previous revolts that ousted three presidents prior to Rafael Correa, it was a safe zone where it was understood that police would not attack. For this reason many of the elderly and children, including infants, took up shelter there.

On the night of Oct. 9, under orders from President Moreno, Minister of Government María Paula Romo and Minister of Defense, alleged torturer and School of the Americas alumnus, Oswaldo Jarrín, the police brutally attacked Parque Arbolito with officers on horseback and motorcycles charging through camps and crowds. Still other officers launched tear gas and flashbang grenades from armored personnel carriers.

When people fled, carrying their babies and shepherding their older children to the nearby Catholic university which had opened its doors as a shelter, the police continued to chase them. Police fired tear gas over the walls of the university and into buildings housing women and children who had just been assaulted at Parque Arbolito. According to social media reports, at least one infant died of asphyxiation.

The assault continued throughout the night, as bombs could be heard exploding until sunrise. At one point early that

morning Indigenous groups were able to retake the cultural center at Arbolito and detained six police officers. They then negotiated a ceasefire with the government mediated by the U.N.

The Indigenous groups returned the officers to the assembly after making them carry the caskets of two Indigenous youth. One of these youths was a leader from the Andean region who, according to his family, had been trampled to death by police horses. News of the capture reinvigorated the movement throughout the day and people were able to rest that night, free from attacks by police.

The ceasefire was a turning point for the movement, and though the police continued their attacks on Arbolito in subsequent nights, the victory had strengthened the Indigenous movement's resolve and prepared it for the depraved viciousness of the Moreno government in its attempts to crush the uprising. However, the movement needed to expand in order to survive the onslaught.

The feminist movement, the strongest social movement in Ecuador aside from Indigenous peoples, held a solidarity march Oct. 11, which wound through the middle-class neighborhoods surrounding Parque Carolina. Up to that point these areas were not confronted with the uprising in the streets, and in fact had hosted a small rally in support of the government and its plans.

That night entire neighborhoods across the country decided to defy the government's curfew and took to the streets in an enormous show of solidarity with the Indigenous people who had been in the front lines in Quito. The "caserolazo," a traditional form of protest in Latin America where people bang pots and pans in the street, showed the government that the movement was growing to revolutionary proportions. The government entered negotiations with the Indigenous movement and dropped austerity Decree 883 the next day [Sunday, Oct. 13].

The invisible strike

In the official census, only about 7.5 percent of Ecuadorians identify as Black. There are a number of other categories that one can self-identify, which indicate African descent. It appears that only those whose dark complexion prevents them from escaping being identified as "negro" will self-identify as such. Others with lighter complexions will choose

other designations such as "afrodescendiente" (African descendant).

Because of the nature of colorism in Ecuadorian white supremacy, this lighter color also correlates to those who avoid ending up in the prison population and those who don't. "Negros," that is, Blacks, are overrepresented in prison by up to four times, while "afrodescendientes" are actually underrepresented. If the one-drop rule of U.S. white supremacy were applied to Ecuador, Black people would make up about 37 percent of the population.

What this amounts to is an immense invisibilization of Black people. Many media sources rarely report on race except in relation to crime. Similarly, during the revolt, no coverage was given to Black communities in the country that rose up and played a significant role

in pushing the government to retract its austerity package.

Valle Del Chota is one of the largest Black communities in the Andean region. Populated by descendants of African slaves brought by Jesuit traders to work in the church's sugar cane plantations, it is now a vital entry point for commercial goods coming from Colombia, whose major border crossing is just to the north of the valley. When the community barricaded this major transport road during the general strike, it represented a major loss in commercial activity to the government. Yet no major outlets reported any uprising of the Black community there.

Similarly, in Manabí, the southern part of Ecuador's Pacific Black belt, which extends all the way north to Panama, the movement blocked off bridges and roads serving as major choke points to major cities. The local, mainly Black population, maintained the barricades, and yet again, no major news outlets reported the activity.

Just north of Manabí, in Esmeraldas, where major oil refineries are located, social media reports indicated that major roads were also barricaded, representing a blow to the oil revenue of the government.

In another Black invisibilized space, El Inca Prison, in the north of Quito, prisoners also rose up in revolt during the general strike. According to members of the prison abolitionist organization, Mujeres De Frente, three people were killed by security forces putting down the revolt and another three died later of their injuries. This would bring the state's official death toll of 10 up to 16 — if it were ever reported on and accounted for by government officials.

