Movement brings Delbert Africa home

Unjustly framed, out after 41 years

By Ted Kelly

Delbert Orr Africa has survived more attempts on his life than arguably any other living revolutionary. For over 50 years, the United States government has tried to kill him, beat him, break him down and silence him. And now at the dawn of a new decade, he has bested the empire once again—Delbert Africa is free.

After being granted parole on Dec. 20, he was finally released from SCI Dallas on Jan. 18. He is the sixth MOVE 9 member to be released in the last year.

As a member of the Chicago chapter of the Black Panthers in the 1960s, Delbert faced dire threats from the state’s war on Black revolutionary groups. The chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party, Fred Hampton, was assassinated on Dec. 4, 1969, in a sordid plot that involved the FBI, the Chicago Police Department and turncoat informants who had been placed close to Hampton’s family.

After this murder-execution, the rest of the Chicago members—Delbert among them—had false warrants put out on them. He managed to elude the state’s agents sent to capture him and went into exile in Canada.

A few years later, back on the U.S. side of the border, he was nearly killed in a car accident that left his cousin and another friend dead, but he managed to once again evade the FBI who came to question him in the hospital.

Despite assurances that he could return to Chicago where the phony warrants had been dropped, Delbert did not trust the word of the criminal justice system. He set out for Philadelphia and found a place to live in Powelton Village.

It was in that neighborhood where he first encountered MOVE, where he once again saw Black radicals putting revolutionary theory into practice. Before long, Delbert earned his place as one of the most important strategists of that organization alongside Coordinator John Africa.

Military, police terror attack on MOVE

Following a 56-day police blockade on the MOVE house, the police rioted on Aug. 8, 1978—one in a long Philadelphia tradition of racist white mobs terrorizing Black communities. Under the command of arch-fascist Mayor Frank Rizzo, the militarized police gang attacked MOVE’s home on Powelton Avenue.

In their reckless and violent fervor—the police fired tens of thousands of rounds of ammunition into a residential neighborhood—the cops shot and killed one of their own, James Ramp.

What followed is one of the most cruel cases of police brutality ever caught on film.

Cops dragged Delbert out by his dreadlocks and mercilessly assaulted him with kicks, punches and blows from metal combat helmets and rifle butts. They shattered his jaw and fractured his eye socket.

In the midst of this attack, Delbert called out to Phil Africa, whom cops had begun to arrest as well, with these words: “It’s gonna be alright! We’re gonna be alright!”

Just as a cop was putting his boot on Phil’s neck, he shouted back: “That’s right! Ona MOVE! Long Live John Africa!” (tinyurl.com/rgl7slm)

Philadelphia Police Commissioner Joseph F. O’Neil was present at the scene.

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Expanding Empire
The global war drive of big business and the forces that will stop it

Where every previous imperialism in history had to “expand or die,” each in conformity to its own specific economic and social laws, the modern, export-of-capital imperialism that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward! It is not a question of the political power of the ruling class but the economic power of the ruling class, the economic power of the means of production and exploitation. It is not a question of the ruling class but the oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities, as well as in its interminable wars; since it calls into question the material possibility of removing their exploiters and exploiting class altogether, and to see themselves in the bargain. It is not a question of the ruling class but the economic power of the means of production and exploitation class altogether, and to see themselves in the bargain. It is not a question of the ruling class but the economic power of the means of production and exploitation class altogether, and to see themselves in the bargain.

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

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on immigrants, migrants, LGBTQ+ oppression, and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means homelessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. So 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 capital profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

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

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

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Delbert Africa spent six years in the “hole,” or solitary confinement, a practice that’s clearly under the United Nations Charter. It is estimated as that many as 100,000 people may be currently held in solitary confinement across the U.S. solitary conditions they are forced to endure, prison repressive policy: “We’re being forced to pay the piper for the infractions of others. Not only is this a violation of his former membership in the Black Panthers. That is to say, the system has been gunging for Delbert since the 1960s. His release is a victory against this white supremacist, capitalist system.

Delbert Africa, a writer up. So I still got my typewriter.”

By Joe Piette Philadelphia

If prisoners can’t report about the conditions they are forced to endure, prison officials can get away with murder. That’s why, when prison staff punished incarcerated journalist Jeanne Coffey with solitary confinement for writing an article critical of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC), it was important that family, friends, prison reformers and abolitionists conduct a phone campaign to get him out. Other prisoners, Coffey’s twin sister Jeanne Coffey and her attorney Martha Conley complained that he was taken out of his cell on Jan. 15 and placed in solitary confinement. The reason? He had written an article for Workers World titled “30 years after the Camp Hill Uprising: Repression in Pennsylvania’s prison system.”

In response, on Jan. 15 members of Food Not Bombs Solidarity and Industrial Workers of the World Philadelphia created a “Phone Blitz” poster on Facebook asking people to call State Correctional Institution (SCI) Althion officials. Workers World published an article called, “Act Now: Prison activist-writer placed in solitary, and shared it widely on social media. Callers were asked to demand Coffey be released from solitary and then he allowed to call his sister to confirm he was all right. Jeanne Coffey told Workers World she got “many calls” from people about their calls to the prison. One prison official told Coffey they got hundreds of calls. By late afternoon on Jan. 15 callers were told he was being taken out of solitary.

Lockdown: collective punishment

The struggle wasn’t over yet. Coffey wasn’t still allowed to call his family. No calls were being permitted because of a lockdown under the much-criticized “violence reduction policy.” In practice, that means staff can immediately shut down entire cell blocks of the prison and confine hundreds of prisoners to their cells for 36 hours. SCI Frackville prisoner Bryan Arroyo describes that discriminatory and repressive policy: “We’re being forced to pay the piper for the infractions of others. Not only is this a violation of our 14th Amendment rights, this constitutes punitive actions taken against a collective: a violation of the Geneva Convention.”

Prison officials admitted the lockdown stemmed from an incident unrelated to Coffey’s circumstances. However, their protocols prohibited all prisoners from making any phone calls. On Jan. 14, SCI Althion prison Superintendent Michael Clark personally called Coffey’s sister and told her the prison lockdown would soon be over. Finally, on the morning of Jan. 15, Coffey called her to say he was fine. Tired of all the phone calls, a security captain told Coffey, “Call off the dogs.”

‘I have a right to write’

Coffey called WW soon after: “I feel good. My health’s all right. What I just experienced for eight days in the hole is horrible. Whatever you all was doing, calling up here, you caught them, and they let me out to general population. I didn’t get a misconduct or nothing! I have a right to write. I have the protection of the First Amendment. I’m not going to let them get away with anything. All this stuff [Pa. DOC Secretary] Wetzel Workers World Party, Food Not Bombs Solidarity, Mobilization.Mumia, REAL Justice and others. One more MOVE 9 member still remains in prison: Chuck Africa.

When the afternoon gathering came to a close, participants chanted: “Free Chuck Africa! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free Imam Jamil Al-Amin! Free ‘em all!” All are political prisoners still in jail. A press conference is scheduled for Jan. 21, at Philadelphia’s Kingsessing Library, 1203 South 51st St. at 2 p.m.

Report and photo by Joe Piette

‘Delbert’s home - Free them all!’

Philadelphia — Very early in the morning of Jan. 18, three loads of furniture plus two-hour trip for a Frankfort-based prison guard. Around the morning of Jan. 18, three loads of furniture plus two-hour trip for a Frankfort-based prison guard. Around the afternoon gathering came to a close, participants chanted: “Free Chuck Africa! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free Imam Jamil Al-Amin! Free ‘em all!” All are political prisoners still in jail.

