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250 million Indian workers

Biggest strike in world history!



Women strikers in Mumbai, India, Jan. 8.

By Martha Grevatt

India is the world’s second-most populated country, with about 1.37 billion people. Over 928 million are “working age” (15 to 64 years old; statistics from worldometers.info) On Jan. 8, one in four people in this age group — 250 million — stayed off the job in the biggest strike to date in world history.

The 24-hour strike shut down banking, transport, retail, public services, construction and industry in many parts of the country. Workers blocked highways and railroad tracks, with their bodies,

barricades and burning tires. Police cars and government buildings were attacked in some places.

The strike was three months in the making. “We have been campaigning from September,” said Amarjeet Kaur, General Secretary of the All Indian Trade Union Congress, two days before the strike: “Anger of the nation will culminate on January 8.” AITUC is one of the 10 Indian labor federations that jointly called the “bandh” (shutdown). Kaur predicted a “complete bandh” in 10 to 15 cities and massive participation across India. (NewsClick, Jan. 6)

The strike was initially called around a 12-point program protesting Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s anti-worker legislation and massive privatization plans, affecting such national assets as airlines, railways and petroleum refineries. Other points addressed high unemployment and inflation in the world’s third-largest economy and called for raising the minimum wage and pensions. Two-thirds of the population live on less than \$2 a day; nearly half of them are “extremely poor,” subsisting on \$1.25 a day or less.

As Subhashini Ali, a Delhi Communist party leader explained, “When this strike

was originally called, it was to register anger against anti-labour laws and the selling-off of the country’s assets. But now it’s broader because there are no jobs. The future of young people is being destroyed by Modi.” (The Guardian, Jan. 8)

Red hammer-and-sickle flags were prominent in many strike photos.

Strikers also displayed, in signs and chants, widespread opposition to Prime Minister Modi’s Citizenship Amendment Act to deny citizenship to Muslims.

Kaur reported that in some economic

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General strike in Marseille, France. Read more on page 9.

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147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011

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212.627.2994

WW TO WOMEN'S MARCH GLOBAL

Together in solidarity — and toward socialism

The Women's March Global, set to take place on Jan. 18, will be the fourth such international protest since 2017 after the inauguration of misogynist/bigot-in-chief Donald Trump as president. Over 100 chapters and thousands of members are mobilizing for multinational, multigendered, multigenerational protests around the U.S. and in countries around the world on that day.

March leaders set an “intersectional platform” known as Global Unity Principles. They call for ending violence against women and rights for workers, immigrants, people of color, Indigenous communities, individuals with disabilities and LGBTQ2+ people. They include climate justice, too. They demand reproductive rights — now under vicious attack in the U.S., with the worst impact on oppressed women.

Another point of agreement among march organizers is opposition to all

forms of racism and bigotry, including Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.

Workers World supports these principles and the movements which fight for them. The Me Too movement, founded by African-American leader Tarana Burke, has become a mass movement that includes job actions against workplace sexual abuse. The Fight for \$15 per hour minimum wage and unionization continues. Although campaigns to raise the minimum wage have succeeded in 22 states, some workers are left out, including tipped workers, and many women, immigrants and people with disabilities.

Trump's racist, xenophobic, anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic, misogynist, ableist, transphobic and homophobic bigotry is dangerous, as it inflames the ultra-right and endangers the safety — and the very lives — of millions of people, as it

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- If you hate the racist terror and economic injustice this system imposes upon people of color;
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- If you're convinced from reading WW that capitalism is at a dead end;
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... 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.

For the past 43 years, WW subscribers have invested in the paper by joining the WW Supporter Program, helping WW tell working-class truth year round. 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, \$100 or more. \$300 is only \$25 a month.

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

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

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

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, 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. □

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

National Office
147 W. 24th St., 2nd floor
New York, NY 10011
212.627.2994
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta
PO Box 18123
Atlanta, GA 30316
404.627.0185
atlanta@workers.org

Austin
austin@workers.org

Boston
284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
617.522.6626
boston@workers.org

Bay Area
P.O. Box 22947
Oakland, CA 94609
510.394.2207
bayarea@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
335 Richmond Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14222
716.883.2534
buffalo@workers.org

Charlotte
charlotte@workers.org

Cleveland
216.738.0320
cleveland@workers.org

Dallas
dallas@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
804 Old Fayetteville St.
Durham, NC 27701
919.322.9 970
durham@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 3454
Houston, TX 77253-3454
713.503.2633
houston@workers.org

Knoxville, Tenn.
knoxville@workers.org

Minneapolis
minneapolis@workers.org

Pensacola, Fla.
pensacola@workers.org

Portland, Ore.
portland@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 34249
Philadelphia, PA 19101
610.931.2615
phila@workers.org

Salt Lake City
801.750.0248
slc@workers.org

San Antonio
sanantonio@workers.org

San Diego
sandiego@workers.org

Tucson, Ariz.
tucson@workers.org

Washington, D.C.
dc@workers.org

West Virginia
WestVirginia@workers.org

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Workers World
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
New York, NY 10011
Phone: 212.627.2994
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org



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Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, Martha Grevatt,
Monica Moorehead, Minnie Bruce Pratt

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Production & Design Editors: Gery Armsby, Sasha
Mazumder, Scott Williams

Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy Colligan,
Sue Davis, S. Hedgecoke

Contributing Editors: LeiLani Dowell, G. Dunkel,
K. Durkin, Teresa Gutierrez, Betsey Piette, Gloria
Rubac

Mundo Obrero: Alberto García, Teresa Gutierrez,
Carlos Vargas

Supporter Program: Coordinator Sue Davis

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Mississippi

Prisoner deaths demand mass action

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

Jan. 13 — For more than 100 years, Parchman Prison in Sunflower County, in Mississippi’s Delta region, has been the location of brutal racism, wretched conditions and unrelenting cruelty.

Established in 1901, Parchman, now named the Mississippi State Penitentiary, is a sprawling complex of 53 buildings on 18,000 acres where almost 5,000 prisoners can be held. Once only a prison for Black people during the era of legal segregation, the majority of those incarcerated there continue to be African Americans. Overseen by armed guards on horseback until 1971, prisoners still labor in vast fields of cotton and soybeans,

Parchman is also the site of Mississippi’s death row execution chamber.

The deaths of five inmates in Mississippi prisons during the first week of January 2020 — three of those at Parchman — has brought much needed attention to the inhumane conditions endured by the state’s prison population. The official response to the deaths was a statewide lockdown that stopped visitation and phone calls — and locked all inmates in their cells for days without required showers, medical care, legal visits or exercise.

At a Jan. 9 rally at the Georgia State Capitol building in support of the

Mississippi prisoners, two Black women with relatives in Parchman’s Unit 29 brought their stories of days of fearful waiting, not knowing if a brother or fiancé were dead or alive, injured or safe.

Parchman’s legacy of slavery

Mississippi Corrections officials released next to no information despite numerous phone calls. The spate of violent death only became public knowledge because of cell phone videos and text messages from those held in Unit 29, the largest housing section at Parchman.

Both women provided virtually the same descriptions of conditions their loved ones were enduring — rats and roaches everywhere, mold on the walls, no running water, broken toilets, no lights, exposed wiring, inedible food, callous and intimidating guards, collapsing ceilings, rain pouring in from holes in the roof with stifling heat in the summer, damp cold in the winter.

Porshia Evans said her brother was stabbed multiple times in Wilkinson County Jail prior to being sent to Parchman in November — evidence that violent conditions exist throughout the system. Her brother, her only sibling, sent word that he has survived at Parchman, but guards have confiscated his canteen items, hygiene products, legal papers, letter writing materials and books. He was removed from Unit

29 to Unit 32, a building taken out of use 10 years ago because of its decrepit condition. There he and others were put, six or more, into cells without running water and had to sleep on the floor with no mats or blankets.

The second woman, worried about repercussions for her fiancé, asked to be known only by her initials, CCC, to tell his story. A fast food worker and mother of six, she actually got confirmation that he was alive and uninjured while at the Jan. 9 rally. He related to her that by chance he was standing near one of the men who was killed and that he and others had been in the “hole” (solitary) for seven days. With more recent news, she knows he was later removed to Unit 32 and hasn’t had a shower since New Year’s Eve. He says many have been injured in encounters with other inmates and prison forces.

Evans and CCC both said that bad storms in the area Jan. 10-11 caused the electrical power to go out at Parchman. There were no lights and no running water. Though power was restored in the area, prison officials had not manually turned the power back on as of Jan. 12.

Death at Parchman

Meanwhile, prison officials continue to provide little information to the families of the men who were killed. In a Jan. 12 Atlanta Journal Constitution article, Rotonia Gates, the mother of Walter

“Keon” Gates who was killed Dec. 31; Jeffrie Hollman, whose son Roosevelt Hollman was beaten and stabbed to death Jan. 2; and other relatives provided details about their loved ones’ fate.

Denorris Howell’s blood-covered body was found Jan. 3 in Unit 29. He had spoken to his mother just hours before his murder, pleading for help, fearful he was going to die. Relatives of the five men who were killed question the role of the guards, are critical of Department of Corrections officials, and wonder about the inaction of elected state officials related to the deaths of their loved ones.

Mississippi has the third highest incarceration rate in the U.S. — the country that leads the world in incarceration. Parchman Prison has been a death trap since its earliest days. In addition, Parchman is part of the Southern prison-industrial complex, with its roots in slavery, which made money off convict leasing to big plantations and companies through the 1920s and profited from notorious chain gangs during Jim Crow segregation. Now, prisons sign lucrative contracts with private companies for commissary or phone services, while mass incarceration laws continue to target people of color communities.

Mass incarceration needs a mass activist response. Justice for the Mississippi Five! □

Due to mass pressure

Prison activist-writer removed from solitary

By Joe Piette

Bulletin: After receiving hundreds of phone calls, SCI Albion prison officials took Coffey out of solitary confinement late Jan. 13 but claimed he couldn’t be allowed to call his sister because of a prison lock down. Coffey finally called his sister on Jan 15. He reported no physical harm and thanks everyone who supported him, including Workers World, Food Not Bombs Solidarity, Industrial Workers of the World, and the Human Rights Coalition.



Jerome Coffey

Workers World writer and prisoner at the Pennsylvania State Correctional Institution at Albion, Jerome Coffey, was removed from his cell and placed in solitary confinement on Jan. 6.

Coffey has been told he’s in the hole while prison officials conduct a phony investigation for a disturbance last week he had nothing to do with. Prisoners have reported guards harassing Coffey ever since he wrote a Dec. 3 article.

A fellow prisoner at SCI Albion told WW that Coffey was put in the hole for mailing an article he wrote for the newspaper on the 30th anniversary of the Camp Hill prison uprising to a SCI Camp Hill administrator.

The PA Department of Corrections has no right to punish a prisoner for exercising his, her or their right to free speech. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution forbids denying “freedom of speech, or of the press” to all people, including those behind bars. Prison authorities have no legal basis to punish prison-reporter Coffey for sharing his article — titled “30 years after the Camp Hill Uprising: Repression in Pennsylvania’s prison system” — even if PA DOC officials disagree with its contents. (Read article at tinyurl.com/tv27tok/.)

His twin sister, Jeanne Coffey, called the prison all day on Jan. 10, but prison officials refused to answer her questions concerning Jerome’s welfare.

