

Durham, N.C., campaign

‘Housing, not evictions!’

By Zachary Richardson  
Durham, N.C.

As the rate of evictions in this rapidly gentrifying city reaches a fever pitch, people here have banded together to demand that the Durham Housing Authority stop displacing residents over the winter season and recognize housing as a human right.

According to Legal Aid of North Carolina, DHA’s attempted evictions in 2019 affected a full 40 percent of its residents. The year’s eviction rate wildly outpaced several major neighboring cities, such as Greensboro (5 percent), Raleigh (1.7 percent) and Charlotte (1.2 percent).

The Emergency Committee to Stop DHA Evictions — a broad, diverse coalition of residents and activists — announced the launch of a new campaign on Dec. 20 outside the Housing Authority. The committee presented a petition supporting its demands, including a moratorium on evictions through March 31. Similar moratoriums have been initiated in Richmond, Va., and Oakland, Calif.

“What has happened is that we have been bamboozled; we have been hoodwinked into a situation because of our needs. We are Black people, Hispanic people and poor whites who need housing,” said Rafiq Zaidi, a resident of Durham public housing.

On Nov. 5, city residents voted overwhelmingly for a \$95 million public bond to support affordable housing. Most of that funding will go to DHA, an agency that working-class residents have little trust in and see as ill-suited to handle its

responsibilities toward the people.

DHA director Anthony Scott, present at the press conference, claimed his agency was being subjected to mistargeted ire. According to Indy Week, he said, “There’s no need for a moratorium, because if a resident talks with us [about making pay arrangements], no eviction is filed.” Scott also claimed the number of evictions had decreased, since analysis by Legal Aid found the agency had filed 540 eviction cases in the first six months of 2019.

Scott’s assertion made no sense, countered Durham Workers Assembly organizer Dante Strobino: “People are still being evicted. How can you have a de facto moratorium if people are still being evicted?”

Activist Loan Tran quoted the petition: “Historical trends indicate that the number of evictions increase over the holidays, which puts families and vulnerable individuals in even more precarity.”

In fact, while the number of evictions has gone down since a midsummer high, evictions again began to increase in October and November — at double the rate during the same period in 2018.

The campaign comes at a time when the city of Durham is undergoing massive shifts in racial demographics and wealth concentration, as longtime, less wealthy residents are being pushed out by newer, comparatively monied, and often white, new arrivals.

According to research by The Herald-Sun, “Since 2010, six [Durham] census tracts have seen their median household income levels rise by more than 40 percent.



WW PHOTO

Dec. 20 press conference demands a moratorium on evictions to end massive displacement.

The county’s median household income increased 8.4 percent over the same period. The same is true of median house value, where five census tracts saw median house value rise by more than 25 percent from 2010-2016.” (April 24, 2018)

The \$95 million housing bond is supposed to be used in part to redevelop five much-needed community housing projects in Durham.

Black Youth Project 100, Durham chapter Co-Chair AJ Williams said that DHA needed to show it is capable of meeting community needs in return for that large investment: “We demand that not a dime of the housing bond be released to DHA until

it stops its out-of-control eviction filings.”

The coalition’s petition gathered over 1,000 signatures in a few days, with support from over 20 organizations, including the Durham City Workers Union (UE 150), Durham Workers Assembly, NC Raise Up for \$15, National Domestic Workers — We Dream in Black, Black Youth Project 100 Durham, NC State AFL-CIO, Durham Association of Educators, the Human Relations Commission, Carolina Jews for Justice and others.

The Emergency Committee to Stop DHA Evictions’ petition, as well as more resources on Durham’s eviction crisis, can be found at stopdhaevictions.net. □

COLOMBIA & FRANCE: Mass strikes roll on 6, 7



‘Cacerolazo’ (noisy protest) in Bogotá.

PHOTO: CUT COLOMBIA



Paris, Dec. 18.

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# Protest in Philadelphia against corporate sexual abuse, racism

By Joe Piette  
Philadelphia

Rylinda Rhodes was loud and clear, speaking here at a Dec. 18 rally outside Comcast world corporate headquarters: “I am a survivor of workplace sexual harassment at Comcast. ... You do not have the right to touch me. I have a right to be protected in my workplace. Comcast, listen to your survivors!” Rhodes worked at a Comcast call center for five years. Then Sil Lai Abrams spoke as a survivor of rape and sexual assault at NBC, which is owned by Comcast: “How can a survivor who comes to you with their story of victimization expect to be heard? ... You are supposed to help humanity. Instead you are a mega-media-conglomerate with tentacles that extend around the globe. In choosing to silence me, and other survivors at NBC as well, it’s an act of cowardice and an act of injustice that helps fuel rape culture. ... We will not be silenced!”

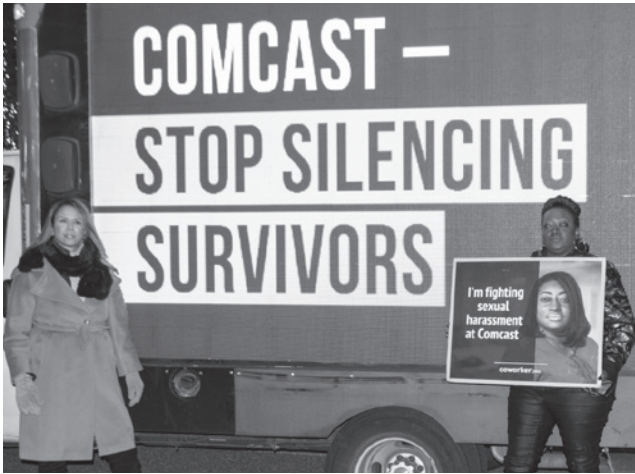
Rhodes and Abrams were joined by over a dozen workers, community members and the women’s advocacy group UltraViolet at the evening rush-hour rally in frigid temperatures. As the rally continued, a mobile billboard truck with two-foot-tall letters, “Survivors Demand Justice at Comcast” and “Comcast — Stop Silencing Survivors,” drove around and around the Comcast skyscrapers.

‘Who do we believe? Survivors!  
What do we want? Justice!’

The action came after NBC launched an internal investigation into the popular television program “America’s Got Talent.” The network announced that judge Gabrielle Union left the series complaining of a toxic culture of sexism and racism.

Despite demonstrators calling for the corporation to fire NBC News President Noah Oppenheim, and anyone else who covered up harassment and discrimination to protect powerful abusers, NBC renewed Oppenheim’s contract.

Protesters also called for Comcast to put in place new policies to eliminate sexual harassment, abuses of power and discrimination. Organizers asked supporters to call



Sil Lai Abrams (left), Rylinda Rhodes.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Comcast’s Senior Director of Communications, Matt Heimke, at 215-286-8666 with those demands.

Comcast call-center employees have described experiencing a culture of sexual harassment and a hostile work environment. Employees report they have been retaliated against by both NBC and Comcast for coming forward.

UltraViolet Executive Director Shaunna Thomas explained: “The toxic work environment that Comcast and NBC Universal has fostered goes far deeper than one or two shows — or one or two bad apples. Between their dangerous approach of addressing abuse in the workplace only when it is exposed in the media, and their knack for launching bogus ‘internal’ investigations against perpetrators of harassment and abuse at the company, enough is enough. There is no holiday cheer in a toxic workplace, and Comcast’s 189,000 employees deserve better.”

Comcast is only one of many corporations that harbor toxic cultures hostile to women and trans people. Workers are increasingly demanding accountability from institutions, the media and individuals who create and tolerate workplaces with sexual abuse, perpetuate sexist narratives or seek to limit the rights, safety and economic security of women and gender-nonconforming people. □

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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, LGBTQ2+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

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

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

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

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

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

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# Philadelphia students protest anti-Muslim laws in India

By Joe Piette

Over 60 demonstrators protested on Dec. 19 at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia against India Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s policies that pose immediate threats against Muslims and their citizenship rights in India.