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Continued from page 1

Delbert recalls hearing him call off the attack on Phil, saying, “Don’t do that here because the cameras can see us.” The entire episode was broadcast on television. The video evidence of Delbert’s beating did lead to an investigation into police brutality, no cops were ever held responsible. This unanswered crime is one of many racist police attacks recorded on video that have followed it, from the beating of Rodney King to the murder of Eric Garner.

After nearly 40 years, the oppressive amount of cell phone videos, surveillance cameras footage or police bodycameras have changed the fact that police can publicly torture and kill Black and Brown people without facing any consequences. As police rioted throughout West Philadelphia in 1978, attacking and arresting anyone they could get their hands on, Rizzo held a frenzied press conference at City Hall. He demanded the reinstatement of the death penalty so he could round up all remaining MOVE members and “throw the switch” himself. Responding to widespread outrage for the retaliation for negative coverage and said that he hoped to get revenge on them during his tenure. Three years later, President of the National Committee.

Mayor, then Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell, stridently defending the city’s crime scene within hours of the police attack. Rendell would go on to become mayor, then Pennsylvania governor and then chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

The MOVE 9

Rendell’s office framed nine MOVE members for Ramp’s death, including Phil and Delbert. Presiding Judge Edward Weisgerber ruled that Rizzo threatened reporters with retaliation if they approached in September 2019, activists around the world participated in a social media campaign where they posted photos of themselves holding signs that read: “I Support the Release of Delbert Africa!” Among those who shared solidarity selfies was 98-year-old Rosemary Neidenberg, one of Workers World Party’s founding members. Delbert has long been regarded as one of the most important figures in the MOVE Organization, both because he served as the group’s Minister of Confrontation and Security and because of his former membership in the Black Panthers. That is to say, the system has been gunging for Delbert since the 1960s. His release is a victory against this white supremacist, capitalist system.

But the struggle is far from over. Chuck Africa, the last remaining member of the MOVE 9 still behind bars, has had his hearing and parole hearing this month. Both Phil and Merle Africa were killed by the prison system. In September 2019, activists around the world participated in a social media campaign where they posted photos of themselves holding signs that read: “I Support the Release of Delbert Africa!” Among those who shared solidarity selfies was 98-year-old Rosemary Neidenberg, one of Workers World Party’s founding members. Delbert has long been regarded as one of the most important figures in the MOVE Organization, both because he served as the group’s Minister of Confrontation and Security and because of his former membership in the Black Panthers. That is to say, the system has been gunging for Delbert since the 1960s. His release is a victory against this white supremacist, capitalist system.

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For rank-and-file control

Government hands off the UAW!

By Martha Grevatt

An ominous federal takeover of the United Auto Workers union is now a real possibility. According to U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider, “All options are on the table. And [takeovers] is one of the options.” (Detroit Free Press, Jan. 10)

In other words, the capitalist state— overtly hostile to organize labor, especially under the Trump administra- tion— could take advantage of documented corrup- tions to sue the union under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO). This could lead to federal oversight.

Nothing could be worse for the UAW and the labor movement as a whole.

These threats follow a federal investigation into corrupt practices by top UAW executives and staff. First to be charged were individuals in the union’s Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) Department, who were accused of taking bribes from the company in exchange for agreeing to inferior contract terms, and then pushing them to the membership for approval. FCA executives were also charged; leaders on both sides have been sentenced to prison or probation.

Further, a federal investigation uncovered multi- mill- ion-dollar scandals involving vendor kickbacks and expropriation of union funds. The people implicated include retired UAW President Dennis Williams and for- mer President Gary Jones, along with Region Five Director Vance Pearson. Jones and Pearson resigned in November.

Members are justifiably outraged at the self-serving behavior of highly paid leaders who they trusted to fight for their best interests.

That doesn’t mean they want anti-union govern- ment agents to come in and clean house for them. And some members rightly question the motives behind the more recent federal pursuit of President Rory Gamble, who took over when Jones resigned. Gamble is the first African-American International president in the union’s 85 years of existence.

There is clearly a double standard on the part of the government—as well as the corporate media—that have attacked the UAW—in the way they have gone after union corruption, which is small potatoes compared to corporate corruption.

After all, UAW corruption did not cause fatal acci- dents with a faulty ignition switch that General Motors installed to save money. It’s not the union that kills and it’s not the union that contributes billions of dollars in profits to shareholders, while workers suffer.

“I just think that there’s definitely a double set of standards,” said Mike Herron, Local 1853 Shop Chair at GM’s Spring Hill, Tenn., plant.

Rank and file take the initiative

The UAW’s Administrative Caucus, in existence since the late 1940s, has created over time a dysfunctional, top-down, corporate-model structure riddled with nep- otism and cronyism. The leadership fully embraced class collaborationist and rejected class struggle. They continued to view the need for a new Russian Revolution, Vladimir Lenin, coined the “labor aristocracy”—a strata within the working class that has been “bought off” by the capitalists.

Nevertheless, the UAW constitution has provisions under which the membership can take action to restore democratic control and ethical practices. With enough support, members can force the union to hold a “Special Convention.”

A new rank-and-file group, Unite All Workers for Democracy — UAWD— has begun the uphill battle to get a Special Convention called for the purpose of setting up the machinery to elect the International UAW’s Executive Board. Currently, the IEB is elected by delegates at the quadrennial Constitutional Convention. What UAW members seek is simple: direct election—one member, one vote.

“Our whole effort is to avoid a federal takeover,” according to Scott Houldieson, a founder of UAWD and a member of UAW Local 551 at the Chicago Ford Assembly plant. “The best reform is to empower the membership of our union to hold our officers accountable for weak contracts and corrupt practices.”

Houldieson and three other UAW activists addressed a Jan. 17 webinar, which a number of interested union members attended. For a special convention to be called, the union’s constitution requires that 20 percent of its members attend. For a special convention to be called, the union’s constitution requires that 20 percent of its members attend. For a special convention to be called... -... by which time the federal government has intervened.

The special convention could be a forum for autoworkers to comment on a wide range of issues and map out a real strategy for the rank and file to take back their union. It would be a step toward breaking up the treacherous partnership with the capitalist owners of industry.

Breaking up labor-management cooperation is neces- sary if organized labor is to remain relevant to the new layers of workers exploited in the gig economy.

Martha Grevatt is Trustee of UAW Local 869. She retired from Fiat Chrysler after 31 years in the plants.

On the line

‘Amazonians United Sacramento’ walk out Christmas Eve

Night shift workers at Amazon’s DSM1 warehouse in Sacramento, Calif., celebrated Christmas with a walkout. It was the latest action in their campaign for paid time off (PTO). After delivering a petition with 4,015 signa- tures to management during their break on Dec. 23, the workers read their demands for a meeting with manage- ment and PTO out loud. Then 36 of 100 workers clocked out mid-shift.

“A lot of people were scared, but it was encouraging to see how many people came through,” said one of those who walked (organizers have agreed not to identify them). “It was good to show people we can stick together.”

Like other Amazon workers, those at DSM1 are faced with a common struggle: warehouse workers’ right to organize, free from harassment and gag orders.

Thousands of teachers, parents and supporters, including leaders of national educational unions, rallied and marched to the Florida Capitol Jan. 13 to protest more funding for public schools. Organized by the Florida Education Association, downtown Tallahassee came to a standstill as teachers in red T-shirts, some carry- ing signs reading, “I shouldn’t have to marry a sugar daddy to teach,” protested the attack on public educa- tion, which began in the late 1990s.

“There are 36 high schools with 1,000 students or more that fail to offer physics classes because they can’t find certified teachers. And one out of eight English classes in this state are taught by uncertified teachers,” said Fedrick Ingram, FEA president.