Family and friends are asking people to call:
SCI-Albion/ Superintendent: Michael Clark 814-756-5778
SCI-Albion/ Deputy Superintendent Facilities Management: Bryan Flinchbaugh 814-756-5778
Tell them you are calling out of concern for Jerome Coffey (AS-1558). Demand that his family be informed of his condition and that he be allowed a phone call to his family, specifically his twin sister, Jeanne Coffey, at 267-368-2081.

In addition, Jerome should be taken out of solitary and returned to general population. Jeanne Coffey is asking callers to let her know what prison officials tell you.

Jerome Coffey is a co-founder of the Human Rights Coalition, a grassroots nonprofit group of prisoners and their families, exoffenders and supporters. HRC was formed to aid and support prisoners’ families coping with the stress and hardships created by having a loved one incarcerated, as well as to challenge the punitive, retributive nature of the penal system. For more information, go to hrcoalition.org/about-hrc. □

Pennsylvania prisoners resist media censorship

By Ted Kelly

When Vol. 61 No. 48 of Workers World newspaper came across the desk of the prison staff at State Correctional Institution Frackville in December, censors seized on an article that criticized the Pennsylvania facility’s administration for a variety of offenses.

In direct violation of the inmates’ First Amendment rights, staff rejected the paper and refused to distribute it among the many subscribers at Frackville. However, thanks to a coordinated effort from both inside and outside the prison, the state Department of Corrections finally relented and the paper got through.

While it is clear that the paper was marked for censorship because of the criticism of prison policies, the official reason for denial was that the article, titled “Death, destitution, and activism in SCI Frackville” (tinyurl.com/vyresbu), mentioned a particular staff member by name.

The DOC employee, Sgt. Purcell, has been accused of refusing to process legal mailings for inmate Bryant Arroyo, thereby illegally blocking legal communication with his lawyers. This incident was noted in an official grievance filed by Arroyo, which is a matter of public record.

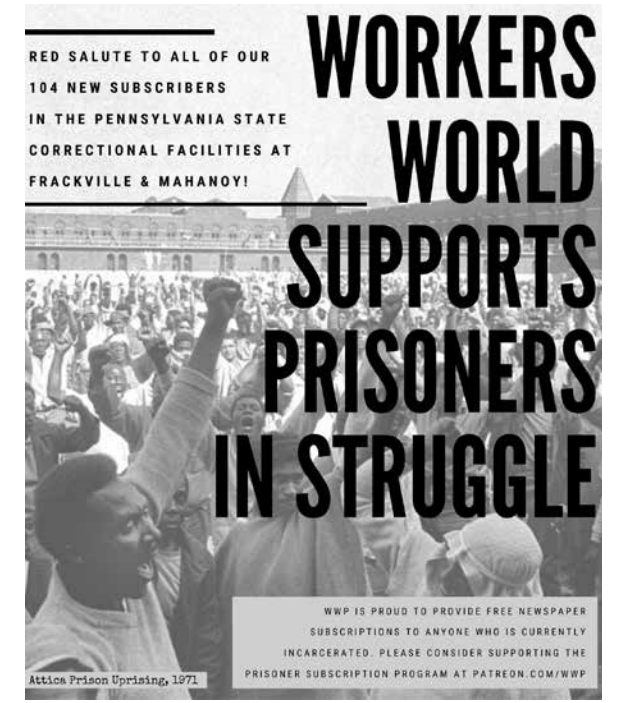
Not least among the other concerns raised by inmates

was the callous indifference to the death of longtime inmate Cleveland Butler. At Butler’s memorial service for prisoners at the facility, Keith “Hungry Jack” Brown sang a beautiful rendition of a Boyz II Men song. Kurt Danysh, one of Butler’s fellow inmates who addressed the assembled mourners, likened the crowd who came to pay tribute to their friend as resembling a “box of crayons,” noting that the diversity of the group was a testament to Butler himself.

Prisoners’ response to oppression and censorship by their captors is historic. After the censorship of Workers World newspaper, over 100 inmates at SCI Frackville and nearby SCI Mahanoy requested subscriptions to the paper.

Workers World is proud to help elevate the voices of all workers and oppressed people, particularly our brothers, sisters and siblings who are prisoners in these 21st century concentration camps. We welcome these new subscribers and salute their refusal to be silenced.

Abolitionists who demand a permanent end to mass incarceration in the U.S. must have no illusions about the severe retaliation that inmates face for exercising their right to political speech. At SCI Albion in Pittsburgh, a Workers World contributor named Jerome Coffey has been thrown into solitary confinement for his outspoken



condemnation of this white supremacist, capitalist system. Workers World expresses solidarity with Jerome Coffey, Bryant Arroyo, Keith Brown, Kurt Danysh and all prisoners. Free ‘em all! □

Salt Lake City

Police assault solidarity camp with unsheltered people

By J.M. Straughn
Salt Lake City

The Take Shelter Coalition set up an encampment here of about 80 people on Jan. 2 to enforce demands to end the brutal treatment of unsheltered members of the working class. The camp was located around the Salt Lake City-County Building in Washington Square.

The Salt Lake City Police Department in full riot gear assaulted protesters Jan. 5 with shotgun “flexible baton rounds” and hand batons, arresting 17 and issuing citations to 13. This is the second brutal attack by cops suffered by protesters in the city in recent months.

The largest shelter in the city for unhoused people, The Road Home, was closed Nov. 21 as temperatures dropped and months of subfreezing temperatures and storms lay ahead. While continuous protests have been underway since the shelter closure was announced, the encampment protest was the first to create an on-going physical presence of activists at a city government building.

Officials cite the opening of new resource centers as compensation for the closure of the large, centrally located shelter. But protesters point out that the new centers offer only a total of 400 beds, while the Road Home offered 1,100 beds.

A 2018 study indicated there are an estimated 2,876 unsheltered residents in Utah, showing the continuing failure of the capitalist state to address human needs. (tinyurl.com/qvznbu3)

The new shelters are located far from jobs, a free clinic and other important resources; transit money is needed to reach them. Unsheltered people without income are placed in a double bind — either break panhandling laws and risk fines of over \$100 or ride transit without paying and risk fines of over \$100 and incarceration in Utah county jails that have a high death rate. (tinyurl.com/vm6d4ao)

Cops, laws, developments target unsheltered people

Anti-camping laws permit police to brutally destroy tent encampments independently constructed by unsheltered people, while beating and arresting occupants and destroying or confiscating their belongings, including cash, identification, food and warm clothing. At a recent vigil to commemorate unsheltered people who had died, Pamela Atkinson, a philanthropist, stated that there were 94 deaths in Utah related to homelessness in 2018.

Rents in Utah have increased every year for the past 10 years while wages remain stagnant. The website Building Salt Lake reported that workers making the state’s \$7.25 an hour minimum wage would have to work a 101-hour workweek to afford an average two-bedroom unit.

In 2017, the state implemented a program called “Operation Rio Grande,” targeting the downtown neighborhood that surrounded two homeless shelters. Sponsored by former Speaker of the Utah House of Representatives Greg Hughes, the program allocated \$34 million for additional jail cells and accelerated police repression of unsheltered people in the downtown area.

Demands for the unsheltered

Protesters’ demands include the opening of a new downtown shelter; the



equivalent number of beds lost in the closure of the old downtown shelter, at a minimum, made readily available and accessible; a change in existing legislation to allow for new shelters to have more beds; no arrests, tickets or harassment of campers; and free public transit for all people who stay in shelters

While some media outlets accused protesters of being “outside agitators,” the facts are otherwise. Among the protesters are currently and formerly unhoused activists who have joined or who have gotten to know over several years the work of groups like Rose Park Brown Berets, Justice for Cody, Union for Street Solidarity and Utah Against Police Brutality. The efforts of these groups have been persistent, consistent and deeply engaged in community conditions for several years. Newer organizations have reached out to ones of longer standing, shared knowledge and skills, and brought renewed energy and militance to the struggle.

According to a statement issued by the Take Shelter Coalition, “The Coalition is made up of a wide range of local community organizers including Civil Riot, Democratic Socialists of Salt Lake, For The People, Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Justice for Cody, Just Media, Party for Socialism and Liberation, Rose Park Brown Berets, Union for Street Solidarity and Utah Against Police Brutality.”

Activists are not accepting the actions of the police forces. A follow-up protest demanding “Money for Housing, Not for War” brought attention to people being forced to sleep outside and campaigned against Chief of Police Mike Brown who authorized abuses.

The deeper concern of the protests is the way that capitalist forces criminalize the victims of the conditions that have been created by capitalism. While landlords raise rents as high as they can, business owners keep wages as low as they can. No power in the capitalist system ensures that workers have the conditions they need to survive.

Reduced to living on the street, people become the targets and victims of state forces trying to beat them into invisibility — unsheltered people are evidence of the crime of capitalism.

Only socialism can create a society in which workers’ needs come first. Socialism is the only system that can defeat capitalism in the struggle on behalf of workers’ needs. □

Jersey City, N.J.

Hundreds rally to defend public park

By Michael Kramer
Jersey City, N.J.

Jan. 11 — Over 700 people rallied in Liberty State Park today to oppose the transfer of 22 acres of parkland to the adjacent private Liberty National Golf Course. Liberty National, owned by billionaire tycoon Paul Fireman, has an initiation fee of \$500,000.

The 22 acres, known as Caven Point, is a migratory bird habitat teeming with bird life year round. Those who came to the rally, reflecting the broad diversity of Jersey City and the surrounding area, included high school students, environmental activists, bird watchers, trade unionists, military veterans, scientists and local politicians. Support to stop this theft of precious land is wide and deep, and the 1% were a target of every speaker at the rally, which was called by over 50 organizations. (NY Times, Jan. 9)

Liberty National has been maneuvering behind the scenes in Trenton, the state capital, with devious tactics ranging from getting friendly politicians to undertake parliamentary maneuvers to setting up a “coalition” of construction unions desperate for jobs and trying to convince local communities of color that saving the Caven Point wildlife refuge is not in their interests!

Liberty State Park covers 1,000 acres along the Hudson River — a former abandoned industrial site restored with Land and Water Conservation funds. (tinyurl.com/rqzebdy) “If you can privatize land purchased with Land and Water Conservation dollars, you’re jeopardizing



Jan. 11 rally in Jersey City.

WW PHOTO: MICHAEL KRAMER

most of our national parks,” said Greg Remaud, director of NY/NJ Baykeeper. “It’s one of our bedrock precedents for land conservation.”

The park is New Jersey’s most visited state park with 5 million visitors a year — it’s a people’s park. And the people have fought off numerous attempts to privatize the restored waterfront park throughout its 43-year history — a continuous onslaught of development proposals, including the private golf course, a water park, a Formula One racetrack, a sports complex and a second private yacht marina — and are fighting now to protect the bird sanctuary at Caven Point. (tinyurl.com/wzac83r)

The LSP Protection Act, currently pending in the New Jersey State Assembly to protect the wildlife refuge, would prohibit any concession, conveyance or lease within the 235-acre natural restoration area in the interior of the park and at Caven Point Peninsula. The bill was submitted by two Assembly members from Jersey City: Raj Mukherji of South Asian descent and Angela McKnight, an African American.

Stephanie Hedgecock contributed to this article.