Speakers, signs and chants denounced passage of a discriminatory amendment to India’s citizenship laws and the creation of a national registry of citizens, which critics say can be used to disenfranchise, incarcerate or deport large numbers of legitimate Muslim citizens in India.

The Citizenship Amendment Act, combined with the National Registry of Citizens, would effectively make millions of poor Indian Muslims stateless.

Opponents argue that these proposed laws violate India’s 1949 constitutional guarantee of secularism, equality and nondiscrimination. Modi’s new laws will grant citizenship to all Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian refugees from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan who

entered India on or before Dec. 31, 2014, without valid documents. It specifically excludes Muslims from the list — in effect marking all Muslim migrants as illegal.

Modi already has blood on his hands. As chief minister of the state of Gujarat, he allowed the massacre of over 1,000 Muslims in a two-month period in 2002. The riots took place after 60 Hindu pilgrims accidentally burned to death in a train crash, for which Muslims were unfairly blamed.

Millions have taken to the streets in India to protest Modi’s latest moves. The government response has been to impose curbs on public gatherings in many areas. However, Indians are defying bans on assembly in many cities, leading to clashes with police that have left nine protesters dead.

The Indian government has cut internet access in an attempt to stop the protests. In fact, it has imposed the highest number of internet blocks in the world – over 95 in 2019. In Indian-occupied Kashmir, broadband and mobile data services have been blocked for more than four months.

The Philadelphia Chapter of the Coalition Against Fascism in India organized the rally. CAFI is asking South Asian students across the U.S. to sign a statement decrying the fascist acts of the Indian state. (To sign, go to [bre.is/5XGgmU2r/](https://bre.is/5XGgmU2r/).)

## Ties among the governments of India, Israel and the U.S.

India is the third largest economy in the world and the ninth-largest U.S. trading partner. The U.S. is India’s largest trading partner. As part of Trump’s campaign to threaten China’s ports across the Indian and Pacific oceans, Trump and Modi agreed on a new deal for \$1 billion worth of naval guns and ammunition.

Modi has also broadened ties with the terrorist state of Israel, purchasing “a massive and still growing river of defense sales and technology transfers from Jerusalem to New Delhi” for use against its own diverse population as well as its neighbors,



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Indian students demonstrate Dec. 19 against Modi government’s anti-Muslim laws.

Pakistan and China. (Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle, Jan. 25, 2018)

Modi’s right-wing ideology of “Hindutva” reveres and mimics Zionism. It condones the right of the Hindu majority to rule over Muslim and other minorities, similar to how Israel oppresses Palestinians in their own homeland.

It’s in the interest of progressive movements fighting against Zionist terror in Palestine and unending U.S. wars against people all over the globe to come out in solidarity with the students and workers demonstrating against Modi’s terror in India. □

# Rally defends special education in Puerto Rico and U.S.

By Workers World New York bureau

Austerity imposed on Puerto Rico’s educational system by the unelected colonialist fiscal board was the target of a street rally in New York City on Dec. 14. The rally was called by the New York chapter of the Timón Committee, which works to raise awareness of special education rights — and of the struggles faced by people with disabilities and their families — both on the island and in the U.S.

Milagros Cancel, president of Comité Timón NY, explained that Comité Timón in Puerto Rico had previously won a class action suit which granted educational civil rights specifically to Puerto Rican children. The children are also legally protected under U.S. federal laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The parent organization in Puerto Rico

continues to defend these rights against attacks, including layoffs, hundreds of school closings and most recently a proposed law known as Proyecto C 1945.

Cancel stressed that these cutbacks and other attacks push families to migrate from the island to the U.S., seeking assistance for their children, where mainland school districts are also being targeted by right-wing austerity forces.

According to the rally press release, draft bill 1945 “attempts to scale back provisions gained from Rosa Lydia Velez v. the Department of Education” and “excludes infants, depriving them of early intervention services.” The proposed law also “violates due process” in future judicial cases addressing special education. This class action case was originally brought in 1981, with a final judgment not issued until 2002.

Proyecto C 1945, approved by one chamber of Puerto Rico’s assembly and headed to the other, is strongly opposed by activists, educators and parent advocates on the island.

In New York, the special education struggle in Puerto Rico has been embraced by a coalition of Puerto Rican diaspora groups known as Frente Independentista Boricua, with solidarity from others who experience the daily inadequacies of the educational system.

The rally chair, teacher Lorraine Liriano, read off a strong list of endorsers and speakers, including Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño and Parents to Improve School Transportation. Also present were members of A Call to Action on Puerto Rico, Chelsea Rising, South Bronx Community Congress and Workers World Party.

Representatives of New York Boricua



PHOTO: PARENTS TO IMPROVE SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Rally Dec. 14, New York City.

Resistance prepared a plena song for the gathering. Plena, an historic Puerto Rican musical form, concentrates on providing information about contemporary events, earning the nickname “el periódico cantado” — the “sung newspaper.” □

# Cuba supporters win in IFCO victory over IRS

*Here is a slightly edited statement issued by the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization. Workers World congratulates IFCO on this victory over U.S. government harassment, especially because of IFCO’s important work in support of revolutionary Cuba. WW celebrates the beginning of Cuba’s 61st year as a liberated, independent country working to establish socialism. On Jan. 1, 1959, Comandante Fidel Castro and a guerilla force, including Ernesto “Che” Guevara, entered Havana, marking the triumph of the first stage of the Cuban revolution. We also celebrate the fifth anniversary of the freeing of the Cuban Five — Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and René González — Cuban patriots imprisoned by the U.S. government for actions defending Cuba; the last were finally freed in December 2014.*

Victory! After a 10-year historic struggle against unprecedented [Internal Revenue Service] harassment, we’ve won! The IRS finally conceded and reinstated our 501c(3) non-profit status.

We want to thank all of you who helped make this IFCO victory possible.

In the words of our attorney, this reinstatement is a clear vindication of IFCO’s principled stand to serve as a fiscal sponsor of the Viva Palestina project that provided desperately needed medical aid for

the beleaguered people of Gaza.

The IRS concession absolves our righteous decision to stand in solidarity with the people of Cuba and to engage in prayerful civil disobedience of the U.S. government’s unjust and criminal blockade of the island nation.

This ruling justifies our steadfast commitment to defend the rights of the disenfranchised, the wrongly imprisoned, and the victims of police brutality.

In the last 10 years, we’ve never let the powers that be stop our life-giving work:

- Challenging the immoral U.S. blockade of Cuba and unconstitutional U.S. travel restrictions with our solidarity caravans and delegations – and winning;
- Supporting the work of sister progressive organizations from Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees to South Bronx Unite, from the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition to the Campaign to End Sanctions;
- Administering the US/ELAM [Latin American Medical School] scholarship program that has graduated nearly 200 U.S. doctors who are now working in underserved communities across the U.S. (For more information: [ifconews.org/medical-school](http://ifconews.org/medical-school).)

Ever since [its founding in] 1967, IFCO has been saying “NO” to injustice. Ever since 1967, IFCO has been attacking and exposing the systems which cause racism, hunger and suffering – both in the U.S. and throughout the world.



Rev. Lucius Walker, founder of IFCO/ Pastors for Peace, prepares to break the U.S. blockade of Cuba as he loads supplies for the 2010 Friendshipment Caravan.

Support and words of encouragement have allowed us:

- To keep sending young people to study medicine in Cuba, to mentor them during their seven years of study and after they return home to practice in underserved communities;
- To keep organizing Caravans to Cuba — we’ve already begun the work for next spring’s Caravan — 10 routes in 50 cities around the U.S. , [with] travel to Cuba next summer;
- To organize delegations to travel throughout the year to have deep discussions and insightful visits to learn about specific areas of Cuban life and culture: health care, education, religion, farming, incarceration, the justice system and more;
- To work with others to organize against U.S.-sponsored sanctions—a form of warfare designed to harm children, the sick, the aging—warfare waged against the most vulnerable people in a country.