“Florida teachers march on Tallahassee capitol

Kids without textbooks

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

‘Amazonians United Sacramento’ walk out Christmas Eve

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DOL attacks franchise workers

The Department of Labor issued a rule Jan. 12 to make it harder to prove that corporations are responsi- ble when franchise owners or contractors violate wage laws. Labor Secretary Eugene Scalia said the Trump rule “will help small businesses and franchise owners” and “provide workers in franchise businesses, addresses multiple issues including the need for global worker solidarity and the fight for a shorter work week. The special convention could be a forum for autoworkers to comment on a wide range of issues and map out a real strategy for the rank and file to take back their union. It would be a step toward breaking up the treacherous partnership with the capitalist owners of industry.

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By Stevan Kirschbaum

Boston

A capacity crowd of 600-plus people — plus an additional 250 overflow — packed Roxbury Community College Jan. 9 to celebrate the life of Charles Henry “Chuck” Turner II.

The “People’s City Councilor” passed away Dec. 25 following a long battle with cancer. He was 79. As a freedom fighter, organizer, strategist and internationalist, he struggled for justice for over 53 years.

The crowd represented the many struggles to which Chuck dedicated his life. Leaders from the Black and Brown communities, from the fight for jobs, housing, education, prison rights, equality, women’s and LGBTQ+ rights — against racism, poverty and war — joined his spouse Terri Turner and family in a moving tribute.

Team Solidarity of the United Steelworkers Local 8751, Boston School Bus Union, organized buses that brought over 60 rank-and-file members from the bus yards.

The three-and-a-half-hour program was led by Darrin Howell, family spokesperson and former District 7 Constituents Advisory Committee director who, like many in attendance, had been mentored by Chuck. It was emceed by Calvin Feliciano and Angela Yarde of Chuck’s council staff.

A rainbow of movement leaders bore witness to his life’s work. New generations of community leaders whom Chuck had mentored joined longtime veterans. Paige Academy Drummers opened the program, which also included song, poetry and an electrifying musical featuring hip-hop band and Chuck’s beloved loyal comrades.

A harvest of speakers included Kazi Toure of the Jericho Movement and Suzanne Lee, a longtime Chinatown activist.

President Andre Francois of the Boston School Bus Union, brought the crowd to its feet with a proposal that the mayor — who was in the audience — name a street in honor of Chuck. He was the strongest supporter, ally and advisor to Local 8751 since its founding in the 1970s.

Chuck was born in Cincinnati in 1940. He said he was “blessed to have been born into a family that had two predominant passions — a thirst for knowledge and a desire to serve.” His mother was a school teacher, while his father later ran one of the first Black-owned pharmacies in Chicago. His brother became a college professor and dean, while his grandfather, Charles Henry Turner, for whom Chuck was named, was a renowned zoologist and entomologist.

Fighting racism, poverty and war

In 1968, Chuck attended Harvard University on a full scholarship. After college, he headed for Washington, D.C. He later recalled “ironically arriving on August 23, 1963. Thus, I had the opportunity to stand with hundreds of thousands and hear Dr. King and others give the call to action.” Chuck spent the rest of his life answering the call to fight the “triple evils” of racism, poverty and war.

In 1999, Chuck ran for and won a Boston City Council seat, in an “attempt to use elective office as an organizing tool.” For a decade, he did just that. He and his spouse paid for a “serve the people” organizing hub district office in Dudley (now Nubian Square), serving his constituents and anyone who walked through the door seeking help.

The People’s City Councilor was loved by the people but hated by the forces of oppression and injustice. In 2008, Chuck was the victim of a federally coordinated, politically motivated racketeering frame-up. At the time, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, who traveled to Boston to support Chuck, wrote: “Chuck has been in the forefront of every battle for social justice, in Massachusetts and around the globe. Turner’s prosecution in 2008 was part of a politically motivated pattern of prosecution and targeting of color or by Bush administration U.S. Attorneys. It is a political frame-up. The voters of his district showed their view of it in the 2009 election by returning him to office.”

For jobs and international solidarity

Chuck’s decades of effective, impassioned organizing in the struggle for jobs — from the Third World Jobs Clearing House to the Boston Jobs Coalition, against racism and discrimination in hiring in the building trades based on criminal records and against police brutality — provide a road map for future organizing.

An internationalist to the core, Chuck fought for workers and the oppressed worldwide: from Palestine to Puerto Rico, Haiti to India, Iraq to Afghanistan. He consistently supported Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier and all political prisoners.

Chuck’s May Day 2011 message from behind the walls said it all: “While the clouds of darkness are thickening over this country, we must remember that the sun never stops shining, no matter how dark it appears. We also must remember that it is the workers of the world who are the yeast in the bread of the planet. We can see the system of exploitation crumbling the weight of its own evil. Let us prepare ourselves to remake the world in the image of Brotherly and Sisterly Love.”

Chuck Turner, ¡presente!”

Chuck Turner was a firm supporter of Boston’s militant school bus drivers’ union, pictured above.

PHOTO: USW LOCAL 8751

Chuck Turner, ¡presente!

PHOTO: STEWART KIRCHBAUM

Black Freedom Struggle

Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle

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

Download it from workers.org/books
Women’s March Global: ‘Women’s rights are human rights’

By Kathy Durkin

The theme of the fourth annual Women’s March Global 2020 was “Women’s Rights Are Human Rights.” On Jan. 18, hundreds of thousands of women and people of all genders marched and rallied in at least 23 countries with various demands.

In Africa, Australia, Europe, Latin America, Canada and the U.S., demonstrators called for their rights. Countries where coordinated protests took place included Brazil, Kenya, Micronesia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Thailand, Zambia, Zimbabwe and 10 European countries.

England’s march in London was linked to global protests that day, including in Chile and Ecuador, which denounced increasing economic inequality—just days before world leaders converge at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

There were 250 events across the U.S. in small towns and big cities—from Massachusetts to Florida to California. Some 10,000 came out in Chicago and 3,500 in Austin, Texas. People traveled from around the country to the main demonstration in Washington, D.C.

For three years, the Trump administration has relentlessly attacked the rights of women, immigrants, single people, low-income communities, workers, LGBTQ2+ people, плевалов with disabilities and seniors. Racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, misogyny, homophobia and transphobia have emanated from the White House.

The reactionaries in the administration and the right-wing politicians who align with them are scheming to slash supplemental food programs and are trying to undermine federal health care programs and disability benefits. Repressive rights are being whittled away in many states, while the majority right-wing Supreme Court is ready to rule against legal abortion. Tens of thousands of migrants are being turned away at the Southern border with Mexico or are detained, separated from their families, their children caged and abused.

The tens of thousands of demonstrators in Washington raised three main demands: rights for immigrants, reproductive justice and solving the climate crisis. Additionally, there were calls for equal pay, LGBTQ2+ rights and an end to sexual abuse. Health care workers’ placards called for Medicare for All. Signs demanded: “Trans rights now!”

A diverse group of march organizers emphasized building a “community of activists” and grassroots mobilizing, rather than showcasing celebrity speakers. Even though getting out the vote for Democratic presidential candidates was raised, the goal of building an inclusive and international movement was stressed.

The energetic participants said they were empowered by the annual demonstrations since Trump was inaugurated.

To start off the march, Hope Butler, member of Maryland’s Piscataway Conoy Tribe, welcomed demonstrators to her tribe’s territory. Then a group of Indigenous women sang and chanted to honor Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls before they led the march to encircle the White House.

Las Tesis, a Chilean women’s performance collective, led a powerful mantra denouncing gender violence, “Un Violador en tu camino” ("A Rapist in Your Path’), near the misogynist president’s mansion. Thousands of marchers sang with them and then again outside the Trump International Hotel. This song, performed by women during recent protests in Chile against the repressive, patriarchal regime, has become a global women’s anthem.