Cleveland

Fight continues to keep homeless shelter open

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

Over 100 supporters of the Metanoia Project, which provides trauma-sensitive respite to homeless people in Cleveland, packed City Council chambers on Jan. 6. They were there to support efforts of Denison United Church of Christ to continue the work of Metanoia, which lost bed space at its original location in November. Pastor Nozomi Ikuta describes the partnership as “protected and essential expression of our faith.”

City Councilwoman Dona Brady, who represents Ward 11 where Denison UCC is located, is trying to use claims of housing and fire code violations to keep the church from housing the homeless. She has even tried to revoke its designation as a church.

“We’re here to say: Keep Metanoia open, support Denison UCC, build a cold-weather plan, and take a stand against NIMBYism [not it my back yard] and racism in our community,” said Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless Executive Director Chris Knestrick.

Activists inside the meeting interrupted proceedings to invoke the memory of Lorraine Van De Venter and Juan Proctor, homeless people who froze to death during one brutal Cleveland winter. Police attempted to confiscate all the



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Protest to keep homeless shelter open inside Cleveland City Council chambers, Jan. 6.

paper signs that read “Ward 11 supports Denison UCC” and “Keep Metanoia at Denison UCC.” After the meeting ended, the crowd burst into loud chanting of “Keep the shelter open,” holding up signs that had escaped detection by the police.

Hours after the council meeting protest, the church was hit with a surprise visit by two inspectors from the Cleveland Fire Department, escorted by six police. Acting at the behest of pro-gentrification Councilwoman Brady, the inspectors affixed a “Cease Use” notice on the church door on Christmas Eve. Denison UCC appealed the order.

The church passed the inspection, which was a victory. So far, because of militant community support and Pastor Ikuta’s determination, this homeless shelter is staying open. □

The coming decade of revolution

By Vincent Taccetta and Makasi Motema

In the last decade the working class — spurred into action by a destroyed economy, state violence, and national and gender oppression — rose up in a series of mass mobilizations, the scope of which had not been seen in two generations. From Occupy to Black Lives Matter to the Women’s Marches, the oppressed and struggling sectors of the working class vented their anger and challenged the capitalist order.

These mobilizations were uneven in political development. Many were spontaneous and unplanned. The state often used unrestrained violence to strike back. But the contradictions that produced the tumult of the last 10 years have not gone away. Rather, conditions have worsened. This can only lead to greater conflict.

If the most politically advanced segments of the working class are up to the challenge, we are likely to see a tremendous push to organize the proletariat. Over the next 10 years, we may see the development of revolutionary class struggle against the bourgeoisie.

If the last decade was the decade of mass mobilization, of the enraged masses awakening and struggling to find their feet, this decade will be the decade of revolution.

Rent extraction and the gig economy

The newest generation of adults lives on the knife edge of economic insecurity.

They are crushed under gargantuan student loan debt. In every major city in the U.S., rents have risen to unsustainable levels, squeezing more and more people out of their homes.

From 2015 to 2018, median rent rose 7.6 percent, while the consumer price index showed a 14 percent increase in the cost of basic necessities like food, energy, transportation and medical care.

For millennials in the U.S. there is no margin of error. They average a net worth of less than \$8,000 — less than any previous generation — and down 34 percent for adults ages 18 to 35. More than half of all millennials have less than \$5,000 in savings. (tinyurl.com/ueyommt)

The rising cost of living has created a traumatic economic wound; the job market offers no means to stop the bleeding. With computerized precision, Silicon Valley has accelerated the extraction of surplus value from the working class.

The so-called “gig-economy” is a thinly veiled assault on workers’ rights. Workers are hired as private contractors rather than full-time employees. This insulates business owners from costs like health insurance. The results are clear: Productivity has continued to rise, but wages have fallen. Inflation-adjusted salaries for millennials are 20 percent lower than they were for baby boomers at their age. (tinyurl.com/yyn9tqzf)

As Marx understood, the continued extraction of wealth creates a counterforce of popular resistance. The working

class, under greater and greater stress, is forced to organize in order to survive. The resurgence of strikes, both in conventional sectors (West Virginia teachers) and in newer tech industries (Amazon and Google), is evidence of this. The extraction of surplus value from the working class is intensifying and becoming unsustainable. As contradictions sharpen, class consciousness and class struggle inevitably increase. In order to maintain control, the ruling class must increasingly rely on state violence.

The slow collapse of the state

Mao Zedong called all reactionaries “paper tigers” — “unable to withstand the wind and rain.” Looking at the U.S. state apparatus in 2020: Has this description ever been more fitting? The U.S. continually pumps more money into the security and surveillance state, but the true strength of its police and military is weaker than ever. It relies on external technological advantage while internal morale and physical capacity are collapsing.

During the Obama administration, major military innovation was the expansion of drone warfare and special operations raids. The imperialists referred to this as the “light footprint strategy.” (tinyurl.com/urpkcl7)

In truth, it was war by assassination. The means were remote-piloted drones which hovered over a population — keeping it in constant terror of the next

“hellfire” missile attack and gangs of specially trained armed forces smashing down doors in the middle of the night to kill or abduct hapless inhabitants.

Why did they resort to such high-tech terrorism? Why abandon conventional warfare? Because no other means were available. The U.S. military is struggling to recruit soldiers. The Pentagon lacks the masses of troops necessary to maintain control over the populations of the numerous countries that have been attacked and occupied.

The only option, then, is to keep targeted countries in a permanent state of chaos by murdering any political or military leaders who attempt to resist U.S. imperialism. Such a strategy can never defeat the broader anti-imperialist movements behind these leaders, and the U.S. knows this.

But the ruling class has settled on destabilization as a means of resource extraction. The goal is to keep resisters off balance long enough for private companies to drain the natural resources (from the land) and surplus value (from the labor of the working class) of the targeted country. As the climate crisis also demonstrates, the ruling class will accrue as much wealth as it can for as long as it can until the entire system collapses.

And the cracks have already appeared. The death squads referred to as U.S. Special Forces are exhausted by the endless attacks they have conducted in Africa

Continued on page 6

The role of racism

Who are the missing people?

By Arielle Robinson

In the case of missing people across the United States, one thing is clear — missing people of color are not granted as much attention by the media or police as missing white people, despite people of color going missing at disproportionately high rates.

Although this fact may seem obvious because of systemic racism, statistics — or the lack of — detail a much grimmer situation.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimated in 2017 that, of 613,000 people who went missing, people of color made up about 60 percent.

Although Black children make up around 14 percent of all children in the U.S., 37 percent of missing children — more than one-third of missing children in the country — are Black, according to CNN. (tinyurl.com/vys4t4d)

Black people as a whole make up about 13 percent of the U.S. population. But in 2018, more than 30 percent of missing people in the country were Black. (tinyurl.com/sd6a6fx)

Because the FBI groups white and Latinx children together, it is difficult to know how many Latinx children are currently missing — 20 percent of missing children are Latinx.

For Indigenous women in the U.S., neither the federal government nor any state or local government collects statistics, reports Pacific Standard magazine. No national database exists for Indigenous nations to report women who are missing. (tinyurl.com/sbq7vu9)

Despite the FBI claiming in 2016 that around 5,712 Indigenous women were missing around the country, the federal missing persons’ database at the Department of Justice has only 116 of those 5,712 women listed.

According to Ms. Magazine (Dec. 2), the very few statistics that do exist around Indigenous women show that 97 percent of Indigenous women who had faced physical and/or sexual violence were victimized by non-Indigenous perpetrators. (tinyurl.com/uznv49r)

Because federal law limits Indigenous tribes from criminally prosecuting

non-Indigenous offenders on tribal lands, Indigenous women rarely receive justice for the crimes committed against them.

It is also important to note that all these numbers of missing people are only estimates, and the actual number of missing people of color is likely much higher.

Racism of police; media intensifies anguish

Another concern for the loved ones of missing people of color is the lack of care by police departments.

Some people of color are hesitant to call the police after a loved one goes missing, for fear of unintended consequences because of the long history of racism by police departments.

For example, some im/migrant families hesitate to call the police because they fear being reported to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Police departments are also quick to label missing people of color as runaways, despite no evidence pointing toward disproportionate numbers of people of color “running away.” A significant number of missing children of color are homeless or in foster care and may end up in sex-trafficking rings, according to Natalie Wilson, a founder of the Black and Missing Foundation.

Media coverage of missing people of color is also a reflection of the entrenched racist system that police adhere to. Only about one-fifth of the 30 percent of Black people missing nationwide is covered by the news, according to CNN.



IMAGE: BLACK AND MISSING FOUNDATION

In a 2015 study exposing the coverage of missing children, media only made reference to missing Black kids about 7 percent of the time. A similar study centered around Indigenous women shows that very few cases of missing Indigenous women are covered on the news.

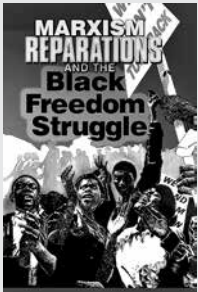
Economic factors play a role in the lack of attention as well. Some families of color may not have the resources to hire a private investigator to search for their loved one after police do a poor, or no, search. The economic necessity of having to go to work to keep a job also allows for less time that a working-class family member could be searching.

Institutionalized racism in the U.S. rears its ugly head again when it comes to Black and Brown people who have disappeared. Racism prevents Black and Brown people from receiving the justice and attention they need.

One response to this alarming situation would be for concerned communities to make the issue of missing people of color a key part of their plan to combat racism at a local level. □

Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper.
Edited by Monica Moorehead.



Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination • Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery • Black Youth: Repression & Resistance • The Struggle for Socialism Is Key • Domestic Workers United Demand Passage of a Bill of Rights • Black & Brown Unity • Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior • Racism & Poverty in the Delta • Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions • Alabama's Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation • Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion

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Youth, the workers and the struggle against war

By Makasi Motema

Excerpted from a talk given at the Jan. 9 Workers World Party forum in New York City titled “The growing U.S. war threats against Iran and Iraq; resistance & international protest plans.”

As the U.S. continues its attacks on Iran, we must ask: How do today’s youth feel about the anti-war movement? The truth is that there is cause both for concern and for hope.

Today’s youth witnessed the anti-war movement of 2003: the massive, beautiful outpouring of humanity, banded together in resistance to imperial war. And they also saw that war continue, unabated. They saw the unresponsiveness of the bourgeoisie. How does one react when they see millions making their voices heard, only to see those in power tune them out?

And yet, today’s youth are moving further to the left every day. They are more critical of war. More critical of the lies of the imperialist state. Less willing to cheerlead the march to war.

This is not a paradox. Nor have young people slid into the abyss of apathy, as many fear. The youth are critical of

imperialism, and they are thinking critically about what it means to be anti-war. The youth are asking the question that needs to be asked: If holding a protest won’t stop the war, then what will?

Young people today are not turning against anti-war protests, nor are they turning against anti-war protesters. Instead they are searching. They are searching for a long-term vision, for a path forward. With the audacity and arrogance of youth, young people are demanding not an opposition to war, but an end to war.

Today’s youth believe that we stand now at an inflection point in history. That tomorrow will not be like yesterday. That the future and the past are in a fight to the death — and that the future will win. The youth do not want to march. The youth do not want to hold signs. The youth do not want to take a single step outside their homes unless that step is a first step on the road to revolution.