For more information on IFCO programs: [ifconews.org](http://ifconews.org) □

## Start 2020 right! Invest in WW!

If you hate the racist terror and economic injustice this system imposes upon people of color;

If you're sick and tired of the bankers and bosses making billions off of workers' labor while the masses around the world are mired in poverty;

If you're disgusted by entrenched patriarchal bigotry that oppresses women and LGBTQ2+ people;

If you're convinced from reading WW that capitalism is at a dead end;

If you want to fight for a far superior way of life based on economic planning and equitable, just distribution of wealth for all people . . . then invest your hard-earned dollars in Workers World and help us put out the only revolutionary socialist weekly in the U.S. that's printed as well as posted on the web. We're determined to keep issuing a printed edition to hand out to people looking for answers at protests, picket lines and street corners, as well as workers trapped in U.S. dungeons.

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Help build Workers World—for today and for the future!



# The British elections and the defeat of the Labour Party

By Larry Holmes

*This is a slightly edited talk from the Dec. 19 Workers World Party forum in New York City.*

I thought we should take this opportunity to talk about the Dec.12 British elections. I'm not going to give a comprehensive analysis of it. What I'm going to do is reflect on it.

First thing, you know this is important, especially because we're on this side of the Atlantic. The British Labour Party is not the same as the Democratic Party. There are similarities, but there are also important historic differences. As a matter of fact, one of the reasons why the Democratic Party has existed, especially over the last 75 to 80 years, is actually to thwart any movement to form such a party — either a revolutionary workers' party or a moderate labor party — that says it's going to represent the interests of the working class.

The Labour Party in Britain is like the social democratic parties all over Europe and all over the world. It is a product of the development of social democracy, of the political development and struggles inside the labor movement between revolutionary Marxists and reformist social democrats.

So it has a different history than the Democratic Party. It is sort of an alliance, representing the workers and the interests of the British ruling class. Obviously, that's a contradictory thing. It's an uneasy alliance. For most of the last century, the ruling class has dominated the alliance.

Four years ago, Jeremy Corbyn, an important leftist leader, got into the Labour Party and became its leader, I believe, on the basis of the vote of thousands upon thousands of young workers — who, like a lot of young people in this country, were adversely affected not only by the global financial crash, but it certainly made things worse. It was a significant development.

Corbyn pushed the party to the left in a distinctive way, not in a revolutionary way, but nonetheless important. Their election manifesto for 2019 compares favorably to anything Bernie Sanders is raising. Corbyn is to the left of Sanders, not only on some domestic issues, but also in terms of the anti-war movement. He has mostly broken with Israel.

## Ruling class, media demonized Corbyn

Why did the elections turn out the way they did with Labour losing badly and the Tories, the Conservative Party, gaining ground? Number one: There were the vicious attacks on Corbyn. Since we aren't there, we didn't feel it. We didn't feel the heat and the seriousness and the constant effort of the bourgeois media and bourgeois politicians to demonize Corbyn.

They whipped up this whole thing about Corbyn being anti-Semitic, primarily because he criticizes Israel. The military came out and almost held a press conference with generals in uniform, saying that if he was elected it would represent a threat to the national security of "our empire." Some of the bankers came out and said if he's elected, the British Parliament will go down. There will be a financial collapse. The country will fall. This was constant every day.

There are some who say that Corbyn made too many concessions to the



Larry Holmes

PHOTO: PEOPLES VIDEO NETWORK

bourgeois elements in his party, represented by Tony Blair, and that Corbyn should have had a hard line and pushed all the bourgeois elements out. Something to think about. That's compared to other countries — let's say France right now.

But compared to other countries in Europe and around the world, there are not many workers' strikes going on in Britain, particularly in England. Actually there is a local strike of transportation workers. Just to give you an idea of how a strike and a workers' struggle can compare to an election — and the danger in that. The striking workers actually called off the strike for one day so they could come back and vote — like that makes sense.

## Elections: bourgeoisie's game

This is important to me and I think it's important to all revolutionaries because if you rely on elections, and not pushing or helping the working class get into motion through mass struggles, through strikes, through occupations, it's very dangerous. Those strikers did carry out occupations. Nine times out of 10, bourgeois elections are the most important thing to the bourgeoisie. That is their game.

It's rare that the bourgeoisie doesn't somehow win in bourgeois elections. When the workers are fighting with strikes, they have had the opportunity to realize more of their strength and their power. So that's something I hope will be reviewed over there when they're going over how it happened.

I think a lot of leftists feel very down and bad all over the world. But this will pass, and the crisis for the British workers is going to deepen with more austerity, more attacks. So this is just one phase, and we're trying to discern some lessons.

Of course, the major problem in this election was Brexit — the vote in the summer of 2016 to leave the European Union and just be under the thumb of the British ruling class. If everybody was truthful, it should have been made as clear as possible that this was a dead end for the working class.

Sure, the bourgeoisie of the European Union is horrible. We are against them, but to trade the European bourgeoisie as your master for the British bourgeoisie is a dead end for the working class.

## A massive workers' strike is needed

Some say that Corbyn's position on Brexit was too equivocal. It tried to please everybody. This was probably true. It seems like he didn't feel secure enough and strong enough just to say: Brexit is a trick to divide the working class, especially against immigrant workers. And

it's racist. So that should be what we're talking about.

We should be talking about how to rally a massive strike of the workers and their allies around the world — which means the entire working class. Perhaps the chances of Corbyn and the Labour Party winning were very, very slim because of Brexit and other things.

It's not just about the workers. It also represents a division in the British ruling class. But as far as we're concerned its principal target — in terms of division and using racism — was definitely the working class.

I don't think the British ruling class was going to allow Corbyn to win. They weren't going to do that. He was feared. He was considered too atypical for the interests of the British bourgeoisie — unless there was some kind of revolutionary situation where the masses were in the streets by the hundreds of thousands demanding revolution and socialism. Maybe then.

But that wasn't the case last week. Also, the ruling class inside the Tory Party and the ruling class inside the Labour Party were united against Corbyn. That's where their class unity transcended their party loyalty.

If you're going to lose an election from a tactical and political perspective, maybe some in the Labour Party were optimistic. I'm sure they fought to the last minute before the elections.

However, if you thought it was going to go your way — and a lot of them had a lot of questions about that because they were aware of the war being waged against the Labour Party — sometimes it's better if you're going to lose an election to be politically strong. And not equivocate on principled issues, so that at the very least you've laid the basis for future struggle.

We can't put ourselves in Corbyn's place. Generally our party shies away from having some up-and-down analysis of the situation that the working class and the left faces in another country — although we do maintain our right to comment on it. It would have been better if Corbyn had come out more strongly as an internationalist. No one was defending the migrant workers who are under attack.

## Solidarity with migrant workers is key

Even if it lost Corbyn some votes, he should have said very strongly: "I am with the migrant workers. They are part of our class." One of the reasons why the Labour Party's going to have to strengthen themselves on this question of proletarian internationalism is because today there's so much confusion about it. Without

qualifying internationalism, it is viewed as something that serves the bourgeoisie.

In other words, with imperialist globalization it's the rich who are internationalists, and they're saying that's in the interests of the working class. That's just like the lie that the cities are for the bourgeoisie and the countryside is for the working class. Trump has tried to play that card, too.

No. The workers in the city, regardless of their jobs, that's the working class. Workers in the cities belong to the working class just as much as the workers in the countryside. It's not a generational divide. Some say a lot of young people were for Corbyn, but he lost the older white workers in the center of the country.

## No to racism! Forge working-class unity!

Our message is: No. We don't choose. All of them are the working class and that's the point. You have to talk more and more about class. For any revolutionary who's going to be viable and for any revolutionary party, you have to. The next phase of the global class struggle is to take a really strong position against racism and for working-class internationalism.

Now it may seem a bit abstract, and not as important as addressing the local struggles that people are in. Whether it's Medicare for All or free college or fighting racist police brutality in the subways or on the streets, people relate to local struggles.