Here are reports by Workers World activists about a few local protests.

Buffalo, N.Y.

The Women’s March 2020 was held in front of Buffalo’s City Hall in freezing wind and snow. The event was organized by the Western New York Peace Center and co-sponsored by dozens of groups. The Buffalo Anti-War Coalition contended there had a speaker, held three banners and distributed flyers for the Jan. 25 “No War on Iran/U.S. Out of the Middle East!” protest. They held the “Sanctions Kill Women” flyer on the reverse side. There was also a continuant from the Ain’t I A Woman? Campaign, which is fighting to abolish the 24-hour workday for home care workers. The Queen City Feminist group led the chanting of the Chilean women’s song protesting gender violence.

— Contributed by Dorritie

Shelter solidarity struggle wins concession

By J.M. Straughn

Salt Lake City

Activists—unsheltered and sheltered—finally saw a response to their demands on Friday, Jan. 17, when the mayor’s office announced a plan to open a city-owned building for use as a temporary winter shelter. This was the first concession to demands issued by the Take Shelter Coalition at a City Council meeting protest last November.

This followed the closure of the largest and most centrally located shelter for unhoused members of the working class. A solidarity encampment begun in January to continue demands has been violently dispersed by police.

The new shelter is slated to provide 145 beds and has been scheduled to remain open until sometime in April. The 145 beds still fall far short of the number of beds eliminated by the shelter closing. Beside replacement beds, more demands need to be met.

A statement issued by the Take Shelter Coalition made clear that the struggle for housing and against police brutality and harassment is continuing:

“Salt Lake City announced tonight that it will open a temporary shelter in Sugarhouse. Just two days before [Mayor] Erin Mendenhall was inaugurated, a camping occupation in Washington Square Park—Operation Take Shelter—was forcibly and destructively shut down by the police. That occupation was formed by the Take Shelter Coalition to serve our unsheltered neighbors and to draw attention to our five demands for city and state officials.”

The five demands are:

1. Open a new downtown shelter.
2. Have, at a minimum, the equivalent number of beds lost in the closure of the downtown Road Home shelter made readily available and accessible.
3. No arrests, tickets or harassment for campers.
4. Change the existing legislation to allow for the new centers to have more beds.
5. Free public transit fare for all people who stay in shelters.

The statement continues: “They may have shut us down, but we know that they could hear us. Today, Mendenhall announced the opening of a temporary shelter in Sugarhouse. Still, none of our five demands has been met.

This new shelter is far outside the downtown area where services are nearby. With the announcement that the Weigand Center warming station will now be closing overnight, that means that there will no longer be a warm place for anyone downtown to stay. So, if a person misses the evening shuttle from the Weigand Center, they are stranded with nowhere to go for warmth.

Before the Road Home closed, it could sleep 1,100 people every night. The new center holds 700. That means that even with this additional 145 beds, we are still 265 beds short. With this kind of deficit, there will continue to be people left outside in the cold. Our city needs an equivalent number of beds to ensure that people have access to a warm place to sleep.

“It is essential that the police department immediately end the ticketing, harassment, and arrests of unsheltered people. The cops have spent all winter stealing people’s survival belongings, and no new shelter can ever make that okay.

“When every shelter falling outside the free fare zone, our demand for free public transit fare for all people staying in shelters remains critical.

“This crisis is the result of corruption, mismanagement, and systemic negligence by the city and state. Each one of our demands is essential, and we also know that we need real change, not reluctantly given crumbs. They shouldn’t only be addressing emergency shelter, they should also be mitigating the risk we all face because of their housing policies. They could do so by implementing the recommendations the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute presented at their first hearing session, and also by implementing the recommendations presented by the ACLU regarding their use of police. These are outside the scope of our demands, but exactly within the scope of their responsibilities.

“This is not good enough. We will not be silenced by police repression or state compromise. We will continue to fight for shelter and dignity for all people.”

District Council 9 of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades in New York City.

Some 2,000 people gathered at a rally in Foley Square. The Campaign Against Sanctions and Economic War had a visible contingent with signs raising the horrific impact of U.S.-imposed sanctions on women in 39 countries in one-third of the world. They distributed hundreds of leaflets explaining how sanctions are weapons of economic war, resulting in chronic shortages of basic necessities, famine, disease and poverty.

Many unions were there in large numbers, including District Council 9 of the Painters union (IUPAT); District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; and Service Employees Local 32BJ. Despite the 20-plus-degree weather, there was a warm feeling of community and solidarity as participants called for the end of violence against women and for reproductive justice, the rights of workers, im/migrants, people of color, LGBTQ2+ people and
Moms 4 Housing brutally evicted, vow to return

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

In the early hours of Tuesday, Jan. 14, heavily armed Alameda County sheriffs carrying AK-47 rifles battered down the door of what had once been a vacant house. Inside were a small group of mothers with small children who had been “repossessing” — living in — the building since mid-November.

After first sending in a “robot,” the sheriffs arrested Misty Tolani, two of the mothers, plus two of their supporters. All were charged with grand theft.

This eviction followed a local judge’s ruling against the claim of possession by the Moms, who are part of a group called Moms 4 Housing.

Since the brutal eviction, the Oakland activist community has been seething with disbelief and anger. “What is this police force? What is this military force for?” asked Carol Fife, director of ACCE (Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment).

ACCE is one of the local organizations that have been actively supporting the Moms’ struggle for housing. Fife noted that the crowd, both the night before and on Tuesday morning, had been calm and disciplined.

A banner still hanging from the now-boarded-up home states that there are four vacant homes for every unhoused person in Oakland. Homelessness has increased by over 47 percent in the last 2 years. Nearly 80 percent of all unhoused people are Black, despite the fact that the Black population has shrunk to 24 percent.

Shortly after the eviction, Tur Ha Ak, a leader of Community Ready Corps (CRC), which had been providing security for the Moms and demonstrators, addressed the crowd. “They took out our mothers and babies with battering rams. They have no humanity,” he said. Then Ak led the crowd of over 200 people with the chant, “Shame, shame.”

The sheriffs responded to his outspokenness by donning riot gear and pulling out their batons.

The night before, several hundred individuals with disabilities, and for halting the climate crisis.


— Contributed by Betsy Piette

Rise and Resist’s banner read “Close the Camps!”

Members of Las Tasis drummed, danced and led the group in chanting their powerful anthem against gender violence.

— Contributed by Brenda Ryan

Philadelphia

The Women’s March brought thousands to the Ben Franklin Parkway despite cold, wet weather. The theme of the March was “The Year of the Woman,” participles of all ages gathered at Logan Circle for a short march up the parkway to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Although rally organizers and speakers, especially politicians, tried to limit the focus to women’s participation in upcoming cap- ism,” she stated. “We will not be scared; we will continue to support the Moms.”

For more information and to support the group, check out their website at mombshousing.org.

Now we're human rights!”

Historic contract reached for women basketball players

By Monica Moorehead

A tentative collective bargaining agreement (CBA) was reached between the Women’s National Basketball Players Association and the Women’s National Basketball Association on Jan. 14. It’s sending an election among the players from the current 12 WNBA teams and approval of the WNBA’s board of govern- nors. It is noteworthy that some of these players showed political solidarity with Black Lives Matter in the aftermath of police shootings of Black people several years ago. Over 68 percent of the WNBA players are African American.

Upon its assumed acceptance by the estimated 144 players, the eight-year CBA, which would run this year through 2027, would guarantee a 53 percent increase in total cash compensation for each player, including base salaries and payment for extra performances, compe- titions, and team and league marketing deals. Each player, regardless of whether they are rookies or veterans, will be guar- anteed a six-figure salary. Top players will receive a compensation package of at least a half-million dollars.