But how? Do we abandon the methods of the past? No. Political agitation through protest is vital for raising consciousness. It also serves a second purpose — if we are willing to rise to the challenge. That challenge is to turn from a mere critique of state power and to embrace the power of

the working class.

The U.S. regime is the most powerful empire that has ever dominated the globe, and yet, its power is insignificant next to the strength of a united working class. A united working class — organized, educated and prepared for struggle. That must be our goal.

Task of Marxist-Leninist party

If we are willing to unite the working class, if we are willing to go among the members of our class — to organize them, to know them, to struggle with them — then our power will be limitless.

This is the role of a Marxist-Leninist party: to engage relentlessly in deep organizing, training cadre organizers, going into unions, going into neighborhoods and forming the masses into political fighting units ready to wage revolutionary struggle.

The path will be long and it will be hard. At first the gains will be slow. The fear that energy is lost in vain will cast a dark shadow on the hope that we will succeed. But if we do this — if we have the courage to lead — then the youth will follow.

Through organizing, we can do more than fight the U.S. war machine — we can break it. The second function of the



Makasi Motema, Jan. 9. PHOTO: PVN

protest action is the demonstration of peoples’ power. When the masses are organized with us, the protest action takes on a completely different political character. With the masses behind us, we can seize the vital points of capital. With the masses behind us, we can stop industry and halt commerce. With the masses behind us, we can shut down ports and block highways. With the masses behind us, we can finally run the fascist police out of our communities. With the masses behind us, we won’t have to ask for the wars to end, we will make them end, and we will bring the war machine tumbling to the ground. □

The coming decade of revolution

Continued from page 5

and West Asia. Even pilots who bomb civilians via remote-controlled planes are experiencing high levels of burnout.

With declining troop numbers but an increasing number of battlefields, how can the empire hope to go on? At this writing, the U.S military is preparing to break itself against the impenetrable terrain and hardened soldiers of Iran. It seems that nothing can divert the state’s self-destructive tendencies.

Domestic law enforcement is no better off. As with the Pentagon, exposure of racist tactics by both the police and the Border Patrol — and the resulting condemnation — has led to declining recruitment and plummeting morale. Numerous stories in recent years feature pigs (a term popularly used by the Black Panther Party to refer to killer cops) openly lamenting this “shocking” turn of events.

For any rational observer, this was an inevitable consequence of the public’s newfound ability — driven by camera phones and the internet — to document and disseminate instances of racism and oppression by U.S. law enforcement.

This declining force will struggle, to greater and greater futility, to contain the growing mass mobilizations over the next 10 years.

Both at home and abroad, U.S. military and police are paper tigers. When faced with the winds of popular anger and the



Youth demand justice for police victim, Eric Garner, in front of killer cop Daniel Pantaleo’s house in Staten Island, N.Y., on Aug. 8, 2019. WW PHOTO: HENRY LUNA

rain of organized resistance, they will wilt and crumble like wet pulp.

Building the revolutionary machine

The state is weak politically, economically and militarily. The people are getting stronger. Class consciousness is growing. A recent poll found that 70 percent of millennials planned on voting socialist, 36 percent viewed communism favorably, and 22 percent wanted to see the abolition of all private property! (tinyurl.com/

yy9pdxhk) This portends a great deal of change in the coming years.

The U.S. has experienced revolutionary upsurges before. But this can only be seen as a cause for apprehension rather than optimism if one incorrectly sees the struggles of the past as distinct events. In truth, all revolutionary movements are part of a continuum of struggle.

The actions of previous generations of revolutionaries created material changes in the governance and culture of the U.S.

Those changes in turn have a material effect on successive generations.

The repressive state apparatus reacts to the periodic rise of social movements, and it will take sustained struggle to create change. Capitalism, in its imperial core, will not be slain in one night. To put it succinctly, a tree cannot be chopped down with the blow of one ax.

What then is our task today? It can only be one thing: to organize for working-class power. To unite the multinational working class in opposition to the bourgeoisie. To build durable, long-term organizations that are capable of withstanding the fearsome rigors of revolutionary struggle.

The last decade showed the sparkling brilliance of spontaneous mobilization, as well as its flaws. A bright flame cannot light the way if it burns out too quickly. Only deep organizing — the creation of long-term political structures in the working class — can carry us through the challenges of the next 10 years. It is only through close ties to the masses that organs of dual power can be built to truly challenge and defeat the ruling class. If not, reactionary forces will dominate.

The contradictions our society faces are mounting. Events, reactions and counter-reactions are unpredictable. We may have less time to prepare than we think. The time to organize for the decade of revolution is NOW! □



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By Deirdre Griswold

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Iran-Iraq solidarity grows amid U.S. threats

By Sara Flounders

United States policy toward both Iran and Iraq is based not on “bad advice” or howling blunders by President Donald Trump, as Democratic Party pundits claim. It is not just a “mismanaged” foreign policy.

Washington’s miscalculations of the past two weeks have been driven by extreme frustration at all levels of U.S. ruling circles, military strategists and think tanks. They reflect developments U.S. imperialists have been unable to push back. In fact, their desperate efforts have had the opposite effect.

The U.S. imperialists are losing their overarching dominant influence in the region. Their ability to control events on several fronts — political, economic and even military — is slipping.

Their weakened position is likely to drive them toward deeper rogue actions, even more reckless threats and new war crimes.

But these criminal actions can also foster deeper anti-imperialist unity in the region. Recent massive demonstrations in Iran and Iraq reflect this. So does the willingness of Iraqi security forces guarding Baghdad’s Green Zone, home to the U.S. Embassy, to literally open the door on New Year’s Eve to thousands of angry people protesting U.S. missile attacks.

Then, on Jan. 7, Iran attacked two vast U.S. bases on Iraqi territory. This open challenge to the U.S. empire was a carefully calibrated response to the Pentagon’s assassination four days earlier of Iran’s highly respected military leader, Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

The implications of this successful strike by Iranian missiles launched from hundreds of miles away will resonate throughout the region. The U.S. has always boasted that its equipment is much more advanced and technically sophisticated.

U.S. collaborators among the corrupt Gulf State monarchies may be having second thoughts about the hundreds of billions of dollars they have spent on U.S. weapons. They will be reevaluating the ability of U.S. promises to protect them, even from the wrath of their own populations. They might also be interested in re-evaluating their hostile relations with Iran.

This was the second time U.S. weapons didn’t achieve what Washington wanted.

In September, using low-flying drones, Houthi rebels in Yemen temporarily took out half of Saudi Arabia’s oil and gas installations. The U.S. blamed Iran. Billions of dollars of Patriot missile systems purchased from the Pentagon offered no protection.

According to many U.S. and Israeli claims, the same missiles and drones are shared with the highly organized Hezbollah forces in Lebanon.

General Soleimani’s Jan. 2 state visit to Iraq, to discuss Saudi peace overtures after 40 years of aggressive hostility, may have been due in part to the successful Houthi drone attack from Yemen.

NATO pulling out

On Jan. 10, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo refused to even discuss with the Iraqi prime minister a vote in the Iraqi Parliament telling U.S. troops to leave Iraq. But U.S. and NATO collaborators got the message.

As Trump called for NATO to step up its involvement in Iraq, NATO allies instead announced their departures. Canada stated it was withdrawing some 500 troops. Germany was next, announcing a partial withdrawal of its troops. Then Sweden, Denmark, Hungary, Romania and Latvia all suspended their



Jan. 8 protest, NYC.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

training missions with Iraqi forces. Many other countries — including Britain, France, Italy, Spain, Australia, Denmark, Norway, Portugal and Bulgaria — have already withdrawn their troops from Iraq.

That leaves U.S. positions more exposed.

Despite the vote in the Iraqi Parliament for the U.S. to leave, the Pentagon has yet to announce its decision.

Threat of sanctions on Iraq backfires

Trump responded to the Iraqi vote with new threats.

Beginning in 1990, and continuing in part even today, the U.S. has imposed sanctions on Iraq. The U.N. estimated that, in the first four years of these sanctions, half a million Iraqi children under the age of five died of malnutrition and preventable diseases.

Trump has now threatened that if U.S. troops are told to leave, he will reimpose the sanctions on Iraq “like they have never seen before” — so harsh they would “make Iranian sanctions look somewhat tame” by comparison.

Rather than help Iraq in its desperately needed reconstruction of essential civilian water and electric infrastructure destroyed in the U.S. war, Trump now threatens that Iraq must pay the U.S. back for the “billions of dollars” it spent building air bases for its military operations.

U.S. sanctions on Iran

It was Trump’s decision in 2018 to withdraw from an agreement with Iran, signed by five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany in 2015, and instead impose harsh new unilateral sanctions. This led to the regional crisis.

The new U.S. sanctions created enormous hardship in Iran. But they did not, as had been predicted, lead to Iran’s collapse. However, they did have far-reaching, unintended consequences throughout the region, forcing all political forces to actively turn, for their survival, away from U.S. domination and toward regional cooperation.

Iraq-Iran trade expands

A growing number of joint Iraqi-Iranian projects now include setting up industrial parks along the south, central and northern borders and increasing commercial links to \$20 billion a year in trade.

The most interesting joint project, signed in May 2019, involves the dredging of a common waterway, known in Iraq as the Shatt al-Arab and in Iran as the River Arvand, to facilitate shipping, commerce and tourism. Iran and Iraq had waged war throughout the 1980s over control of this vital artery, which forms a natural border between the two countries. Due to hostilities, the waterway has not

been cleared since the mid 1970s.

Iran and Iraq are also planning on developing the Naft Shahr and Khorramshahr natural gas fields. Plans to link the Iraqi and Iranian railway networks together are also moving forward. This will enable U.S.-sanctioned Iran to transport goods, through Iraq, to U.S.-sanctioned Syria, which has seaports on the Mediterranean coast.

These cooperation developments have been covered by both Arab and Iranian news services.

After high-level meetings in May, Iraq is increasingly using Iran’s refined petroleum products for needed gas and electricity, helping the disrupted economies in both countries.

Trump’s bellicose threats of harsh sanctions on Iraq will only strengthen these regional decisions and trade agreements.

Chinese projects in Iraq

Threats of U.S. sanctions are also reinforcing the drive for wider relations. China is already Iraq’s largest trading partner, while Iraq is now China’s second-largest oil supplier. The relationship exceeds \$30 billion in annual two-way trade.

Prime Minister Abdul Mahdi headed a large delegation to China this past October to discuss mega projects in infrastructure, education and health. The meetings were described as “a quantum leap” in bilateral relations.

Trump’s reaction? He demanded that Mahdi cancel the contracts.

Meanwhile, extensive signed agreements for railway projects and building new international roads, bridges, schools and health clinics came out of the meetings.

China’s Hilong Oil Service & Engineering Co. and the Iraqi Drilling Co. agreed to a joint venture to exploit

numerous oilfields throughout the country, including the Majnoon field — one of the world’s largest.

Chinese projects with Iran

China’s economic relations with Iran are more advanced than those with Iraq.

China and Iran in 2016 signed a \$600 billion, 25-year trade agreement based on the international agreement to end sanctions on Iran.

The U.S. illegally abrogated this agreement and has demanded that every other country also cancel its trade. But China has not complied with U.S. demands. Under its Belt and Road Initiative, sometimes called the New Silk Road, trade with Iran has expanded.