But sooner or later as the worldwide crisis deepens along with class struggles, internationalism is going to become more and more decisive. I wonder whether it would have been a good idea for Corbyn to call a conference in London of European socialists and revolutionaries who want to discuss how we can strengthen the class struggle against the European Union, the bankers in Germany — and bring them all in.

That would say so much. That would be a signal to anyone who is worried about chauvinism and bourgeois nationalism having an effect. No, this is a leader who has an internationalist view.

I'm not sure whether this issue became part of the program of the commentary of the Third International. (We had a discussion about that a few months back, as this is the hundredth anniversary of the Third International formed in Moscow in 1919.)

But if the International didn't take that position, at least they were discussing it and calling for the workers to declare a United States of Europe, where it would be united European workers fighting the imperialist unity of bourgeois forces. That's an important point. Sooner or later we've got to go back to that.

## Build internationalism!

I wonder what would have helped Corbyn — what would have made the difference. What would have sent a message that would have been interpreted as: "We're not going to turn against migrant workers or workers anywhere outside of our geographical boundaries."

Maybe Corbyn should go to Paris because there is a tremendous general strike in France with thousands upon thousands of workers out in the street in every city. You know the strike is primarily against attempts by Macron and the bourgeoisie to take away retirement benefits. Some people will have to work longer to get

*Continued on page 5*



# Sanctions: A new generation of warfare

By Makasi Motema

*Below is a slightly edited version of a talk by Makasi Motema given at a Dec. 19 Workers World Party meeting in New York City.*

In the winter of 1941, the people of Leningrad survived on 125 grams of bread per day. Half of that bread was made of sawdust. In many buildings in the city wallpaper paste had been made from potato starch. In their desperation, citizens began to strip the walls and boiled the paste to make soup.

The cause of this suffering was the military encirclement of Leningrad by Nazi Germany during the early stages of “Operation Barbarosa,” the Nazi offensive into the Soviet Union during World War II. The German Werhmacht quickly surrounded the city and could have easily sent troops to occupy it.

But this was ruled out early by the German high command “because it would make us responsible for food supply” for the civilians in the city (Leningrad: The Epic Siege of World War II, 1941-1944 by Anna Reid). Instead, the cold calculation was to maintain the siege. Block off all

roads. Allow no supplies in or out. Allow starvation to take its course.

Since 1941, the imperialist powers of the world have grown more sophisticated, but they have not become more merciful. The United States has earmarked many governments for destruction, but like the German high command before them, they understand that a military occupation would make the U.S. responsible for feeding and caring for millions of civilians.

And like the German high command, the U.S. ruling class has settled on the cold, inhuman calculation of siege warfare. Cut all lines to survival. Do not allow supplies in or out. Allow starvation and disease to take its course.

This is so-called “modern warfare.” The goal is, through minimum effort, to create

chaos and desperation among the civilian population — to facilitate and finance the evolution of general chaos into civil unrest, then political destabilization and finally regime change.

The first critical step in this process is the imposition of sanctions. The use of sanctions is as clear an act of war as occupying highway intersections with Nazi Panzer divisions. It is a means of cutting off the supplies necessary for the continuation of human life from an entire population.

### Sanctions Kill campaign holds NYC planning meeting

Saturday, Dec. 14, about 40 organizers gathered at the Solidarity Center in New York City to plan a campaign against U.S.-imposed sanctions. This campaign will

lead to nationwide actions on the weekend of March 13-15. In New York, a demonstration on Wall Street will be held on March 14.

During the meeting, several organizers raised the importance of political education around this issue — which is intentionally complex and opaque. That’s why the leadup

to these actions will be driven by an educational campaign done through social media, leafleting and teach-ins.

There is also a draft resolution calling for the immediate abolition of sanctions and a call that has already been translated into 12 languages, with more on the way. These resources can be used by any organization that wants to participate in the call to end sanctions.

The meeting was an important first step in the education process in New York City. As organizers, we have to make the effort to explain the way that sanctions are used as an act of war — that they are a critical tool for the U.S. and its junior partners to expand the hegemony of finance capital across the globe. □

## U.S. imperialism uses dollars to rule world’s economy

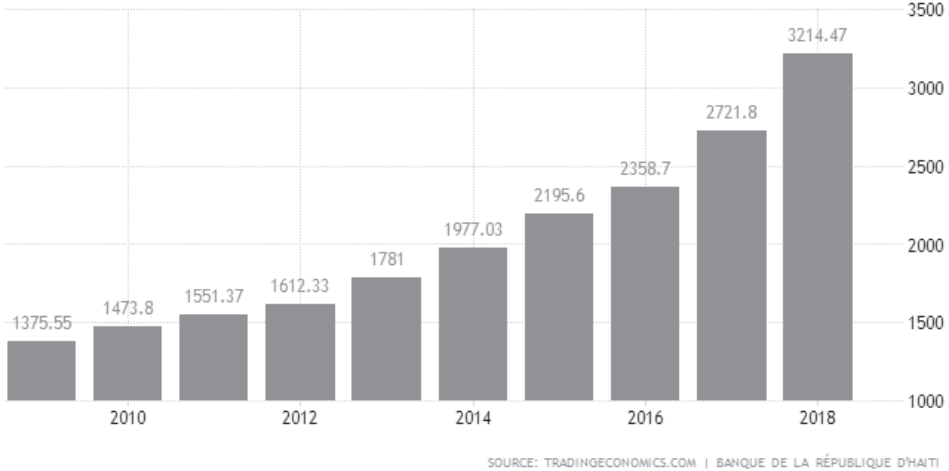
By G. Dunkel

The whole structure of the world’s financial system — where every day, trillions of dollars, euros and yuan zip from bank to bank, from individuals to companies, to and from all sorts of institutions — still reflects the domination of the U.S. dollar.

According to the World Bank, 50 percent of all bonds and loans issued throughout the world are valued in U.S. dollars, and the share of world commerce valued in dollars is four times the amount of world commerce coming from the U.S. Also, 60 percent of the countries in the world, which produce 70 percent of the world’s output, rely on the U.S. dollar to value their currency.

Put another way, most of the world’s trade is in U.S. dollars, even between entities outside the U.S.

The 32 U.S. actively enforced sanctioned regimes, which include not just sanctioned countries and organizations such as the “Transnational Criminal Organizations,” but also countries which do business with these sanctioned entities, change frequently. Some, like the sanctions against Cuba, have remained in force for decades. Other countries with a significant number of neocolonies, such as France, have their



Graph shows increase in total remittances to Haiti by Haitian immigrants in millions of dollars. These remittances, over \$3 billion, now equal 32 percent of the country’s GDP.

own sanctions policies.

Germany, whose economy produces much more per worker than does the U.S. economy, has nevertheless had to follow the U.S. decree of strict sanctions against Iran. German banks, stock markets and trading companies need access to the capital that is locked behind the U.S. dollar.

After powerful Germany folded before the might of the dollar, weaker European powers like Belgium, France and Italy fell into line on the sanctions, even though their governments complained.

It wasn’t the first time German imperialism felt the power of the U.S. dollar and sanctions. After the November 1918 armistice ended the fighting in World War I, it took eight months before the peace treaty was signed in June 1919. The Allies maintained their sanctions on German ports for those eight months, while 100,000 Germans died of starvation and preventable diseases.

### Sanctions let U.S. hide its role

Tanks, bombs, explosives, bullets and napalm leave a clear trace. Children missing limbs because they played with the mines and bomblets that the Pentagon has dropped in great abundance can be photographed and interviewed. When the U.S. Armed Forces shoots at people and occupies a country, the people often shoot back.

This popular resistance can arouse opposition in the U.S. to supporting such military measures.

On the other hand, if children die from lack of vaccines or their parents die from lack of money for blood pressure medicine, the political impact is less. And the governments in sanctioned countries can be blamed, instead of the country which imposes the sanctions. An example is media coverage of Zimbabwe.

Countries use tightly networked relationships to make trades, and many trades are monitored by computer servers located in New York City. This makes

it hard for countries facing sanctions to hide their trades.