The mere fact that WNBA players will not face the threat of injury and fatigue when forced to find supplemental work overseas to support themselves and their families — during the eight-month hiatus from the WNBA — is a huge weight off their shoulders.

Besides additional cash compensation and better travel accommodations, other improvements in this agreement include free agency, postcareer job preparation, and mental health, domestic violence/ partner abuse, nutrition and women’s health programs. Most importantly, players who become mothers financially will have paid maternity leave, a child care stipend, two-bedroom apartments for players with children, workplace accom- modations for nursing mothers, and family planning benefits.

A progressive and historic step forward

WNBA President Nneka Ogwumike, a star forward for the Los Angeles Sparks, stated on “Good Morning America,” “We wanted to leave a legacy. I think we came in understanding that it wasn’t just about the top player. It wasn’t just about the rookies. It was about every player across the board and we really wanted to be able to come together with the WNBA with actually a lot of innovative ideas.

“Interestingly enough, as much as we fight for what we feel is right, we also know that we deserve — we have wom- en’s soccer, we have women’s hockey that are looking up to what we are look- ing to do. We are really hoping that it can set the tone and really create that legacy for women and sports moving forward.” (Jan. 14)

The treatment of professional women and gender-nonbinary athletes, in the way for pay equity and equal rights is not isolated from the rest of this capital- ist, patriarchal society.

Across the board, this contract does not begin to compare to the CBA of the players’ male counterparts in the 30 teams in the National Basketball Association. This is due to the overwhelming popu- larity of the NBA, founded in 1946, com- pared to the WNBA founded in 1996. The total revenue for the NBA in 2018 was $27.4 billion, but only $66 million for the WNBA. The highest paid annual sal- ary for an NBA player (Stephen Curry) in 2018 was $40 million, compared to $113,500 for a WNBA player (Brittney Griner).

Despite these huge remaining gaps, WNBA players and others in the sports world view this new CBA as a progres- sive, historic step forward. Yet there are fewer WNBA teams now than there once were. The WNBA began with eight teams in its initial season, reached 26 teams in the 2000 season and is currently down to 12 teams. Why the reduced number? Because the profits aren’t big enough as women’s sports don’t draw the big crowds, the high ticket prices, or lucre- tive TV and livestreaming contracts, especially in small city markets, com- pared to the NBA.

The average regular season attendance of an NBA game in 2018 was 18,000 compared to close to 6,800 for a WNBA game. (wsn.com, Aug. 29, 2019) This is being seen as a major triumph.

Whitney Medicaid from SB (Sports Blog) Nation stated on her Twitter feed: “Things I’m shocked that WNBA players didn’t have before — proper legroom on flights, their own hotel rooms on trips, paid maternity leave. That’s bonkers and so basic. But at least the league has made these things happen in the new CBA.”

According to a report, “The Union Advantage for Women,” released by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, statistics show that women workers, notably women of color, benefit much more from having a union, compared to other higher wages and health care coverage, compared to those not unionized. (Feb. 22, 2018)

And even though the WNBA contract terms are still glaringly unequal com- pared to the NBA, the fact that there is a contract defined, put in writing, will inspire workers of all nationalities, genders and abilities, from low-wage workers to professional athletes, to fight for a union.”

— Contributed by Brenda Ryan

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Nneka Ogwumike, president of WNBA.
Students resist imperialist speaker for MLK Week

By Arielle Robinson
Kennesaw, Ga.

Outraged progressive students at Kennesaw State University protested on Jan. 16 because a vice president of military-industrial giant Lockheed Martin was the invited keynote speaker at KSU’s Dr. King Legacy Luncheon. Students held a die-in, followed by an educational event, “Hostory: MLK’s Legacy of Peace,” to highlight Dr. King’s true legacy of anti-militarism. KSU/United, Young Democratic Socialists of America KSU and Students for Justice in Palestine were organizers of the event.

The students were protesting the university’s invitation to Roderick McLean, vice president and general manager for Lockheed Martin’s Air Mobility & Maritime Missions organization in Marietta, Ga. McLean previously served as Lockheed’s vice president and general manager for its Integrated Fighter Group Operation.

University officials on the way to the Legacy Luncheon at the Connellton Event Center were forced to step through the bodies of students holding signs exposing the damage to human life caused by Lockheed Martin and the U.S. military.

Students taped signs to their chests with factual information: “3% of U.S. military spending could end world hunger.” “Lockheed Martin is the largest weapons contractor, equal to all the other countries of the world combined.” “Lockheed Martin supplied weapons for the conflicts in Yemen and Syria” and “16,706 civilian casualties,” which represents the number of civilians killed in Yemen by U.S. weapons made by Lockheed Martin.

At the educational event, Dr. King’s “Beyond Vietnam” speech was read aloud. Flyers were distributed about the crimes committed by Lockheed Martin and on MLK’s anti-war philosophy. KSU/United handed out its demand that the administration return the organizing of MLK Week to Black students.

Prior to the protest, the sponsoring groups released a statement signed by various organizations, including the International Action Center, which read in part: “It may seem honorable for KSU to recognize MLK’s achievements as a Black engineer who went to an HBCU, which represents Black success in an historically oppressed society. However, his standing as a keynote speaker at an MLK Legacy luncheon also represents KSU’s direct support for a U.S. empire that oppresses people the world over.”

Previously, Martin Luther King Week at KSU had been an event open to the metro Atlanta public on weekend ends, which brought revolutionary speakers like Angela Davis and Marc Lamont Hill to campus. KSU’s African-American Student Alliance controlled who spoke. After Davis delivered the keynote address in 2015, pressure from local Republican Party forces was followed by the KNI administration setting control of MLK Week in 2016.

The week is now a private event with RSVP invitations, held during class and work hours on a weekday so that many students and outsiders cannot attend. Such privatization has led to people like military-industrialist McLean being invited to speak on MLK’s legacy.

KSU students took a stand Jan. 16, forcing administrators and corporate outsiders to witness Martin Luther King’s true legacy.

San Francisco Labor Council Resolutions

`Support the rising anti-war and pro-peace movement`

The following resolutions were passed by unanimous vote of the San Francisco Labor Council on Jan. 13.

Global Day of Protest: No war on Iran
Whereas, President Trump has placed the whole world on alert and brought the United States closer to war due to the irresponsible assassination of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani; and
Whereas, the Trump administration has threatened Iranian cultural sites with attack, a threat which, if carried out, is a war crime; and
Whereas, the San Francisco Labor Council, has spent more than $5.6 trillion on war, is higher than military spending of all the other countries of the world combined, and is equal to all the other countries of the world combined. The United States is the world’s largest arms export country.
Therefore Be It Resolved that the San Francisco Labor Council endorses the call of Global Day of Protest — No War on Iran — on Saturday, January 25, 2020, and will send notification to its delegates inviting them to the actions.