Extensive new rail lines through Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan connect China and Iran, cutting delivery time to half that of ocean trade. Future rail lines from Urumqi in Xinjiang province to Tehran will further shorten trade time and expand economic ties.

These two formerly colonized and oppressed countries, Iran and China, are increasingly targeted by U.S. imperialism. In response, they are expanding exchanges in defensive military technology and advanced technical support.

In 2018 the U.S. ordered Canada to arrest and detain Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of the Chinese tech company Huawei. The charge was “illegally dealing with” Iran, allegedly violating U.S.-imposed sanctions. China has continued to ignore U.S.-imposed sanctions on Iran.

Attacks breed resistance

On the same day that U.S. drones assassinated Iranian Gen. Soleimani in Iraq, the first joint naval exercises of Iran, China and Russia were underway in the Gulf of Oman, off the Iranian coast.

Wall Street’s ruthless and expanding efforts to starve every country into compliance need to be met with such class-conscious, anti-imperialist solidarity.

The struggle is far from over and the growing desperation of capitalist exploiters and Pentagon war planners means many crises lie ahead. However, there are a new, determined mass mood and new means to confront a decaying system built on piracy, looting and occupation.

The leader of Lebanon’s highly organized Hezbollah militias said the U.S. killing of Gen. Soleimani will impel the entire region into a “completely new phase.”

Speaking before thousands of supporters at a rally in southern Beirut, Hezbollah leader, Hassan Nasrallah called the U.S. killing of Soleimani a “clear, blatant crime that will transform the region.” □

Buffalo, N.Y. No war on Iran!



A large, noisy crowd turned out in Buffalo, N.Y., Jan. 9, chanting nonstop to demand all U.S. troops be pulled out of Iraq and “No war on Iran!” Motorists

in rush-hour traffic, including the driver of a packed city bus, responded with lots of honking in solidarity with the protest.

— Report and photo by Ellie Dorritie

ANOTHER KIND OF WAR

Unilateral economic sanctions damage Syria

By Karin Leukefeld

First published in the German daily newspaper Junge Welt on Dec. 16. Translation by John Catalinotto.

At the beginning of December, the Conference of Germany’s State Interior Ministers extended the ban on deportations to Syria without restrictions until at least June 2020. Originally, the interior ministers at their autumn meeting in Lübeck planned to relax the ban and allow deportations of serious criminals. During the conference, however, a gloomy picture of Syria was painted. The country “is anything but safe,” declared a church aid organization.

There were “hardly any education or training opportunities and few prospects of finding work and earning an income.” The health system was “at rock bottom”; there was not “enough intact housing.”

A Nov. 20 report by the Foreign Office addressed to the conference stated that there were “no safe areas for returnees.” It stated that attacks by “the regime” were possible anywhere and at any time, with the exception of areas currently under Turkish or Kurdish control or controlled by the U.S.

Contrary to what politicians and the media have described, however, the war has largely come to a standstill, except in Idlib and other areas in the north of the country. A different kind of war is now raging, however, due to the unilateral punitive economic measures of the European Union and an oil embargo by the U.S.—an economic war.

Willing to return

Nevertheless, tens of thousands of people are still determined to return to Syria. They are coming from Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, and Syrians now living in Europe also plan to return to their homeland. A report by the U.N. Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in October 2019 states that 75,501 refugees “spontaneously” returned between January and September of this year. It is likely this is a minimum estimate.

For 2019, an “increase in self-organized returns” is expected, although this presents a challenge, the report says. The UNHCR is trying to help by repairing shelters and providing legal assistance, subsistence and education. “The growing demands for support for returnees,” however, required more commitment from all the involved parties.

But the rich U.N. member states from Europe, the U.S. and the Gulf States are providing no support. The government in Damascus gets more and more isolated, and after all the war damage, now unilateral EU economic sanctions are destroying the Syrian economy. These sanctions were first imposed on Syria’s oil sector in 2011. Since then the sanctions have been repeatedly tightened and extended annually, most recently in May 2019 until June 1, 2020.

Currently, 269 people and 69 institutions and companies are on the sanctions list. They are subject to a ban upon entering the European Union, and their personal assets in European banks have been frozen. The pretext for the sanctions is that these entities are responsible for violence and repression against the civilian population in Syria and benefit from “support for the regime and/or being associated with persons or institutions of the regime.”

People struggle to remove rubble from damaged buildings in Syria’s old city of Aleppo in 2019.

In addition to the entire Syrian government, military personnel, business people and their companies are on the list. These include Syrian Arab Airlines, the mobile phone provider Syriatel, the renowned daily newspaper Al-Watan, and all Syrian oil production companies and banks, including the Central Bank. Even the Syrian tobacco and cotton marketing organizations are subject to sanctions because they are state institutions.

Reconstruction made difficult

The unilateral punitive measures have a devastating effect, especially since they are linked to the U.S. oil embargo, which is also unilateral. In Aleppo, the businesspeople in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry are bound by the sanctions.

They “prevent us from building our companies and creating jobs,” said a businessman in Aleppo in an interview with Junge Welt. Instead, Europe is sending aid organizations to Syria: “They give



us bread, but no work. People become dependent instead of living in dignity. Every worker we would hire would be able to feed [their] family [themselves].”

Only the U.N. Security Council has the authority to impose punitive measures on a country. Therefore, unilateral sanctions are contrary to international law. Idriss Jazairy, the U.N. Special Rapporteur in charge, has stated this legal concept time and again. The majority of the U.N. member states reject unilateral sanctions, but the rich Western states take the law into their own hands, he said, thus aggravating the danger of war internationally.

On Nov. 21 the Second Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs at the United Nations addressed the question of the legality of unilateral sanctions.

Sixteen draft resolutions were submitted and two were adopted.

Among them was one calling on the “international community” to condemn unilateral economic, financial or trade sanctions because they prevent countries’ development. Punishments that are not authorized by U.N. bodies must be suspended. Such measures are incompatible with international law and contradict the basic principle of the multilateral economic system.

The resolution was approved by 116 U.N. member states, while two states—the U.S. and Israel—voted against it. Fifty-two states, among them all EU states, including Germany, abstained. □



Sanctions harm reconstruction in Syria’s Homs province

By Karin Leukefeld

Published in Junge Welt, Dec. 16. Translation by John Catalinotto.

According to Gov. Talal Barasi, about half a million people fled from Homs province, the largest in Syria, during the war. Some 2.3 million people had lived in Homs before the war, Barasi explained in an interview with Junge Welt. Of these, about 500,000 people, or 100,000 families, had left the province.

About 40 percent had returned, both internally displaced people and people who had sought protection in Lebanon. The responsibility of the provincial and central government is to create the conditions for their return and to reestablish public services. The government is repairing water reservoirs, roads and schools, but sanctions are preventing Syria from

obtaining necessary building materials.

The engineers in Homs planned the reconstruction according to the latest standards, said Barasi. They drew up a master plan for the years 2025-35. “The unfair sanctions against the Syrian people have a negative impact on the reconstruction process,” he said.

Machines and tools that are needed cannot be imported. Barasi particularly emphasized the oil embargo: “We need oil for industry, transport, heating, reconstruction, hospitals, and also to produce electricity. This is an economic war being waged against Syria.”

Whoever is from Homs and wants to return is welcome, said the Homs governor. Fourteen busloads, about 700 people, returned from Jarabulus on the border with Turkey. It was difficult for the people arriving from the north because Ankara [seat of the Turkish government] refused

to cooperate with Damascus.

Barasi said: “But from Lebanon, people are returning across the border with official permission and papers. This is regulated by a Syrian-Lebanese committee. We have the names and lists of people who want to return.” The Syrian and Jordanian governments have also worked together for returnees from Jordan.

Nevertheless, there were still many reasons why people did not come back. They lacked money and transport facilities. Some of the terrorist groups would not allow people to leave, while other people were stopped by the international troops in the region.

“We strongly believe that all Syrians should return home,” said Barasi. “And I repeat that we will provide the returnees with all the services that are needed. We will ourselves send buses to pick them up from the border.” □

Earthquake hits Puerto Rico

The people organize against ‘natural,’ capitalist-made disaster

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

A 6.4 magnitude earthquake hit the Caribbean on Jan. 7, with the southern coast of Puerto Rico its epicenter. Then a 5.9 quake devastated the same area of the island on Jan. 11. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, in addition to these quakes, since Dec. 28, Puerto Rico has suffered over 1,200 smaller quakes and aftershocks, with more than 70 at least 3.5 magnitude. (AP, Jan. 12)

Thousands of people are in shelters; hundreds of homes and schools are destroyed, with at least one person dead. Over 300,000 people have been without water and millions are left without electricity. Governor Wanda Vázquez estimated damage from the Jan. 7 earthquake alone at \$110 million.

People of the island are still struggling to recover from the 2016 devastation of hurricanes Maria and Irma. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has continued to withhold more than \$18 million in hurricane aid. The New York Daily News reported Jan. 9: “The Trump administration is refusing to release all available disaster aid to Puerto Rico despite this week’s earthquakes, citing concerns about ‘corruption’ and ‘financial mismanagement’ on the island.”

The only “corruption” is, in fact, the

financial exploitation of the island by U.S. colonialism for over a century, exacerbated most recently by the PROMESA Act (Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act). Passed by the U.S. Congress in 2016, PROMESA was designed by capitalist power-players to “restructure debt” taken on by the Puerto Rican government so they could reap more profit through drastic austerity cutbacks to human services.

Puerto Rican people rising up

Starting in 2016, the people of Puerto Rico rose to protest this exploitation. Teachers and students began striking, joined by other workers, with mass May Day mobilizations. In 2019, an island-wide strike of millions of people, demanding economic and social justice, kicked out the existing governor and his staff. (Makasi Motema, “Puerto Rico strike: 12 days rattle the empire,” WW, July 30, 2019)

The dynamic self-organization of the Puerto Rico people in the face of “natural” and human-made disasters continues. Since the quakes began, Aurora Levins Morales, environmentalist and writer, has been reporting on her observations and efforts in the Indiera community on Facebook posts:

“Jan. 8 — Pretty much everyone is without power and many without water,

something my people are experts at, but remember, power outages can be fatal for people with medical conditions that require equipment or refrigeration and caused many deaths post-Maria.

“The south coast towns nearest the epicenter, and nearest to me as well, have been hard hit, with many buildings badly damaged or collapsed.

“Up here in Indiera... today I was able to go out walking in the community and things are much worse than I thought. At least 6-7 houses have collapsed in the immediate area, but the worse thing, collectively, is that the store, which is the heart of this barrio, and the only source of groceries anywhere near, is damaged beyond repair. People have rallied around to build a tiny wooden store nearby for now, but without Don Liche’s colmado this community will fade away.

“We’re going to make sure it gets rebuilt. The help that does come to PR rarely makes it into the rural communities, so I want to make sure that this area gets some real help.”

Levins Morales is the daughter of distinguished Marxist scientist Ricardo Levins Morales. (See WW, April 15, 2016) Her Facebook post immediately after the first earthquake documents the community’s effort to sustain a school there:

“Escuela Rúbias is in the highlands of



PHOTO: AURORA LEVINS MORALES

Escuela Rubías, in the western highlands of Puerto Rico, before the Jan. 7 earthquake hit.

western Puerto Rico, in a coffee growing area economically devastated by Hurricane María.... [The school was] targeted for closure by the government, like so many others. The community organized, blocked the gates, and kept their school open, continuing to serve K-8 students.