### Remittances

The U.S. and French governments impose sanctions on Mali, a poor landlocked West African nation of 20 million people, which has a large migrant community in France. Sanctions prevent the migrants from simply wiring money home. According to a 2015 study by the World Bank, the way most Malians in France send money home is by courier: Somebody puts the money in a belt and takes a plane.

Sanctions are not the only financial weapon Washington has in its arsenal.

For five countries — Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in Central Asia, Haiti, Liberia and Nepal — remittances from abroad are equivalent to a quarter or more of each country’s economic output, which is traditionally measured as gross domestic product.

In 2018, remittances to Haiti were slightly over 30 percent of GDP. In 2016 and 2017, the percentage of remittances was also very close to 30 percent. In absolute terms, this works out to approximately \$60 million a week.

Over the past three years, hundreds of thousands of Haitians have taken to the streets to demand significant changes in government policies: lower fuel prices, higher minimum wages, support for farmers. If the Haitian government tried to make political changes that Washington opposes, the U.S. could slow down the money flow or even stop the remittances. This punishment would mean immediate, substantial damage to Haiti’s economy.

The Trump administration has tried to end Temporary Protective Status for 50,000 Haitians currently living and working in the U.S. Ending TPS would not only be a disaster for the individuals protected by it, but also a major blow to Haiti’s economy.

International Days of Action Against Sanctions & Economic War will be held March 13-15. The organizers say: “Sanctions kill! Sanctions are war! End sanctions now!” For more information: [sanctionskill.org](https://sanctionskill.org). □

## The British elections

Continued from page 4

them. But there are other issues involved.

Imagine if leaders of the Labour Party would have gone to Paris to say we are all with the French workers. And imagine if delegations were sent from Italy, Spain, Germany, Norway and Poland to show solidarity with the French workers and their general strike. And, moreover, we’re going to have a continent-wide general strike so that bourgeois unity will no longer ring in the European Union, but it will mean working-class unity.

As I said earlier, this issue of internationalism may not seem as urgent and as important at the moment, but that is

going to change, especially if a war breaks out anywhere. It would do our party very well — when our efforts in history are judged — if we were the primary party at the center of world imperialism and had the strongest record not only on paper and in speeches, but in actions, that we were ready to show the direction to a new kind of proletarian internationalism.

Ultimately, the way to fight racist bourgeois chauvinism and nationalism — and we’re talking about Trump as much as we’re talking about Boris Johnson or any of the neofascists in Europe — is to fight it with internationalism. You fight reactionary bourgeois nationalism with proletarian internationalism. □



# WORKERS WORLD editorials

## Union busting? It's a crime!

The corporate media constantly tell us that the United States is a great democracy because of its “free elections.” Never mind that Donald Trump became president with fewer votes than his main opponent. Never mind that the U.S. Senate has long been described as a “millionaires’ club.”

And never mind that few limits are set on the money spent on elections—meaning that despite numerous attempts at campaign finance reform, the candidates with the closest ties to the rich and ultra-rich almost always win. To confirm that, the current president was a multimillionaire from birth.

But what about other types of elections? What about when workers want to vote in a union so they can combine and strengthen their ability to fight the boss for better pay and conditions?

If anything, these elections are even less

“free” than the ones for political candidates.

### Criminal bosses vs. unions

A recent report from the Economic Policy Institute shows that bosses are increasingly breaking the law to prevent workers from joining together in unions.

In roughly 42 percent of all union election campaigns, the owners were found to have violated federal laws. Some crimes involved the totally illegal firing of workers for union activity. (EPI, “Unlawful,” Dec. 11)

And the real numbers are undoubtedly even higher. First of all, the 42 percent figure covers only elections supervised by the National Labor Relations Board. Workers in industries like agriculture and domestic work, as well as “independent contractors”—such as cab and truck drivers, airplane cleaners, freelance writers and other gig workers—are not covered

by NLRB oversight.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in 2018, only 6.4 percent of private sector workers were union members.

However, according to the EPI, nearly half of all nonunion workers say they would vote for a union if given the opportunity. What a huge difference!

This shows that it is not worker apathy that keeps union membership down.

Criminal behavior by the bosses is a big factor that keeps workers unorganized.

Criminal activity— isn’t that where the government is supposed to get involved? Doesn’t the budget for “fighting crime” take a huge bite out of our tax dollars? But when the criminals are bosses, it’s a different story. When the bosses are exploiting our labor power, forcing us to work under dangerous conditions and committing illegal wage theft—paying below minimum

wage or denying overtime pay after 40 hours—those who call for “law and order” are conveniently quiet.

These criminal bosses should be behind bars—not workers desperate to make ends meet.

No matter how much money the bosses sweat out of us, they always want more. And they will do anything—including breaking whatever progressive laws have been won—to get it.

This is why workers need unions, whether we work in the fields, on the assembly lines, in warehouses, hospitals, stores and restaurants, in offices, or in the public sector. Only a collective struggle will improve our wages and working conditions.

The multinational, multigender working class is the vast majority. Organized, we can win. □

## Making liberation more than a word

On Dec. 10, dictionary-maker Merriam-Webster announced that, after a 313 percent increase in “look-ups,” the pronoun “they” was declared Word of the Year for 2019.

Most significantly, the dictionary added a new definition for “they”—“a single person whose gender identity is nonbinary.”

The use of “they” as a singular pronoun in English is not new. For over 600 years, “they” has been used to refer to people whose male or female gender identity is unknown.

But Merriam-Webster’s choice of “they” was because of the growing number of people claiming and living gender-nonconforming lives, who increasingly present openly in social media, published texts and daily social interactions.

This is a victory for the movement of people who are gender fluid, gender blenders, gender benders, gender nonbinary, agender, androgynous, gender queer, trans or transgender, gender defiant—or other identities still in the

process of being created.

The 2019 public acknowledgment of “they” is a major advance for gender activists, trans historians and everyday people who have fought for centuries to have public space in which to live authentic lives.

Workers World Party member and WW Managing Editor Leslie Feinberg was in the forefront of the modern gender liberation struggle. Hir decades of public speaking on trans lives began in 1992, the year her pamphlet, “Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Is Come” was published. (Available free at [workers.org/books](http://workers.org/books).)

Feinberg’s now-classic novel of trans life, “Stone Butch Blues,” became integral to women’s and gender studies classes, and is passed from hand to hand in prisons. (Available free at [lesliefeinberg.net](http://lesliefeinberg.net).) Hir “Transgender Warriors: Making History” (1995) was the first Marxist analysis of pre-colonial, precapitalist reality of trans lives in matrilineal society and of the appearance of trans oppression under class society.

Feinberg said about pronouns: “No pronoun is as complicated as I am,” and about gender: “Gender is the poetry we each make out of the language we have been taught.” (“Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue”)

### Struggle for trans justice continues

While in the last decade headlines on gender struggles have focused on such topics as Hollywood movies and the battle for safety in public school bathrooms, gender activism has been waged on all fronts—from the workplace to health care to the prison-industrial complex.

There has been no let-up in the virulent and deadly violence against people on the gender spectrum. In 2019, murders of transpeople reached the highest number ever recorded in the U.S—at least 26—according to the Human Rights Campaign. Official statistics are underestimates, as attacks on trans and gender-nonconforming people are often underreported and misgendered by hospitals and police.

The overwhelming majority of those killed in 2019 were Black transwomen—from community activist Dana Martin, killed in Montgomery, Ala., on Jan. 6 to Yahira Nesby, beloved member of the local ball scene, killed in New York City on Dec. 19.

Their deaths starkly reveal intertwined oppressions: racism, woman-hating and gender bigotry.

Their lives demand that in 2020 we make ending oppression more than a word.

As revolutionary communist Leslie Feinberg posed: “How can we tear down the electrified barbed wire that has been placed between us to keep us separated, fearful and pitted against each other? How can we forge a movement that can bring about profound and lasting change—a movement capable of transforming society?”