Opposing the coup in Bolivia
Whereas Evo Morales, running for his fourth term of office as President of Bolivia, had the highest vote count in the unofficial and official vote results, leading by over 10% his nearest rival and receiving over 45% of the vote in the October 20 national election in Bolivia; and
Whereas there has not been any demonstrable evidence of fraud in the election, despite claims of the OAS, and
Whereas under Evo Morales’ tenure since 2006, Bolivia has made outstanding economic and social gains on behalf of Bolivia’s poorest and mostly Indigenous citizens, such as reducing extreme poverty from 38% to 18% and implementing measures to respect the dignity and equality of the Indigenous majority, and
Whereas even though Evo Morales had agreed to hold new elections and to a peace agreement, the military deposed him and began brutally attacking his supporters, killing more than 20 people, and
of economic and political control of these countries;
Therefore Be It Resolved that the San Francisco Labor Council vigorously condemns the recent coup in Bolivia and supports Evo Morales, the illegally deposed President of Bolivia, who is committed to a peace agreement and new elections, and
Be It Further Resolved that the San Francisco Labor Council joins international labor and human rights organizations in demanding that the people of Bolivia be able to vote in free and fair elections without intervention or further oppression by the police or military, and
Be It Finally Resolved that the San Francisco Labor Council will send this statement to Representatives Nancy Pelosi and Jackie Speier, Senators Kamala Harris and Dianne Feinstein, President Donald Trump, the AFL-CIO, the California Federation of Labor and the Alameda and San Mateo Labor Councils.

Stop denying disaster relief to Puerto Rico!

Demonstrators gathered in Philadelphia on Jan. 15 in front of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Mid-Atlantic Region, with signs and Puerto Rican flags. Spokesperson after speaker criticized the Trump administration for refusing to allow $818 billion in post-hurricane aid to be sent to Puerto Rico, which has been devastated by hurricanes Maria and Irma in 2017.

After recent earthquakes reaching 6.4 magnitude in Puerto Rico, Trump finally lifted the hold on $8.2 billion in aid on Jan. 14. Protesters were not satisfied and demanded that the whole $18 billion be released so the electrical grid, bridges, homes and businesses can be repaired and rebuilt.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette
France

Strike over pensions enters sixth week

By G. Dunkel

The political strike against the French government’s regressive pension plan to raise the retirement age entered its sixth week on Jan. 16. While a significant number of striking railroad and Paris subway workers have been forced back to work by financial pressures, strikes have now closed most of the major French ports and many of France’s most popular tourist sites.

The SNCF, the government-owned railroad company, estimated it has lost over 1 billion euros (around $1.1 billion). The Paris Opera, a major tourist draw, has lost over 80 million euros. Thousands of freight cars are piled up in railroad yards because freight couldn’t move during the SNCF strike.

Le Havre, one of the ports being struck, handles around 9,000 truckloads a day. All of them were being blocked.

The Louvre in Paris is the world’s largest art museum, which received 9.6 million visitors in 2019. On Jan. 17, strikers blocked all five entrances to the museum for the first time. Thousands of tourists, both French and foreign, some with timed tickets for the Leonardo da Vinci exhibit, were kept out.

Hotels and restaurants, which draw a significant amount of business during the year-end holidays, reported a dismal lack of customers.

The French government does not appear to have released its estimate of how much this strike has cost the French economy. Instead, Prime Minister Édouard Philippe has emphasized his government’s determination to proceed with the pension plan.

Workers’ anger growing

President Emmanuel Macron and his spouse went to the theater on Jan. 17. Macron’s presence was recognized by a journalist, who tweeted out a call to protest. About 100 people gathered and attempted to get into the theater, but were pushed out by cops who rushed to protect the president. Macron waited until the play was finished to leave — to boos and catcalls.

The journalist Taha Boubah, who had been a parliamentarian candidate for France Unbowed (France insoumise), was arrested for organizing this disturbance, but was released after being held overnight.

Strikers, carrying flags of the militant union federations CGT and SUD, occupied the main office of the reformist union CFDT on Jan. 17. They came, according to spokesperson Anasse Kazib for the site online union, to protest the lack of support by the CFDT central leadership for CFDT railroad workers and the fact that the CFDT has not used its 126-million-euro strike fund. They wanted to make clear that the CFDT central leadership was not speaking for its members.

The leaders of the CGT and SUD emphasized that they did not support their occupation, although they strongly disagree with the strategy of the CFDT.

The orchestra of the Paris Opera, which has been striking along with the ballet dancers since Dec. 5, held a free, public performance Jan. 17 in front of the opera hall, which drew around 15,000 people.

The Yellow Vest protest movement held its 52nd protest in Paris Jan. 18, which drew thousands of protesters. It was so dispersed and broken up by tear gas and baton charges from the cops that the number of protesters was not available. Dozens of people were arrested in scuffles that went on from early afternoon to well after nightfall.

Some videos of police brutality against the Yellow Vests were spread widely on social media.

Videos on the French television channel France 2 show striking dockers welding shut the gates to the loading areas on the docks and then welding braces to the gates to make it even more difficult to force them open.

Lawyers throughout France, who have a special retirement system funded by contributions from active law- m the workers and force them back. But it is meeting stub- born resistance.

France steps up as U.S. threatens to withdraw

By G. Dunkel

The Hill, a newspaper that chronicles the role of Congress in backing U.S. imperialism, reported Jan. 20 that Secretary of Defense Mark Esper has likely decided to withdraw U.S. troops from former French colonies in Africa. The withdrawals “could include abandoning a recently built $120 million drone base in Niger and ending assistance to French forces fighting militants in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.” The U.S. currently has about 400 soldiers in West Africa.

This past summer, the U.S. imposed financial sanctions on some political leaders in Mali. While Washington claims it is only targeting individuals, any entity having economic relations with these individuals can also be sanctioned, which leads to a chain reaction.

In response to the possible U.S. realignment, France called a meeting Jan. 13 in Pau, a small French city 30 miles from the Spanish border. It invited Mali’s Ibrahim Kaboré, Niger’s Mahamadou Issoufou, Mauritania’s Mohamed Ould Ghazouani and Chad’s Idriss Deby.

Kaboré, Niger’s Mahamadou Issoufou, Mauritania’s Mohamed Ould Ghazouani and Chad’s Idries Deby. This meeting was originally set for December but was postponed after 71 Niger troops were killed in an attack by so-called “militants” on Dec. 10. Last week, another attack left 89 more of Niger’s soldiers dead.

France is an imperialist country and the former colonial overlord in the Western Sahel, which includes Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, as well as Chad and Mauritania.

The Sahel is a vast, arid area, south of the Sahara Desert, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to parts of Sudan. The region where the borders of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso meet, however, is fairly well-populated and fertile, and has active insurgent groups that the French army calls “jihadist.”

In 2012 — after Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi had been deposed and murdered a year earlier through the intervention of NATO countries, including France — vast stockpiles of modern arms, along with trained soldiers, became available throughout the Sahel. A loose coalition of “jihadist” groups and forces from an ethnic group in northern Mali, the Tuareg, used these arms to begin taking over cities and towns in Mali. The French Army intervened and reestablished a regime that was under their control.

France currently has 4,900 troops in the Sahel. This military presence has been the target of large demonstrations in Bamako, Mali’s capital; people in Niger have also protested. The French government did not provide the political support it was hoping for at the meeting held in Pau. It then announced it was sending an additional force of 220 soldiers to the Sahel.

Without the U.S. providing very significant support, and with popular opposition to its presence, France is going to have problems maintaining the troops it needs to impose its control on the Western Sahel.

Imperialism in Africa

France steps up as U.S. threatens to withdraw

When President Trump ordered the assassination of Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani in early January, tens of thousands of people protested in over 80 cities across all U.S. states. While Trump has since stepped back from pushing all-out war in Iraq and Iran, he has issued executive orders increasing deadly sanctions against the people of Iran. The Pentagon is also refusing to comply with the decision of the U.S. Congress for the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

The danger of war is far from over and the need for a much larger anti-war movement is clear. U.S. aggression against Iran and continued occupation of Iraq still threaten another disastrous, bloody war.

On Jan. 29, actions will take place around the world to oppose a new war in the Middle East. Organizers are encouraging all those opposed to war to turn up and speak out. Actions are already scheduled in over 70 U.S. cities and in a dozen other countries. A list of scheduled mobilizations can be found at tinyurl.com/wecjgk4.