It's true the Indigenous movement was the most visible actor in the "paro," or general strike, and faced the brunt of state repression in Quito. Still, Black communities across the country also rose up and proved that not only were the Black people of Ecuador in revolt, but that they were a powerful and organized force to be reckoned with. Indeed the leaders of the national Indigenous council (CONAIE) recognized this in their negotiations with the government.

Perhaps the next time Ecuador's Black community rises up in revolt, Black leaders will actually be able to take a seat at the negotiating table themselves. □



Santiago, Chile, 25 de octubre.

MUNDO OBRERO
editorial

¡Estados Unidos, OTAN, Turquía fuera de Siria!

Publicado el 17 de octubre in Workers World.

El conflicto dentro de la clase dominante estadounidense sobre la invasión turca del norte de Siria ha creado cierta confusión sobre los eventos allí. El nuevo desarrollo más reciente, una alianza de fuerzas con base kurda con el ejército nacional sirio para defender la frontera del ejército turco, puede aumentar esa confusión. Para aclarar la situación lo mejor posible, necesitamos establecer algunas posiciones básicas y subrayar algunos hechos básicos.

En primer lugar, el imperialismo estadounidense nunca tuvo, nunca ha tenido y nunca tendrá una razón legítima “humanitaria” para estacionar tropas en cualquier lugar de Siria. Washington coloca tropas en áreas para ventaja estratégicas y/o dominación económica. La razón por la que las tropas estadounidenses han estado en Siria y en otras partes de la región es porque los monopolios petroleros estadounidenses controlan y explotan los recursos naturales, principalmente combustibles fósiles, petróleo y gas, para que los propietarios capitalistas de estas compañías puedan enriquecerse.

Durante los últimos ocho años, las armas y la influencia política de los Estados Unidos, y las de otros países de la OTAN, han alimentado una guerra brutal que ha destrozado a Siria, causando la muerte de cientos de miles de sirios. Esta guerra también ha convertido a unos 10 millones de refugiados sirios, muchos



Las tropas estadounidenses abandonan la frontera entre Siria y Turquía. Deberían hacerlo.

dentro de Siria o en países vecinos y algunos en Europa. El objetivo de Estados Unidos era eliminar al gobierno sirio soberano y reemplazarlo con un títere de las potencias imperialistas occidentales.

En Libia, por ejemplo, en el 2011 los imperialistas lograron eliminar un gobierno legítimo y lo reemplazaron con un horror inestable.

Nada bueno ha venido o vendrá de la presencia de las tropas estadounidenses, ni de la dominación política del imperialismo estadounidense. Nadie debería creer que el presidente racista, misógino y xenófobo de EE.UU. se haya convertido de alguna manera en un pacificador. Aparentemente como estrategia electoral, ha ordenado la eliminación de un puñado

de tropas estadounidenses del norte de Siria. Simultáneamente, el Pentágono está enviando 1.800 soldados a la monarquía de Arabia Saudita para defender los campos petroleros y continuar la guerra genocida en Yemen.

Crímenes de guerra de Turquía

En segundo lugar, al enviar tropas y armar grupos títeres en el norte de Siria, el régimen reaccionario del presidente Recep Erdogan en Ankara, Turquía, está cometiendo un crimen de guerra. Esta invasión es una agresión desnuda contra el vecino de Turquía, Siria, el último de muchos crímenes cometidos contra Siria en los últimos ocho años. Esta agresión causará sufrimiento adicional a las

personas del noreste de Siria, que son principalmente kurdas, pero cuya composición refleja los numerosos grupos étnicos y religiosos que habitan en toda Siria.

Erdogan persigue a la propia población kurda de Turquía, que se estima que son de 14 a 20 millones de los 80 millones de habitantes de Turquía. El régimen de Ankara ha estado utilizando su ejército, especialmente en las regiones kurdas, en un intento por aplastar el movimiento del pueblo kurdo. El gobierno de Erdogan persigue a los partidos políticos de oposición y periodistas en toda Turquía, ya que oprime a la clase trabajadora de Turquía.

El hecho de que Erdogan haya tomado algunas medidas en el pasado reciente que lo pusieron en desacuerdo con EE. UU. o la Unión Europea (comprar armas de Rusia, participar en conferencias con Rusia e Irán para resolver la guerra en Siria) no debe inducir a error a nadie a pensar que el presidente turco representa cualquier tendencia progresista en todo el mundo. Los ladrones, incluso aquellos en la misma pandilla, pueden tener una pelea.