This is the year to struggle, both for the right to use “they” and for a world built on justice and liberation. Let’s make the “we” of revolutionary struggle 2020’s Word of the Year. □

## Colombian people stay in the streets

By Martha Grevatt

A powerful strike rocked Colombia on Nov. 21, with millions participating across the country of 50 million people. The National Strike Committee initially called only a one-day strike to oppose anti-worker legislation.

But masses of people have stayed in the streets for the past six weeks. They have now issued over 100 demands, none of which the right-wing President Iván Duque has agreed to.

The tax law that sparked the original protest—now approved by the economic committees of both houses of Congress—will result in lower tax rates for the wealthy and fewer government services for the vast majority of Colombians. Colombia has the second-highest rate of income inequality in Latin America. Most workers are low-paid, with almost 50 percent engaged in informal, precarious work.

Additional grievances that drove the Nov. 21 mass strike—in which reportedly half the country took part—included legislation that would hurt pensioners and lower the minimum wage.

As the strike gained momentum, the movement in the streets raised demands about the rights of Indigenous and Afrodescendent Colombians, sexual violence, the assassinations of labor and

social justice activists, the Duque government’s refusal to implement the 2016 peace accords with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and a range of other pressing issues.

After the police killing of 18-year-old Dilan Cruz at a protest on Nov. 25, demonstrators called for the government’s Mobile Anti-disturbances Squadron (ESMAD) to be dissolved. Signs bearing Cruz’s photo are now seen at demonstrations throughout the country. Four other people have been killed by ESMAD since Nov. 21. The government has intensified its militarization of the country by the increased presence of ESMAD in full riot gear.

### Six weeks, multiple acts of resistance

For workers who have been protesting and have not returned to work, the last six weeks have been one long, continuous strike.

Multiple forms of resistance are being implemented, including “cacerolazos” (loud, pot-banging noise protests) and “plantones” (sit-ins). The National Strike Committee, which includes the Central Union of Workers (CUT) and a range of other unions and social organizations, has called additional day-long strike actions in response to Duque’s intransigence to their demands. The committee denied the president’s Dec. 3 request to call off the protests.

On Dec. 4, members of the Indigenous Guards made the 15-hour bus journey from Cauca to Bogotá, to press their demands. They carried their own red, black, green and white flag, and women held up pots of burning incense to “clean the badness away.” (Al Jazeera, Dec. 4) Their plan, for the time being, is to stay in the capital.

Well-known Colombian musical artists, including the Grammy-nominated band Bomba Estéreo, participated in mass outdoor concerts in Bogotá and Medellín supporting the strike movement. In Medellín a large group of concert-goers from the crowd performed the anti-patriarchal song “El violador en tu camino” (“The rapist in your path”), which was created by the Chilean group Lastesis and has become popular all over the world. Colombian artists working in all genres are part of the new movement.

Even Miss Colombia, Gabriela Tafur, took the opportunity to voice support for the protests during the Miss Universe pageant, held in the U.S. on Dec. 8.

Progressive elected officials, including Senator and former Mayor of Bogotá Gustavo Petro, have joined the protests. Inspector General Fernando Carrillo has called on the government to end the systematic assassinations by right-wing paramilitaries with ties to the state.

Since the strike began, among those



PHOTO: CUT ANTIOQUIA

**Dec. 21, “Medellín resists singing” concert supports weeks of strikes and protests.**

assassinated have been FARC ex-combatant Manuel Santos Yatacué Ramos, environmentalists Natalia Jiménez and Rodrigo Monsalve—gunned down on the way to their honeymoon—women’s leader and cultural worker Lucy Villarreal and peasant leader Reinaldo Carrillo, who was shot to death in front of his family.

These kinds of government-sanctioned, targeted assassinations—along with kidnappings, terrorism, assaults, sexual violence, firings, evictions and other forms of brutal intimidation—are routine in Colombia and have been for decades. Since Jan. 1, 2016, almost 600 social activists have been killed—an average of almost two each day. For unionists, the country is the most dangerous in the world.

This courageous national strike for justice in Colombia has engaged the whole country—and inspired workers and oppressed people around the world. □



# French unions want retirement ‘reform’ scrapped

By G. Dunkel

It was a tough holiday for transportation strikers in France. Their pay packet for December was basically empty.

The struggle on the national railroad (SNCF) at 23 days is longer than a similar struggle over the SNCF retirement plan in 1995 and shows every sign of lasting longer than the 28-day struggle in 1986-87.

Protesters are still in the streets. The two most militant unions representing SNCF workers called for a march on Dec. 28 near the Paris railroad station Gare du Nord, which was broken up by cops firing tear gas after some bank windows were broken.

The public bank account set up by the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) for donations to support the strikers passed the million euro mark on Dec. 26. A big chunk of the money came from Twitch, a computer games network. At a rally in front of the headquarters of the Paris subway system, a high-ranking CGT leader, Marianne Ravaud, said, “This money came mostly in



A dancing picket line, Paris, Dec. 24.

small donations from all over France. It shows the basis of our support.” Public opinion polls report that between 60 and 70 percent of people in France support the strike.

Most unions in France have no strike funds.

One of the eight refineries in France has been shut down by its unions at the CGT’s call. Gas company Total’s refinery at Grandpuits, about 50 miles southeast of Paris, is still shipping out product in trucks but has lost its pipeline connection, so it will soon have to

stop. Scattered outages of certain types of fuel have been reported, making drivers nervous.

Picket lines have been set up at some bus depots from time to time, putting more pressure on the transportation system.

In a blatant attempt to divide workers in order to win, the government of Prime Minister Édouard Philippe has not invited the head of the CGT, Philippe Martinez, to the next meeting of the striking unions and the government. Meetings like this are generally where political strikes in

France are settled.

Ballet dancers at the Paris Opera held a picket line on Dec. 24 in front of the Opera House by dancing some scenes from Swan Lake accompanied by Opera musicians. The dancers’ retirement system dates back to 1698 under Louis XIV. Dancers generally join the ballet corps between the ages of 8 to 10 and retire after 30 years of service, when they reach 42. □

## WW COMMENTARY

By John Catalinotto

Dec. 20 — The U.S. House of Representatives voted to impeach the president on two counts late on the evening of Dec. 18. All Republicans and one Democratic House member voted against impeachment.

As of today, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi has not yet released the orders of impeachment to the Senate. Pelosi says she first wants to make sure the Republican leaders of the Senate will agree to a fair trial. So far Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell has said he will do everything possible to defend the president.

This impeachment is the third in U.S. history. Andrew Johnson was impeached in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1998. Neither of those two was convicted by the Senate. There seems to be no possibility that the Senate, which the Republican Party controls, will find Donald Trump guilty.

The charges against Trump involve his withholding U.S. military aid from Ukraine. Trump asked the Ukrainian government to first provide information implicating his Democratic political opponent Joe Biden in corruption as a condition of aid. Biden’s son, Hunter Biden, had a cushy job in Ukraine when Joe Biden was vice president.

The president has rightfully earned the hatred of large sections of the U.S. population. He has made incessant comments that are insensitive, crude, many of which can be classified as racist, xenophobic, misogynist and provoking violence, ranging from his slander of Mexicans to insults about African countries. He has waged war upon the poor of the United States and given handouts of tax cuts to the rich, while opening up Indigenous lands and natural resources for corporations to plunder.

### The politics behind the charges

Some Congress members, like Democratic Rep. Al Green from Texas, have urged that Trump be charged in the impeachment process for inciting violence based on his racist comments. If the House had brought charges based on such anti-people crimes, impeachment could have been used to mobilize mass demonstrations on a

# Trump impeached: What next?

progressive basis.

But the current impeachment by the House does not indict the president for crimes against humanity. Instead the House impeached him for failing to support U.S. imperialism and for acting against the interests of the 0.001% of billionaires who rule U.S. society and dominate the world. In fact, the president acted in his own narrow interest in a strategy to attempt to win the 2020 election.