“Escuela Rubías is essential for this community’s revival, but in order to secure its future, additional classrooms need to be built.... Help Escuela Rubias provide the kind of education Puerto Rican children need, for the future they deserve.”

For more information on sending aid and assistance to Puerto Rico, go to facebook.com/auroralevinsmorales.

Venezuela

By John Catalinotto

The self-appointed “interim president” of Venezuela, Juan Guaidó, received a humiliating setback in that country’s National Assembly vote on Jan. 5. He was deposed as leader of the parliamentary body.

Throughout 2019, Guaidó served as the designated puppet of U.S. imperialism in Venezuela. He made five attempts with a reactionary, pro-U.S. regime to overthrow and replace the Bolivarian government led by President Nicolás Maduro. Guaidó had no base among Venezuelans outside of his own assembly district and little credibility even among the opposition.

His main support came from the worst imperialist operatives allied with

the Trump administration: Mike Pence, Mike Pompeo, John Bolton, Marco Rubio, Elliott Abrams, from Trump himself; from Luis Almagro — the Uruguayan U.S. agent heading the Organization of American States; the Iván Duque regime in Colombia; Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil; and from the European Union.

Guaidó’s complete lack of popular support helped defeat all five of his attempts to make a coup during 2019. He was also connected to the embezzlement of humanitarian aid and links to Colombian paramilitary outfits — “death squads.”

Opposition parties have dominated the National Assembly (AN) since the December 2015 vote. Apparently a majority of the representatives, even those opposing the Maduro government, were

disgusted with Guaidó’s role.

On Jan. 5, some 81 of 150 voting members elected Luis Parra president, replacing Guaidó, who didn’t attend the meeting. Guaidó claimed he wasn’t allowed in, staging a fence-climbing photo-op.

Maduro recognized Parra as the new AN president, saying on Jan. 5: “The National Assembly has voted and there is a new leadership board. It was in the air that Guaidó was going to be removed by the very opposition.” Maduro criticized Guaidó for “not showing up.”

Parra said he would “pursue a path toward reconciliation” with the government. (quotes from venezuelaanalysis.com, Jan. 5)

On Jan. 8, Guaidó declared the Jan. 5 vote irregular and established his own

version of the national assembly, with himself as its leader.

That means Guaidó is the self-appointed leader of a self-appointed assembly, which he claims gives him the right to be the self-appointed president. Pence congratulated him.

While his obvious lack of popular support may make him a ridiculous figure, U.S. imperialism’s backing for Guaidó continues the threat against Venezuela’s revolution and its sovereignty. The progressive movement in the United States must still resist U.S. interference in Venezuela and demand an end to U.S. sanctions that have imposed suffering on millions of Venezuelans. □

As gov't concedes point

General strike in France continues

By G. Dunkel

French President Emmanuel Macron’s government bet that the unions would grow tired, their members pinched by their loss of pay, and that public support would dwindle as travel to and from work became onerous, as their electricity flickered. But the government lost.

In response to massive protests Jan. 9 the French government offered a major concession. But the struggle continues, as does public support for the workers.

Workers at France’s Central Bank have decided that starting Jan. 13, they’ll stop supplying ATMs with money. At least one of France’s eight refineries has stopped producing fuel. General assemblies of workers at the other eight refineries are considering keeping their products from being distributed.

Many political analysts in France say that government intransigence over pension reform has led “reformist” unions like the CFDT (French Democratic Confederation of Labor) and Unsa (National Union of

Autonomous Trade Unions) — which had collaborated with Macron — to withhold support from Macron’s government. Militant unions like those in the CGT (General Confederation of Labor) and FO (Workers’ Force) have become more confrontational.

According to the CGT website, workers demonstrated in 216 cities and towns throughout France on Jan. 9, drawing nearly 1.7 million people to march in the streets. They protested the government’s plan to modify France’s retirement system. The existing system has given France’s retired population the lowest poverty rate of European retirees.

The turnout on Jan. 9 was larger than that on Dec. 5 when the protests started. According to an official report published Jan. 6, the public strike fund for the CGT has received the equivalent of \$2.2 million in contributions from 29,214 people all over France. Other unions have also set up similar funds for online donations and local unions have passed the bucket at demonstrations and marches and on the street.

French unions typically don’t have strike funds, but rely on public donations to sustain long strikes.

Gov’t withdraws threat

After the huge Jan. 9 demonstrations, Prime Minister Édouard Philippe announced that he was withdrawing plans to increase the retirement age to 64 in the bill he will present to parliament this spring. This concession removes an obstacle to support from the reformist unions — a red line they were not willing to cross.

Prime Minister Philippe has already made similar concessions to the police, dancers at the Paris Opera, nurses, airline flight attendants and pilots. Spokespeople for the CFDT and Unsa, welcoming his concession, remarked that it was clearly jerry-rigged and said other issues must still be negotiated.

The CGT and FO made clear that they are not interested in negotiating terms of a bill that they want withdrawn. The current system certainly could be improved, with more attention given to the needs of

women and low-wage workers, but the government proposal leads nowhere. Much of the financial pressure on the retirement system could be resolved by putting the wealth tax back into effect.

Class solidarity is behind the strong public support of the unions’ determination to defend France’s current retirement system, which consists of 42 distinct plans reflecting the needs of workers in each plan. An interview with a commuter on the government-owned television chain France 2 illustrated this solidarity.

This commuter, a woman in her thirties, was spending 90 minutes longer to reach her job and 60 minutes longer getting home. Her trip home was in a car jam-packed, like “sardines” — the camera showed the sweat on passengers’ faces. She arrived at her station, dark because striking electricity workers had shut off the power. But as she waited for her bus ride home, she told France 2 she still supported the unions because they were fighting for everyone. □

Putting the truth behind bars

Did you know that one of the most protected rights in this country is the right of the government to lie to the people?

That is the essence of the persecution being carried out right now against Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange.

Manning was a U.S. Army intelligence analyst based in Iraq when, in February 2010, she first sent incriminating internal documents about the war there to WikiLeaks, headed by Assange. She had earlier contacted the Washington Post and the New York Times, but they weren't interested.

The information included 750,000 sensitive military and diplomatic documents on U.S. wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan. It included graphic photos and videos of U.S. torture and systematic abuse. It included a video showing a U.S. airstrike in Afghanistan that killed scores of civilians.

All this punctured the sanitized myth the military and the U.S. government had created to justify their imperialist war crimes in the Middle East.

For opening these damaging documents to public scrutiny, Manning was jailed by the Army on May 27, 2010. She was sentenced to 35 years in prison and remained behind bars for almost seven years — where she was kept in a men's prison and subjected to anti-trans abuse — until pardoned by President Barack Obama.

The war hawks were furious about her release, and on May 16 of last year, with a more reactionary group now in the White House, she was rearrested for refusing to testify against Assange before a grand jury.

The U.N. Special Rapporteur on torture, Nils Melzer, has now charged the U.S. government with using “severe measures of coercion” on Manning that amount to

torture. (Guardian, Dec. 31, 2019)

Julian Assange, an Australian who founded WikiLeaks in 2006, has also been persecuted and threatened with arrest since 2010, when he made public the online materials liberated by Manning and others that showed the true character of the brutal U.S. war in Iraq. For six years he had to take sanctuary in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London.

But the Ecuadorian government has since moved to the right. Last April, under U.S. pressure, Assange was forced to leave the embassy. He was immediately arrested and since then has been held in solitary confinement in Belmarsh, a maximum security prison in London. Now in seriously deteriorating health, Assange is fighting extradition to the U.S., where he could be sentenced to 175 years in prison or even given the death penalty.

The documents released by both

Manning and Assange were not “fake news.” Even the current right-wing U.S. government hasn't been able to accuse them of that. Their courageous release provided the public with the real news about what was going on in the world — coming right from the horse's mouth in government documents that had been marked “Eyes Only” or “No Distribution.”

These documents refute the sanitized version of past and current wars, which are prettified in both government statements and corporate media news reports. The “crime” of Manning and Assange was to reveal the brutal and predatory nature of the U.S. billionaire class. The super-rich will get their politicians and generals to commit any crime against humanity if that helps pump up their super-profits.

Free Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange! Defend the right of the people to know the truth! □

Together in solidarity — and towards socialism

Continued from page 1

undermines their legal and human rights. Already, fatal attacks have led to many needless deaths.

Washington's horrific war on immigrants, especially those from Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East and Africa — with detentions, deportations, family separations and caging of children — cries out for solidarity and action. So does the occupation of oppressed communities by racist police, which endangers women, gender-oppressed people and their loved ones. So do hate crimes, including murder, being committed against trans women of color.

All the bigoted vitriol, plus the Trump administration's anti-worker, anti-poor stance, translates into reactionary measures that weaken people's legal rights and cut vital, even life-saving government services, including health care and food programs. These attacks are particularly aimed at low-income and oppressed people, mainly women and children, seniors and people with disabilities.

However, it's not just Trump and his cronies who push reactionary, racist ideas and policies. Underlying their venom is the ideology promoted by the richest individuals — the capitalist class — who seek to whip up hostility and divisions among

workers and communities to prevent them from uniting to fight for their rights.

The richest 26 billionaires — most of them in the U.S. — own as much wealth as the poorest half of the world's population. In their mad rush for super-profits, capitalists impoverish people around the globe, paying exploitation wages while fighting unionization and workplace safety. In their global search for oil, gas and minerals, they steal land and resources from Indigenous peoples and destroy ecosystems. They disregard ethical responsibility for human beings and the planet's health.

For worldwide solidarity!

A look at the impact of globalized capitalism (imperialism) shows that women are disproportionately affected; they comprise 70 percent of the world's poorest people. Moreover, millions of women and gender nonconforming people must emigrate each year, leaving their families and homelands, to find jobs.

Imperialism causes endless war, as capitalists seek to grab countries' resources and to attain political, economic, strategic and military domination of whole regions to exploit and control them. Washington has militarily occupied countries in the Middle East for years, as it seeks to oust noncompliant governments, install puppet leaders and beat out competing countries

for the spoils. This is true in Latin America, Africa and elsewhere in Asia, too.

Today there is a serious threat of U.S. war against Iran. And the Pentagon refuses to remove its troops from Iraq, despite the population's insistence that U.S. troops leave their country. Flouting the wishes of people in the region, Washington just sent an additional 3,500 soldiers to the Middle East.

Women and children are the hardest hit victims of war and occupation. Solidarity with our sisters in Iran and the rest of the Middle East is crucial. We must loudly insist: “No war on Iran! U.S. out of Iraq!”

WW calls for solidarity with our Palestinian sisters against the U.S.-backed militaristic, apartheid state of Israel. To express sisterhood with oppressed women who are living under the gun in their own homeland, with no legal or human rights, is not anti-Semitic, but a moral imperative.

We also express solidarity with women and their families — one-third of humanity — who live in the 39 countries under U.S.-imposed sanctions. A new campaign entitled “Sanctions Kill” opposes this form of economic warfare and calls for global actions March 13-15. (See



Chicago workers protest sexual abuse at McDonald's, Sept. 18, 2018.

sanctionskill.org.)