Initiators for this call include the International Action Center, Answer Coalition, CODEPINK, Popular Resistance, Black Alliance for Peace, National Iranian-American Council, Veterans for Peace, U.S. Labor Against War, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, United National Anti-War Coalition, Pastors for Peace/Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization, International Workers Solidarity Network, HRIC (Fight for Human Rights), Alliance for Global Justice, December 12th Movement, World Beyond War, People’s Opposition to War, Imperialism, and Racism, Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Dominican Sisters/ICAN, Nonviolence International, No War on Venezuela, Food Not Bombs and many other anti-war and peace organizations.

For more information, go to tinyurl.com/wyr7gpx/.
In 2015, a former Black woman law-ayer, April Reign, created the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite on Twitter to bring spe- cial attention to the extreme lack of diver-sity in the Academy Award nominations, especially for actors of color, female, and in lead, and supporting role cate-gories. In that year, all of the nominees were white.

Once #OscarsSoWhite went viral, it brought to light that of the approximately 6,000 people belonging to 17 branches in the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, 92 percent were white and 73 percent male. Promises were made by the Academy hierarchy to put more serious effort into adding more people of color and women members in front of and behind the camera.

Fast forward to five years later. Very little progress has been made. This same Academy is 84 percent white and 68 per-cent male. Variety, May 16. Actors of color have been nomi-nated and even won Oscars for acting after 2015, like Lupita Nyong'o, Regina King, Mahershala Ali. However, when the Oscar nominees for films released in 2019 were announced on Jan. 13, only one person of color was nominated for acting: Cynthia Erivo for her stirring portrayal of abolitionist Harriet Tubman in the film "Harriet." Some of the most noteworthy actors of color were overlooked for their criti-cally acclaimed performances, including Lupita Nyong'o in "Us," Jennifer Lopez in "Hustlers," Awkwafina in "The Farewell," Alire Woodard in "Clemency" and others.

Besides the lack of nominations for actors of color, not one woman was nomi-nated in the best director category. The lack of a nomination for the screenplay writer and director of "Little Women," Greta Gerwig—who is white—was viewed as the most egregious oversight in this cat-egory. But women of color directors were also overlooked for their work, like Kasi Lemmons for "Harriet," Chinnonw Chukwu for "Clemency" and Lulu Wang for "The Farewell," to name just a few. This year’s protest should include #OscarsSoMale.

Over the 91-year history of the Academy Awards, only five women directors have been nominated, with only one win. That was in 2015, when the all-male, pro-war film "The Hurt Locker" in 2010. The vast majority of the nine best film nominations mainly focus on white male characters. When "Little Women" was nominated for best picture, but not Gerwig for her direction, the question was raised sarcastically whether "Little Women" had directed itself.

Movies reinforce racism, sexism

In repeatedly calling for structural changes in broadening the Academy membership, April Reign stated in a Variety op-ed that "#OscarsSoWhite has always encompassed all traditionally underrepresented communities, not just race and ethnicity. It’s also gender iden-tity, sexual orientation, disability, First Nations status and age." (Jan. 15)

Not surprisingly, Hollywood reflects the rest of U.S. class society with its sor-di history of funding racist, sexist and homophobic films for mass consumption since the late 1800s. In the same op-ed, Reign remarked, "[T]he black actresses who have been nominated for best actress or best supporting actress, the vast major-ity play women dealing with trauma: in one case, a victim of sexual abuse, in the other, who were enslaved, or women who were subservient to others. What does it mean when Lupita Nyong'o can win for her performance in ‘12 Years a Slave,’ playing an enslaved woman, but is completely shut out when she’s play-ing not just one, but two fully realized char-acters in ‘Us?’ Those are the questions we need to be asking."

This is because the heads of major studios, who control multimillion-dol-lar budgets for films, have been majority rich, white males. There are only a small handful of filmmakers of color, along with women, who can afford to direct and produce their own films, like Gerwig, Spike Lee and Michael B. Jordan. And even then, they are still at the mercy of the banks for the necessary funding to make their films. It remains to be seen if any kind of symbolic protest will take place for the blatant snubs at the Feb. 9 Academy Awards, viewed by an estimated 1 billion people worldwide.

On the other hand, the Independent Spirit Awards, held one day later, "Indies," held the evening before the Academy Awards broadcast—recognize films with much smaller budgets that portray in a positive light people of color, women and LGBTQ+ who speak different languages on a global scale.

### French and African workers, unite!

The working class of France has a proud history of struggle. The Paris Commune, established in March 1871 and proud history of struggle. The Paris Commune, established in March 1871 and the working class of France is part of a growing strike and protest wave around the world, including in Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Puerto Rico and most recently India. Even in the U.S., strikes are more frequent and involve larger numbers of workers.

What is still needed is for the global proletariat to strike with coordination and in unison. Workers in the imperialist oppressor countries need to be in solidar-ity with workers of their home country’s former colonies and today’s neocolonies. At this time the role of French imperi-alism in suppressing the masses of its for-mer African colonies is increasing. France has just sent more troops to Burkina Faso after its force of 4,500 who have been exerting imperialist control over the vast region known as the Sahel.

It is in the interest of striking workers in France to come out unequivocally for the removal of French troops from Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Protests by the people in these former colonized coun-tries are demanding just that.

For the French working class to declare its solidarity with these people would be a step toward building transnational class unity. It would demonstrate understand-ing of another very old union slogan: “An injury to one is an injury to all!”

Victory to the French strike! Imperialism out of Africa!

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### Oscars still so white, so male

Even though Greta Gerwig—who is white—won best director, for "Little Women," women in abject poverty, women who were underrepresented communities, not just race and ethnicity: It’s also gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, First Nations status and age. (Jan. 15)
Form of transportation. Emissions decreased 55 percent, and are down 89 percent, total hydrocarbon monoxide emissions from vehicle traffic it did 20 years ago. Since 1998, carbon decreases happening since 2013.

Aerodynamic diameter of 2.5 microns or less environmental news is negative. Beijing’s efforts actually go back to 1998, when the municipal government launched several measures aimed at combating pollution. Since then, the average annual concentrations of sulfur dioxide have declined by 93.3 percent, nitrous dioxide fell 37.8 percent, and PM2.5 (particle matter with aerodynamic diameter of 2.5 microns or less) decreased 35.6 percent, with most decreases happening since 2013.

Pollution from vehicles has also decreased significantly, even though the city has three times as many cars as it did 20 years ago. Since 1998, carbon monoxide emissions from vehicle traffic are down 89 percent, total hydrocarbon emissions fell 64 percent, nitrous oxide emissions decreased 55 percent, and PM2.5 fell 81 percent.

Beijing, like the rest of China, has also invested heavily in extensive public transit systems, which greatly reduce air pollution and provide an equally accessible form of transportation. Meanwhile in Germany, often touted as a leading “green” capitalist country, emissions from the transport sector are 25 percent higher than in 1995.

Public transportation

From 2009 to 2015, China built 87 mass transit rail lines in 25 cities, totaling 1,926 miles. In 2016 the government lowered the population threshold for cities to start planning metro systems—from 3 million to 1.5 million people—opening up many more cities for construction of subway systems and other forms of efficient passenger rail transit.

China also has the largest high-speed rail network in the world, with over 18,000 miles of track. This comes to more than the rest of the world combined!

Spending on the control of air pollution in Beijing increased from under 2 billion yuan in 2009 to 18 billion yuan in 2017. (The exchange rate is 1 yuan = 0.15 dollar.) The increase was especially rapid after 2013.