There are many people in the U.S. who hate—and some who fear—Trump for good reasons. The Democratic Party leadership has forced them, if they want to remove the president from office, to take sides with the reactionary Ukraine government and U.S. imperialism against Russia. Taking sides as such has nothing to do with the real interests of the U.S. people.

There is nothing this president or the Republican Party has done that has helped any section of the working class in the U.S. and nearly everything he has done has hurt oppressed workers, im/migrants, the poor, women and LGBTQ2+ people. Compared to these harmful acts, withholding military aid from Ukraine is hardly a crime—although the president did it for dishonest reasons.

### Military budget exposes Democrats

The Democrats, although they want to use impeachment to defeat Trump, have jumped right in behind the Republicans to support U.S. militarism. A recent example was their almost unanimous support for the new Pentagon budget, which passed the House for a whopping \$738 billion earlier this month — at the same time a presidential edict is about to kick nearly a million people, many children and seniors, off food stamps and into devastating hunger.

One of the few Democrats who opposed this giveaway to the military-industrial complex, Rep. Rashida Tlaib of Michigan — who is one of the “Squad” — said why she voted against raising this budget by \$131 billion over two years: “I cannot support a bill that provides \$738 billion for wars and defense contractors while this year we provided only \$190 billion in discretionary funding for health care, education, and workforce development.”

Rep. Tlaib went on to criticize the U.S.-funded war against Yemen, maintenance of the prison at Guantanamo, the new planned Space Force and new nuclear weapons provided in the bill.

Mobilizing to defeat these programs would be a big step forward in holding U.S. imperialism accountable.

### A truly progressive future

Thousands of people all over the country demonstrated on Dec. 17 in dozens of cities supporting the impeachment process. At other times during the past three years, these or similar forces protested in the millions against the president’s misogyny, expressed solidarity with migrants or defended the environment.

It is reasonable that all these people would like to see the president removed, even if it means replacing him with an equally reactionary Mike Pence. But even if the president’s removal by the Senate were likely, the Democratic Party strategy does not lead to a truly progressive future.

This has been a decade of massive protest in the U.S. against the president’s agenda of hatred. There have been protests by people with disabilities for health care; protests for workers rights — from education to fast food workers — interlinked with protests against sexual abuse and for women’s liberation; protests for basic rights for LGBTQ2+ people; protests against racism, mass incarceration and killings by police; protest for migrants and against im/migrant concentration camps; protests against climate crisis and mobilizations by Indigenous peoples to protect the Earth. Millions have turned out in the streets and have shouted out for justice.

The impeachment process is proceeding through the mire of capitalist legalistic procedure. But people’s outrage generated by this president offers a chance for these many varied movements to interlink and use their power to forge a progressive path to the future.

The history of struggle teaches that representatives of the capitalist state — police or congresspeople or judges or presidents — do not create a just or a livable world.

Only the people in struggle will create a future in which we can live and flourish. □

# Elecciones británicas y derrota del Partido Laborista

Continúa de la página 8

posición, al menos lo estaban discutiendo y pidiendo que los trabajadores declarar un Estados Unidos de Europa, donde se unirían los trabajadores europeos que luchan contra la unidad imperialista de las fuerzas burguesas. Ese es un punto importante. Tarde o temprano tenemos que volver a eso.

### ¡Construye internacionalismo!

Me pregunto qué habría ayudado a Corbyn — qué habría marcado la diferencia. Que habría enviado un mensaje que hubiera sido interpretado como:

“No nos vamos a voltear en contra los trabajadores migrantes o los trabajadores fuera de nuestros límites geográficos”.

Quizás Corbyn debería ir a París porque hay una tremenda huelga general en Francia con miles y miles de trabajadores en las calles de cada ciudad. Sabemos que la huelga es principalmente contra los intentos del Presidente Emmanuel Macron y la burguesía de quitarle los beneficios de jubilación. Algunas personas tendrán que trabajar más tiempo para obtenerlos. Pero hay otros problemas involucrados.

Imagínense si los líderes del Partido Laborista hubieran ido a París para decir

que todos estamos con los trabajadores franceses. E imaginen si se enviarán delegaciones desde Italia, España, Alemania, Noruega y Polonia para mostrar solidaridad con los trabajadores franceses y su huelga general. Y, aún más, vamos a tener una huelga general en todo el continente para que la unidad burguesa ya no suene en la Unión Europea, sino que significa la unidad de la clase trabajadora.

Como dije antes, este tema del internacionalismo puede no parecer tan urgente e importante en este momento, pero eso va a cambiar, especialmente si estalla una guerra en cualquier lugar. A nuestro partido le iría muy bien — si juzgamos nuestros

esfuerzos en la historia, si fuéramos el partido principal en el centro del imperialismo mundial y tuviéramos el historial más sólido, no solo en papel y en discursos, sino en acciones, que estuviéramos listos para mostrar la dirección a un nuevo tipo de internacionalismo proletario.

En última instancia, la forma de luchar contra el chovinismo y el nacionalismo burgués racista — y estamos hablando de Trump tanto como de Boris Johnson o de cualquiera de los neofascistas en Europa — es luchar utilizando el internacionalismo. Luchar contra el nacionalismo burgués reaccionario con el internacionalismo proletario. □





FOTO: CUT ANTIOQUIA

Medellín, Colombia, 21 de diciembre.

# Elecciones británicas y derrota del Partido Laborista

Por Larry Holmes

*Esta es una charla ligeramente editada pronunciada durante el foro de Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero el 19 de diciembre en la ciudad de Nueva York.*

Pensé que deberíamos aprovechar esta oportunidad para hablar sobre las elecciones británicas del 12 de diciembre. No voy a dar un análisis exhaustivo de ello. Lo que voy a hacer es reflexionar sobre ello.

Primero, se sabe que esto es importante, especialmente porque estamos en este lado del Atlántico. El Partido Laborista británico no es lo mismo que el Partido Demócrata. Hay similitudes, pero también hay importantes diferencias históricas.

De hecho, una de las razones por las que ha existido el Partido Demócrata, especialmente durante los últimos 75 a 80 años, es en realidad frustrar cualquier movimiento para formar un partido de este tipo — ya sea un partido revolucionario de los trabajadores o un partido laborista moderado — que dice que va a representar los intereses de la clase trabajadora.

El Partido Laborista en Gran Bretaña es como los partidos socialdemócratas en toda Europa y en todo el mundo. Es un producto del desarrollo de la socialdemocracia, del desarrollo político y las luchas dentro del movimiento obrero entre marxistas revolucionarios y socialdemócratas reformistas.

Por lo tanto, tiene una historia diferente a la del Partido Demócrata. Es una especie de alianza, que representa a los trabajadores y los intereses de la clase dominante británica. Obviamente, eso es algo contradictorio. Es una alianza incómoda. Durante la mayor parte del siglo pasado, la clase dominante ha dominado la alianza.

Hace cuatro años, Jeremy Corbyn, un importante líder izquierdista, ingresó al Partido Laborista y se convirtió en su líder, creo que sobre la base del voto de miles y miles de jóvenes trabajadores, quienes, como muchos jóvenes en este país, se vieron afectados negativamente no solo por el colapso financiero global, sino que ciertamente empeoraron las cosas. Fue un desarrollo significativo.

Corbyn empujó al partido hacia la izquierda de una manera distintiva, no revolucionaria, pero igualmente importante. Su manifiesto electoral para 2019 se compara favorablemente con todo lo que Bernie Sanders está planteando. Corbyn está a la izquierda de Sanders, no solo en algunos asuntos internos, sino también en términos del movimiento contra la guerra. El en su mayoría ha roto con Israel.

## Clase gobernante, los medios demonizaron a Corbyn

¿Por qué las elecciones resultaron como lo hicieron con los laboristas perdiendo y los conservadores, el Partido Conservador, ganando terreno? Número uno: Hubo ataques viciosos contra Corbyn. Como no estamos allí, no lo sentimos. No sentimos el calor, la seriedad y el esfuerzo constante de los medios



Larry Holmes

FOTO: PEOPLES VIDEO NETWORK

burgueses y los políticos burgueses para demonizar a Corbyn.