While supporting the fight against women's and gender oppression at home and abroad, let us also work together to take the movement to the next level — to strike at globalized capitalism — the root cause of bigotry, the oppression of people of all genders and nationalities, inequity, poverty and war.

WW asserts there is a system that would prohibit all forms of discrimination and inequality. It would outlaw millionaires and billionaires, ban the enrichment of a few to exploit the labor of the majority, and use the wealth created to provide everyone with jobs, housing, education, medical care and nutritious food — and protect the environment. That system is socialism. □

India

Biggest strike in world history!

Continued from page 1

sectors strike participation ran at 90-100 percent. “The working class is on the streets today,” she said. The strike engaged the whole population, including large numbers of informal sector workers and farmers. Economic hardship has led to publicized suicides of several farmers.

Worldwide solidarity

Student organizations in India and abroad were solidly behind the strike. A National Education Strike of students boycotting classes and calling for affordable education coincided with the Jan. 8 bandh. A solidarity statement with students was signed by 21 groups, including United Students Against Sweatshops and a dozen U.S. graduate student unions.

Indian students in the U.S. are planning to demonstrate in five cities Jan. 26.

Union solidarity statements were up on line even before Jan. 8. “The World Federation of Trade Unions, which represents more than 97 million workers from 130 countries in the 5 continents, stands firmly and militantly on the side of the Indian working class and expresses its internationalist solidarity with [the] All India general strike on January 8th, 2020,” the WFTU posted Jan. 7. “We condemn the government's nationalist strategy of dividing and fragmenting the working class on an ethnic and religious basis which is not only reactionary, unacceptable and harps back to colonialist tactics but is also unconstitutional.” (wftucentral.org)

Other statements came from worldwide

federations of construction and education workers and the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers in Britain.

Capitalists support Modi

The poverty of the Indian masses is directly related to the huge profits being made by U.S. companies that invest in India. They include General Motors, Ford, General Electric, Microsoft, Amazon, Pfizer, Coca-Cola and many others which pay slave wages. U.S. Foreign Direct Investment last year was over \$3 billion, and this country is India's fourth-largest trading partner. (business.mapsofindia.com)

Billionaire U.S. President Trump shared the stage in a “Howdy, Modi” event in Houston Sept. 22. Modi praised

Trump's “concern for every American, a belief in America's future and a strong resolve to make America great again.” Trump used the podium to make anti-Muslim remarks and to commend Modi for doing “a truly exceptional job.” (Washington Post, Sept. 22)

One thing should be clear to workers and oppressed people here in the belly of the beast: In India, like here, there is a battle between two antagonistic class forces. Our fight is alongside the quarter-billion workers, peasants and students who shut their country down on Jan. 8.

To read Martha Grevatt's 2016 interviews with Amarjeet Kaur, go to tinyurl.com/qozf64h/ and tinyurl.com/sc22bz5/.

Raging fires in Australia ignite mass protests

By Mirinda Crissman

While devastating fires, ignited by a record-breaking heat wave in Australia, have grown in strength and number since September 2019, the sources of these fires go back to when the British began colonizing the continent some 200 years earlier.

It is estimated that over 1 billion animals have perished in the flames and 27 people have been killed. This immense and irreversible loss of life is the result of the theft of Aboriginal lands, destruction of sacred sites, introduction of foreign species and pests, poisoning the land and water, and growth of water-intense produce. The disrespect for Indigenous custodians of the land and disregard for warning signs, including drought, fires and floods, have also contributed to this catastrophe — along with the climate catastrophe.

Vanessa Cavanaugh, an Aboriginal woman of the Bundjalung Wonnarua (original custodians of lands on the eastern coast of Australia), co-wrote an article: “Strength from perpetual grief: how Aboriginal people experience the bushfire crisis.” She states, “Colonial legacies of eradication, dispossession, assimilation and racism continue to impact the lived realities of Aboriginal peoples. Added to this is the widespread exclusion of our peoples from accessing and managing traditional homelands. These factors compound the trauma of these unprecedented fires.” (theconversation.com, Jan. 9)

Cavanaugh explains that with intergenerational trauma comes intergenerational wisdom. The few areas that are still managed by Indigenous people practicing cultural burning have resisted annihilation from these massive bushfires, whereas other areas have not. These protected areas will be quicker to recover from the devastation and will provide an example of how to move forward to prevent something this disastrous from occurring again.

She wrote on her Jan. 6 Twitter feed regarding the land: “I hope it’ll recover. I



Mass protests across Australia on Jan. 10.

hope that Indigenous knowledge & expertise takes precedence in the forward management of natural environments. This requires Indigenous people & systems leading the process, not being tacked on, or our knowledges excerpted & cropped into failing models.”

For thousands of years, Aboriginal custodians of the land have practiced cultural burning. Also known as fire-stick burning, it is the intentional practice of setting small, controlled flames to prevent fire risks and produce new life. These cultural practices were passed down in order to make land more fire-resilient, as well as to rejuvenate local flora, protect native animal habitats and engage in reciprocal kinship with the land.

Oliver Costello, from Firesticks Alliance Indigenous Corporation, has been trying to implement these practices on a large scale. He states, “Since colonisation, many Indigenous people have been removed from their land, and their cultural fire management practices have been constrained by authorities, informed by Western views of fire and land management.” (theconversation.com, Jan. 9)

Australia’s Bolsonaro

Australia’s Prime Minister Scott Morrison has been deemed “the Australian Bolsonaro.” Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro is a climate change denier who has actively allowed the Amazon rainforest to burn for the benefit of businesses and to the detriment of Indigenous people as well as the rest of the planet. The scale is comparable. According to NASA’s Fire Information for Resource Management System, the 2019 fires in the Amazon torched 11 million acres of land, while fires in Australia have burned 14.5 million acres.

Since September Australia’s bushfires have released 350 million tons of carbon dioxide, equal to two-thirds of the country’s annual emissions from human-made sources based on data from NASA satellites, according to Pep Canadell, director of the Global Carbon Project. (Reuters, Jan. 7)

Despite all the available data, Prime Minister Morrison and Emissions Reduction Minister Angus Taylor have ignored all sound science and warnings

that the crisis will only grow worse if the current lack of response is maintained.

Morrison and Taylor say that Australia does not need to cut carbon dioxide emissions more aggressively to limit global warming, even after a three-year drought and unprecedented bushfires. Instead, they say Australia, which contributes 1.3 percent of the world’s carbon dioxide emissions, but is the second-largest emitter per capita behind the United States, should be rewarded for beating its emissions reduction targets for 2020.

As the world leader in coal exports at \$70 billion annually, Australia is going to have to greatly restructure the way it does business and life if it is going to survive this catastrophic threat.

Crisis ignites mass protest

Tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets in every major city throughout Australia on Jan. 10. These nationwide rallies were organized by Uni Students for Climate Justice. With 30,000 rallying in Sydney alone, the masses called for the resignation of Morrison because of his inaction in response to this massive climate crisis.

In light of recent international developments, troops from neighboring New Zealand are calling for a boycott on war with Iran. Teanau Tuiono from Manawatu Peace Action alleges the U.S. has wanted war with Iran for decades. Rather than fall in line with the imperialist power, he asserts that New Zealand troops, which include a high percentage of Indigenous Māori, are better deployed in their own region working on issues such as climate crisis.

In an era when catastrophic events are increasingly and violently displacing the living, the movement for climate justice is still evolving. This movement must support Indigenous custodial practices and sovereignty and act in solidarity with migrants, who are increasingly displaced by the climate crisis and the imperialist system that exacerbates it. □

EE.UU. amenaza con una guerra más amplia

Continúa de la página 12

En Afganistán, 18 años de ocupación estadounidense solo han traído restos y división sectaria.

Casi todas las corrientes políticas en Iraq, Siria y Afganistán, incluso las que colaboran con Washington, eventualmente han llegado a odiar la duplicidad y la arrogancia racista de la dominación estadounidense.

La única solución del Pentágono a la creciente resistencia en todos los frentes es más guerra e incluso sanciones más severas.

Según el Washington Post del 4 de enero, Estados Unidos tiene alrededor de 6.000 soldados en Iraq con una brigada de 3.500 tropas aerotransportadas que llegan. Hay más de 14.000 tropas estadounidenses / de la OTAN en Afganistán. En el suroeste de Asia, desde Afganistán hasta el Mediterráneo, hay un total de 70.000 fuerzas estadounidenses. También hay decenas de miles de contratistas y mercenarios en Iraq y Afganistán.

Enviar miles de tropas adicionales no cambiará la incapacidad de Estados Unidos para ocupar y controlar un país, pero aumentará tanto la destrucción como la resistencia.

Culpando a Irán por los fracasos estadounidenses

Es política de Estados Unidos culpar a Irán por cada revés y forma de resistencia en toda la región. Irán, aunque severamente sancionado y rodeado, es el único país que ha escapado de la ocupación directa de Estados Unidos y la destrucción masiva.

La medida de la administración Trump para cancelar unilateralmente un acuerdo legalmente vinculante, firmado por los cinco miembros permanentes del Consejo

de Seguridad de la ONU más Alemania, para poner fin a las sanciones contra Irán, ha aumentado las tensiones en la región. Las nuevas sanciones estadounidenses impuestas a Irán son un esfuerzo por desestabilizar el país con hiperinflación y escasez.

Irán, China y Rusia inician simulacros navales conjuntos

Pero Irán envió su propio mensaje a medida que las amenazas estadounidenses se intensificaron con la crisis en Iraq. Fue un mensaje que el mundo entero tomó nota.

Una quinta parte del petróleo del mundo pasa por el Estrecho de Ormuz, que se conecta con el Golfo de Omán. El 27 de diciembre, Irán, China y Rusia comenzaron cuatro días de simulacros navales conjuntos en el Océano Índico y el Golfo de Omán.

El ejercicio naval conjunto mostró la determinación de ofrecer cierta protección a una región que ha sido abiertamente saqueada por los piratas imperialistas modernos. Los nuevos acuerdos comerciales y fondos para la reconstrucción de economías devastadas por la guerra y sancionadas están en los tableros de dibujo en Irán, China y Rusia. Ya no es un mundo unipolar.

Costosas armas estadounidenses de poco uso

El 14 de septiembre de 2019, los ataques contra el gigante energético de Arabia Saudita Aramco en su vital planta de procesamiento principal y planta de gas Abqaiq, cerca del campo petrolero Khurais, redujeron a la mitad temporalmente la producción de crudo de Arabia Saudita. Los rebeldes hutíes de Yemen se atribuyeron la responsabilidad. Pero Washington y Arabia Saudita acusaron a Teherán de los ataques, un cargo que Irán ha negado firmemente.

Las compras sauditas de más de \$67 mil millones en armas estadounidenses, incluidos los famosos misiles Patriot, no advirtieron ni impidieron el ataque. Arabia Saudita es el tercer mayor gastador del mundo en el ejército. Su incapacidad para proteger su instalación petrolera más crítica hizo sonar las alarmas. Los misiles Patriot estadounidenses podrían ser tigres de papel.

Las armas baratas y de bajo vuelo son un nuevo desafío para las defensas sauditas, que están diseñadas para misiles de gran altitud.