The city also invested in more numerous and more sophisticated air quality monitoring stations. Beijing now has 35 such stations, which can track six major pollutants, as well as over 1,000 sensors spread throughout all parts of the city that monitor concentrations of PM2.5.

Chinese cities now get much of their energy from solar panels, like these outside Chongqing.

Many varied policies, programs and subsidies

The policies and programs put in place to achieve these remarkable results are numerous and varied. They include subsidies to promote electric cars, subsidies for early retirement of older vehicles, and more stringent emissions standards for new vehicles. The local Beijing government also provides subsidies for solar panels and solar water heaters, as well as subsidies for residents to replace coal boilers with electric ones.

As older, polluting industries have been phased out and subsidies provided for workers to find new jobs, the creation of new, green industries has been heavily promoted. An environmental police team was formed to crack down on industries that violate environmental laws. At the end of 2017, some 135 cases of administrative detention and 44 cases of suspected environmental crimes were investigated by the environmental police team.

An environmental petition and complaint system was created, which includes a hotline and an online mailbox, plus incentives of up to 50,000 yuan per case, to encourage the public to actively report environmental violations.

The city formed the Beijing Public Environmental Ambassadors, a group of well-known media personalities and celebrities (such as former National Basketball Association player Stephan Marbury, who now lives permanently in China) who promote environmental awareness to the public. As a result, the proportion of Beijing residents who believe they have a responsibility to play an active role in environmental protection grew from 65 percent in 2013 to over 80 percent in 2017. And satisfaction with Beijing’s environmental quality of life increased from 42 percent in 2015 to 64 percent in 2017.

In Shunyi district, a women’s volunteer team with 8,000 members encourages women to participate in environmental efforts and support their work. The team educates the public, for example, on the existence of subsidies for converting coal boilers to electric. They also engage in recycling programs to “turn waste into treasure.”

The men conduct inspections, and if they find facilities or behaviors that damage or pollute the environment, they work to persuade and educate people to correct their mistakes. The results of the women’s environmental volunteer team have been so promising that the Beijing government has chosen to expand their work to the entire city.

Listen to the people

Beijing’s extensive and successful environmental efforts began as a response to public pressure. Many people listed air pollution as one of their top concerns, and despite widespread approval of the government overall, they expressed dissatisfaction with the state of the environment.

In response, the government, from the local level all the way up to the national, rapidly put in place necessary measures to control pollution. This is in line with what the Western media report about China—the false characterization of the country as an “authoritarian dictatorship” that cares less about the needs and wishes of its people, where people exist only to serve the state.

But the case of Beijing’s air pollution control success shows the opposite is true: The state exists to serve the people.

The Chinese revolution in 1949 succeeded in establishing a state based on the masses of workers and peasants and dedicated to building socialism—a huge task in a country impoverished by landlords, capitalists and foreign imperialist exploiters. Over the past 70 years the leaders of the Communist Party have tried various approaches to serve the people and build up the economy while maintaining their socialist goals. By the end of this year China will have totally eliminated extreme poverty, uplifting over 850 million people in the process. And now it is successfully cleaning up the environment.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., the supposed land of freedom and democracy, there are actually more poor people than in China, according to the 2015 Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report—despite China having over four times the population and a less developed economy.

Cities like Los Angeles and Salt Lake City are disappearing under smoggy skies as the Trump administration rolls back environmental regulations, such as vehicle emission standards. Trump pulled the U.S. out of the Paris Climate Accords, all to benefit Big Business. Meanwhile, drinking water in many rural areas and in cities, particularly places like Flint, Mich., which have large numbers of Black residents and communities of color, is unsafe for humans due to pollution.

China shows, life in the U.S. doesn’t have to be like this. Rapid and significant reductions in pollution can be achieved if the political will exists to fight the hold of Big Business over our lives. (!)
250 millones en India hacen la huelga más grande

Por Martha Grevatt

India es el segundo país más poblado del mundo, con aproximadamente 1,374 millones de personas. Más de 928 millones de estos en “edad laboral” (entre 15 y 65 años; estadísticas de worldometers.info). El 8 de enero, una de cada cuatro personas en este grupo de edad, 250,000, se unieron en la huelga, el más grande hasta la fecha en historia mundial. La huelga de 24 horas cerró la banca, el transporte, el comercio minorista, los servicios públicos, la construcción y la industria en muchas partes del país. Los trabajadores bloquearon carreteras y vías férreas, con sus cuerpos, barricadas y reumáticos en llamas. Coches de policía y edificios gubernamentales fueron atacados en algunos lugares.

Esa es la tarde y la esperanza que se está llevando a cabo en este momento frente a la legislación anti-trabajadores del ministro Narendra Modi y los planes masivos de privatización (NewsClick, 6 de enero). India es el segundo país más poblado en el mundo, con aproximadamente 1,374 millones de personas. Los medios de comunicación corporativos como en información de Estados Unidos no han podido acuer-

doarse de eso. Su valiente liberación brindó al público noticias reales sobre lo que estaba sucediendo en el mundo, saliendo directamente de la boca del caballo en documentos gubernamentales-

Les habían sido marcados como “Solo ojos” o “Sin distribución”. Éstos documentos refutan la versión desinformada de las fuerzas de seguridad y defensoras de los Estados Unidos. Un informe de la ONU sobre la tortura, Niña Melzer, ha acusado al gobierno de los Estados Unidos de usar “medidas severas de coerción” sobre Manning que equivalen a tortura. (Guardian, 31 de diciembre de 2019)

Julian Assange, un australiano que fundó WikiLeaks en 2006, también ha sido perseguido y amenazado con arres-
tar desde 2010, cuando dijo que podría los materiales en línea liberados por Manning y otros que mostraban el ver-
dadero carácter de la brutal guerra de Estados Unidos en Irak. Durante seis años tuvo que refugiarse en la embajada ecuatoriana en Londres.

Pero después el gobierno ecua-
toriano se había movido hacia la derecha. En abril pasado, bajo la presión de Estados Unidos, Assange se vio obligado a aban-
odar la embajada. Fue arrestado de inmediato y desde entonces se encuentra recluido en régimen de aislamiento en Belmarsh, una prisión de máxima seguridad en Londres. Ahora en grave deterioro de la salud, Assange está luchando contra la extradición a los EE.UU., donde podría ser sentenciado a 175 años de prisión o incluso recibir la pena de muerte.

Los documentos publicados por Manning y Assange no eran “noticias falsas”. Incluso el actual gobierno estadouni-
dense ha sido arrestado por su liberación. Fue arrestado de inmediato y desde entonces se encuentra recluido en régimen de aislamiento en Belmarsh, una prisión de máxima seguridad en Londres. Ahora en grave deterioro de la salud, Assange está luchando contra la extradición a los EE.UU., donde podría ser sentenciado a 175 años de prisión o incluso recibir la pena de muerte.

Por otra parte, el multimillonario presidente de los Estados Unidos, Trump, compartió el escenario en un evento de “Howdy, Modi” en Houston el 22 de septiembre. Modi eligió la “preocupación de Trump por cada estadounidense, una creencia en el futuro de Estados Unidos y una fuerte determinación de hacer que Estados Unidos vuelva a ser grandioso”.

Trump utilizó el podio para hacer comentarios anti-musulmanes y felicitar a Modi por hacer “un trabajo verdaderamente excepcional” (“Washington Post, 22 de septiembre”).

Una cosa debería estar clara para los trabajadores y las personas oprimidas aquí en el vientre de la bestia: en India, como aquí, hay una batalla entre dos fuer-
as, mientras, que se prefieren tanto en decla-

Para leer las entrevistas de Martha Grevatt del 2016 en inglés con Amarjeet Kaur, visite tinyurl.com/qozf64h/ y

tinyurl.com/se2z9zg/.