Inflamaron todo esto acerca de que Corbyn diciendo que era antisemita, principalmente porque critica a Israel. Los militares salieron y casi celebraron una conferencia de prensa con generales en uniforme, diciendo que si era elegido representaría una amenaza para la seguridad nacional de “nuestro imperio”.

Algunos de los banqueros salieron y dijeron que si era elegido, El Parlamento británico caería. Habrá un colapso financiero. El país caerá. Esto fue constante todos los días.

Hay quienes dicen que Corbyn hizo demasiadas concesiones a los elementos burgueses en su partido, representados por Tony Blair, y que Corbyn debería haber tenido una línea dura y expulsar a todos los elementos burgueses. Algo sobre lo que pensar. Eso se compara con otros países — digamos Francia ahora.

Pero en comparación con otros países en Europa y en todo el mundo, no hay muchas huelgas de trabajadores en Gran Bretaña, particularmente en Inglaterra. A decir verdad, si hay una huelga local de trabajadores del transporte.

Solo para darle una idea de cómo una huelga y la lucha de los trabajadores pueden compararse con una elección, y el peligro que conlleva. Los trabajadores en huelga realmente suspendieron la huelga por un día para que pudieran regresar y votar, así tiene sentido.

## Las elecciones: el juego de la burguesía

Esto es importante para mí y creo que es importante para todos los revolucionarios porque si se confía en las elecciones y no presionas o ayudas a la clase trabajadora a ponerse en movimiento a través de luchas de masas, huelgas, ocupaciones, es muy peligroso. Esos huelguistas llevaron a cabo ocupaciones. Nueve de cada diez veces, las elecciones burguesas son lo más importante para la burguesía. Ese es su juego.

Es raro que la burguesía no gane de alguna manera en las elecciones burguesas. Cuando los trabajadores están luchando con huelgas, han tenido la oportunidad de darse cuenta de su fuerza y su poder. Así que eso es algo que espero se revise allí cuando analicen cómo sucedió. Creo que muchos izquierdistas se sienten muy deprimidos y mal en todo el mundo. Pero esto pasará, y la crisis para los trabajadores británicos se profundizará con más austeridad, más ataques. Así que esta es solo una fase, y estamos tratando de discernir algunas lecciones.

Por supuesto, el principal problema en estas elecciones fue Brexit: la votación en el verano de 2016 para abandonar la Unión Europea y estar bajo el control de la clase dominante británica. Si todos fueran sinceros, debería haber quedado lo más claro posible que este era un callejón sin salida para la clase trabajadora.

Claro, la burguesía de la Unión Europea es horrible. Estamos en contra de ellos, pero, intercambiar la burguesía europea como su amo por la burguesía británica es un callejón sin salida para la clase trabajadora.

## Se necesita una huelga masiva de trabajadores

Algunos dicen que la posición de Corbyn sobre Brexit era demasiado equívoca. Intentó complacer a todos. Esto probablemente era cierto. Parece que no se sentía lo suficientemente seguro y fuerte como para decir: Brexit es un truco para dividir a la clase trabajadora, especialmente contra los trabajadores inmigrantes. Y es racista. Entonces esto debería ser de lo que se debe hablar.

Deberíamos hablar sobre cómo organizar una huelga masiva de los trabajadores y sus aliados en todo el mundo — o sea, toda la clase obrera. Quizás las posibilidades de que Corbyn y el Partido Laborista ganaran eran muy, muy escasas debido a Brexit y otras cosas.

No se trata solo de los trabajadores. También representa una división en la clase dominante británica. Pero a lo que a nosotros respecta, su objetivo principal, en términos de división y uso del racismo, era definitivamente la clase trabajadora.

No creo que la clase dominante británica permitiera que Corbyn ganara. No iban a hacer eso. El era temido. Se le consideraba demasiado atípico para los intereses de la burguesía británica — a menos que hubiera algún tipo de situación revolucionaria donde las masas estuvieran en las calles por los cientos de miles que exigían la revolución y el socialismo. Quizás entonces.

Pero ese no fue el caso la semana pasada. Además, la clase dominante dentro del Partido Tory y la clase dominante dentro del Partido Laborista se unieron contra Corbyn. Ahí es donde su unidad de clase trascendió la lealtad de su partido.

Si va a perder una elección desde una perspectiva táctica y política, tal vez algunos en el Partido Laborista fueron optimistas. Estoy seguro de que lucharon hasta el último minuto antes de las elecciones.

Sin embargo, si pensabas que iba a salir como pensabas — y muchos de ellos tenían muchas preguntas al respecto porque sabían de la guerra se libraba contra el Partido Laborista — algunas veces es mejor si vas a perder un elección para ser políticamente fuerte. Y no se equivoque en cuestiones de principios, de modo que al menos haya sentado las bases para la lucha futura.

No podemos ponernos en el lugar de Corbyn. En general, nuestro partido evita tener un análisis de arriba abajo de la situación a la que se enfrentan la clase trabajadora y la izquierda en otro país, aunque mantenemos nuestro derecho a comentarlo. Hubiera sido mejor si Corbyn hubiera salido con más fuerza como

internacionalista. Nadie defendía a los trabajadores migrantes que están bajo ataque.

## La solidaridad con los trabajadores migrantes es clave

Incluso si Corbyn perdió algunos votos, debería haber dicho con mucha fuerza: “Estoy con los trabajadores migrantes. Son parte de nuestra clase”.

Una de las razones por las cuales el Partido Laborista tendrá que fortalecerse en esta cuestión del internacionalismo proletario es porque hoy hay tanta confusión al respecto. Sin un internacionalismo calificado, se le ve como algo que sirve a la burguesía.

En otras palabras, con la globalización imperialista son los ricos los internacionalistas, y dicen que eso es en interés de la clase trabajadora. Es como la mentira de que las ciudades son para la burguesía y el campo es para la clase trabajadora. Trump también ha tratado de jugar esa carta.

No. Los trabajadores de la ciudad, independientemente de sus trabajos, esa es la clase trabajadora. Los trabajadores en las ciudades pertenecen a la clase trabajadora tanto como los trabajadores en el campo. No es una división generacional. Algunos dicen que muchos jóvenes eran para Corbyn, pero él perdió a los trabajadores blancos mayores en el centro del país.

## ¡No al racismo! ¡Forja la unidad de la clase trabajadora!

Nuestro mensaje es: No. No elegimos. Todos ellos son la clase trabajadora y ese es el punto. Tienes que hablar más y más sobre la clase. Para cualquier revolucionario que sea viable y para cualquier partido revolucionario, tienes que hacerlo. La siguiente fase de la lucha de clases global es tomar una posición realmente fuerte contra el racismo y el internacionalismo de la clase trabajadora.

Ahora puede parecer un poco abstracto y no tan importante como abordar las luchas locales en las que se encuentra la gente. Ya sea Medicare para Todos o la universidad gratuita o luchar contra la brutalidad policial racista en el metro o en las calles, las personas se relacionan con las luchas locales.

Pero tarde o temprano, a medida que la crisis mundial se profundice junto con las luchas de clases, el internacionalismo se volverá cada vez más decisivo. Me pregunto si habría sido una buena idea para Corbyn convocar una conferencia en Londres de socialistas y revolucionarios europeos que quieran discutir cómo podemos fortalecer la lucha de clases contra la Unión Europea, los banqueros en Alemania — y unirlos a todos.

Eso diría mucho. Eso sería una señal para cualquiera que esté preocupado por el efecto del chovinismo y el nacionalismo burgués. No, este es un líder que tiene una visión internacionalista.

No estoy seguro de si este tema se convirtió en parte del programa del comentario de la Tercera Internacional. (Tuvimos una discusión sobre eso hace unos meses, ya que este es el centésimo aniversario de la Tercera Internacional formada en Moscú en 1919).

Pero si la Internacional no tomó esa

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