2020: una nueva década

La resistencia incondicional y el odio constante al imperialismo estadounidense son una fuerza material ahora profundamente arraigada en los movimientos populares en toda la región. Están encontrando formas creativas y de baja tecnología para resistir el todopoderoso monopolio estadounidense. También están desarrollando nuevas alianzas que pueden permitirles reconstruir.

Sí, la máquina militar de EE.UU. y el poder corporativo de EE.UU. siguen siendo amenazas masivas para muchos países y un enorme desperdicio de recursos. El peligro de una guerra estadounidense ampliada contra Irán e Iraq, mientras continúa las guerras en Siria, Afganistán y Yemen, corre el riesgo de una guerra global que nos pone en peligro a todos. Al mismo tiempo, los eventos muestran que la dominación de EE.UU. se enfrenta a un desafío fundamental en el 2020.

¡Se necesitan todas las voces y la mayor unidad para exigir la salida de EE.UU.!

¡Fin a las guerras!

¡Reesar las tropas estadounidenses a su pais! □



El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

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

LowWageCapitalism.com

Apuntando a Iraq, Irán

EE.UU. amenaza con una guerra más amplia

Por Sara Flounders

7 de enero – Manifestaciones enormes en Irán, Iraq y en toda la región están expresando ira antiimperialista y señalando un nuevo día, un renacimiento de los movimientos de masas que expulsarán a los Estados Unidos de la región.

Un acto criminal de los Estados Unidos ha encendido esta tormenta de fuego.

El 2 de enero, el imperialismo estadounidense llevó su agresiva guerra contra Irán a un nuevo nivel. Un avión no tripulado estadounidense realizó un ataque furtivo que asesinó al principal general iraní Qassem Soleimani, jefe de la Fuerza de la Guardia Revolucionaria iraní Corps-Quds Force.

Soleimani estaba en una visita oficial a Iraq, realmente en una misión para negociar por la paz. Fue recibido por Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, el líder de las Fuerzas de Movilización Popular (PMF) de Iraq, quien también fue asesinado en el ataque con aviones no tripulados. Las PMF son oficialmente parte de las fuerzas de seguridad iraquíes.

El Departamento de Defensa de los Estados Unidos admitió que llevó a cabo el ataque siguiendo las órdenes del presidente Donald Trump.

En los días posteriores a esta provocación de guerra, ocurrió lo siguiente:

En Iraq, decenas de miles se unieron a una marcha fúnebre por los dos líderes militares asesinados por el Pentágono. El Parlamento iraquí votó para expulsar a las 6.000 tropas estadounidenses que han estado estacionadas en Iraq después de que sus miembros escucharon evidencia de un asesinato político estadounidense que viola la soberanía de Iraq.

El primer ministro iraquí, Adil Abdul-Mahdi, le había dicho al parlamento que el gobierno de los EE.UU. sabía que el general Soleimani viajaba a Iraq como emisario oficial de paz para reunirse con él como parte de las negociaciones con Arabia Saudita para reducir las tensiones en la región. Iraq actuaría como mediador. Abdul-Mahdi dijo que Trump también le había pedido a Iraq que desempeñara un papel mediador con Irán.

En Irán, los líderes del gobierno han prometido que atacarán a los EE.UU. Y que será un ataque militar. Cientos de miles, tal vez millones, de personas han marchado en las calles en luto por Soleimani y su homólogo iraquí. Un canto favorito era “¡Muerte a América!”, lo que significa Estados Unidos.

Desde EE.UU., Trump envió un tweet que amenaza con destruir 52 sitios culturales iraníes. Tal ataque sería un crimen de guerra. Mientras tanto, Washington ha ordenado a los ciudadanos estadounidenses que abandonen Iraq.

Si bien los acontecimientos han expuesto algunas de las debilidades del imperialismo estadounidense en Iraq y la región, han hecho más probable una gran guerra agresiva estadounidense.

Estados Unidos humillado en Iraq

La última escalada de Trump sigue a una experiencia humillante en Bagdad, el último día del 2019. una procesión fúnebre desarmada de miles de personas pasó por puestos de guardia sin oposición, capas de barreras de explosión y puestos de control en el complejo de embajadas de Estados Unidos más seguro del mundo.

Las fuerzas de seguridad del gobierno iraquí no hicieron nada para impedir que los miembros de la milicia y sus líderes ingresen a la zona verde fuertemente fortificada donde se encuentra la embajada de los EE.UU.

Esta acción audaz siguió a un funeral masivo para miembros de las unidades de la Milicia Popular que habían muerto en un bombardeo estadounidense. Expuso la vulnerabilidad de los ocupantes estadounidenses.

Esa acción de la embajada envió un mensaje claro: ninguna base estadounidense en Iraq está segura.

Las mismas fuerzas iraquíes en las que confía Estados Unidos, en la embajada más fuertemente fortificada del mundo, abrieron la puerta. Claramente, Estados Unidos no tiene aliados. Incluso las fuerzas iraquíes que colaboraron se han alineado contra los EE.UU.

Desde entonces, la escalada de EE.UU. incluyó la llegada bien publicitada de tropas estadounidenses de la 82 División Aerotransportada a Kuwait, tropas que a menudo se utilizan para evacuar a ciudadanos estadounidenses. Miles de otras tropas están en camino en anticipación de una guerra más amplia.



Filadelfia, 4 de enero.

MO FOTO: JOE PIETTE

El papel del imperialismo estadounidense es destructivo en todo el mundo. En ninguna parte ha sido más destructivo en las últimas décadas que en los países del área, desde Asia occidental hasta África del Norte, que muchos llaman Medio Oriente.

A medida que EE.UU. enciende una crisis, este es un momento importante para evaluar la posición de EE.UU., su fortaleza y sus alianzas, y evaluar la evolución de los movimientos de los pueblos por la soberanía en toda la región.

Zona verde: una burbuja estadounidense

La Zona Verde es una burbuja de seguridad creada por los Estados Unidos, una colonia autónoma que ocupa cuatro millas cuadradas del centro de Bagdad. Está rodeado por muros de hormigón y cercas de alambre de púas fortificadas con sacos de arena, focos y puntos de control.

La Embajada de los Estados Unidos, dentro de la Zona Verde, ocupa más de 100 acres de bienes raíces de primer nivel. Es aproximadamente del tamaño de la Ciudad del Vaticano. Seis veces más grande que la sede de las Naciones Unidas en Nueva York, es la embajada más grande del mundo.

El hecho de que las fuerzas de seguridad iraquíes más altamente entrenadas, supuestamente confiables para proteger los intereses de Estados Unidos, no hicieron ningún esfuerzo por detener a los manifestantes mientras marchaban hacia la zona verde fuertemente fortificada, es un desarrollo sorprendente. Esto envía un mensaje sobre la seguridad de todas las bases estadounidenses en Iraq.

La adquisición de la Zona Verde no fue un evento aislado o excepcional. Más bien, fue la tercera vez durante los últimos meses de 2019 que el poder de los EE.UU. fue desafiado con éxito de maneras completamente nuevas y creativas y en una región que ha sido brutalmente dominada, ocupada y deliberadamente empobrecida por las fuerzas estadounidenses durante décadas.

La escala de estos fracasos humillantes se puede apreciar mejor cuando se compara con las grandiosas promesas de cinco presidentes estadounidenses consecutivos y unos 30 años de fallidas sanciones, bombardeos y ocupaciones estadounidenses que han torturado esta región de gran riqueza.

Fuerzas populares en movimiento

El gobierno iraquí ya está debilitado y dividido por meses de protestas populares que se han apoderado de Bagdad y el sur de Iraq desde principios de octubre.

Los intentos de represión de manifestaciones que piden servicios básicos, oportunidades de empleo y el fin de la corrupción han resultado en al menos 470 muertos y más de 20.000 heridos. Las continuas protestas se han convertido en demandas para una revisión completa del sistema político corrupto y sectario establecido bajo la ocupación estadounidense.

En las últimas semanas, una serie de ataques con cohetes han apuntado a instalaciones militares en Iraq donde el personal de los Estados Unidos está estacionado. La ocupación de la Plaza Tahrir, también conocida como Plaza de la Liberación, estuvo en vigor durante el ataque a la Embajada de los Estados Unidos.

Estrategia de EE.UU.: mantener dividida la región

La ira pública había estallado después de que Estados Unidos bombardeó a las milicias conocidas como Fuerzas de Movilización Popular, que son oficialmente parte de las Fuerzas de Seguridad Iraquíes. El ataque de Estados Unidos el 29 de diciembre mató a 32 e hirió a 55 personas que habían sido honradas como combatientes de primera línea contra el grupo Estado Islámico (EI).

Estados Unidos dijo que lanzó el bombardeo en represalia por un ataque con cohetes el 27 de diciembre cerca de Kirkuk que mató a un “contratista” estadounidense (de hecho, un mercenario). Pero el sitio que el ejército estadounidense eligió bombardear estaba a cientos de millas de donde había muerto el mercenario estadounidense.

El área bombardeada fue el único cruce fronterizo controlado por las fuerzas iraquíes y sirias, no Estados Unidos. El cruce se abrió con gran celebración después de estar en manos de las fuerzas del Estado Islámico durante cinco años. En septiembre pasado, Israel bombardeó a las fuerzas sirias que intentaban abrir este crucial cruce de carreteras.

La apertura de este puesto fronterizo en la frontera entre Siria e Iraq significó que, por primera vez en 30 años, el comercio, los viajes y los intercambios entre Afganistán, Irán, Iraq, Siria y Líbano estaban potencialmente abiertos y no estaban bajo el control de Estados Unidos.

La estrategia de EE. UU. durante décadas se ha centrado en cómo mantener dividida, dependiente y en guerra a toda esta región. Siria. Iraq e Irán se dividieron uno contra el otro a medida que la política de Estados Unidos inflamaba las diferencias sectarias, étnicas y religiosas.

Todos estos países están bajo estrictas sanciones de Estados Unidos, por lo que abrir su capacidad para comerciar entre sí es un gran paso adelante que salva vidas. Unir nuevamente esta región destruida es un objetivo de quienes se oponen a los esfuerzos de Estados Unidos por recolonizar el área. Al bombardear este cruce fronterizo, Estados Unidos confirmó que su estrategia es dividir por la fuerza la región.

Estrategia de EE.UU. Frente a Irán, Iraq, Siria y Afganistán

Desde la revolución iraní de 1979, Estados Unidos ha tratado de aplastarla con sanciones. También endureció las sanciones contra Iraq en agosto de 1990, seguido al año siguiente por una campaña de bombardeo masivo más sanciones que condujeron a la muerte de medio millón de niños iraquíes.

Luego, en el 2003, Estados Unidos invadió y ocupó Iraq, destruyendo su tejido social y cultural. Más de 1 millón de tropas de EE.UU. recorrieron Iraq, pero no pudieron someter a la resistencia.

Las sanciones de Estados Unidos contra Siria comenzaron al mismo tiempo que Estados Unidos invadió Iraq en el 2003. Se volvieron mucho más severas en 2011, con un esfuerzo total para derrocar al gobierno sirio. Washington y sus aliados armaron y suministraron a decenas de miles de fuerzas mercenarias extranjeras y luego brindaron apoyo a los terroristas del Estado Islámico creados por Arabia Saudita. El EI se convirtió en la nueva excusa para que el ejército estadounidense bombardeó a Siria y envíe tropas a Iraq como “entrenadores”.

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