En este momento no conocemos los detalles del acuerdo entre los combatientes con base kurda en el norte de Siria y el gobierno sirio legítimo, ni podemos prever cómo se desarrollará. Sin embargo, aplaudimos cualquier alianza que confronte a una potencia hegemónica local como Turquía y, lo que es más importante, excluya a los regímenes imperialistas de Europa y Estados Unidos, que son los principales opresores de la humanidad en todo el mundo. □

No solo una guerra comercial

MUNDO OBRERO
editorial

¿Qué hay realmente detrás de las difíciles negociaciones comerciales entre los Estados Unidos y la China Popular?

¿Es, como ha afirmado la administración, que China no estaba comprando suficientes productos agrícolas estadounidenses? China se ha convertido en un gran mercado para los agricultores del Medio Oeste de EE. UU., que están fuertemente hipotecados y confían en que Beijing compre grandes cantidades de sus semillas de soja y otros cultivos.

“Los envíos de soja cayeron por un precipicio en 2018, pero en 2019 protagonizaron una recuperación sorprendente. En todo caso, las exportaciones de soja a China este año van un poco por delante de su tasa de 2017” (Mother Jones, 27 de agosto). Sin embargo, la administración Trump, ansiosa por las próximas elecciones, ha intentado culpar a China de los problemas de los agricultores.

Los Trumpistas no admiten que gran parte del problema de los agricultores se deba al cambio climático, ya que las

grandes inundaciones de la primavera pasada convirtieron los campos del Medio Oeste en lagos. Pero según la habladuría de Trump, el cambio climático no existe.

Las compras de productos básicos de los Estados Unidos por parte de China se han vuelto tan importantes para la economía de los Estados Unidos que los mercados bursátiles aquí suben y bajan con las noticias de cada día sobre las negociaciones comerciales. Trump lo sabe. Cuando tuitea que las conversaciones están en marcha, los mercados suben. Cuando no sucede, los mercados vuelven a caer.

China no tiene motivos para sabotear su relación comercial con Estados Unidos. ¿Entonces, cuál es el problema?

Nunca mencionado por este gobierno, pero aludido en algunos informes de prensa, es el hecho de que los Trumpistas han estado utilizando las negociaciones comerciales para impulsar una agenda que socavaría el tremendo progreso de China en el desarrollo económico y social. Logró liberar a 850 millones de personas de la pobreza extrema entre 1981 y 2015, según el Banco Mundial.

China no es un país capitalista, aunque permite que exista la propiedad capitalista junto con su economía estatal y

de planificación centralizada. La China popular es el producto de una gran agitación social que duró décadas y logró llevar a los trabajadores y campesinos al poder en 1949. Pero este enorme país sufría de subdesarrollo extremo y pobreza en ese momento. Solo en los últimos años se ha convertido en una potencia económica.

Lo que realmente ha estado sucediendo es que la administración Trump, a través de sus negociaciones con China sobre el comercio, ha estado tratando de obtener compromisos de China para debilitar la propiedad estatal sobre las partes de la economía que han sido la base de su progreso.

Así es como lo expresó el medio de comunicación más informado para la clase dominante imperialista de Estados Unidos: “Trump lanzó la guerra comercial contra China con demandas de reformas estructurales radicales, pero Beijing ha indicado que no está dispuesto a cambiar fundamentalmente la forma en que controla la economía de China”. (New York Times, 10 de octubre)

En otras palabras, los negociadores comerciales de Trump decían que China tenía que poner a prueba su infraestructura económica socializada. Y los chinos dijeron que no.

Washington luego presionó a Beijing al aumentar los aranceles a las importaciones chinas. Esto ha afectado a millones de personas aquí, elevando los precios de una multitud de bienes de consumo importados en los que confiamos.

Por lo tanto, la clase trabajadora de los Estados Unidos se ha visto obligada a pagar la guerra comercial y los esfuerzos de la administración Trump para llevar el cambio de régimen a China.

Al momento de escribir esto el 14 de octubre, el secretario del Tesoro de los Estados Unidos, Steven Mnuchin, dice que se está haciendo un acuerdo. Pero nada ha sido firmado. Y los mercados de valores son cautelosos, dado el historial pasado de falsas promesas de la administración.

Esto podría ser simplemente otra finta de “humo y espejos” por la brutal pandilla en Washington para evitar desencadenar una caída del mercado. Parece que hace mucho tiempo que el capitalismo de EE.UU. se pudre desde adentro, buscando culpar en cualquier parte, excepto en este sistema de multimillonarios salvajemente polarizado versus trabajadores cada vez más precarios. □