

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



Delbert Africa welcomed by MOVE members and allies.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE



Delbert Africa today.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

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.

Continued on page 3



PHOTO: A. REA

Pensacola, Fla., women's march, Jan. 18.

- Women march for rights 6-7
- Contract gains for WNBA players 7
- Moms for Housing 7

- Gov't hands off UAW! 4
- On the Picket Line 4
- Tribute to Chuck Turner 5



- King Day: Students protest war 8

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- Editorials
- Oscars, racism & sexism 10
 - France, Africa and workers' solidarity 10

- French strikes 9
- No War on Iran! 9
- Lebanon 10
- China vs. pollution 11

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 type of imperialism is far more dynamic, far more ruthless, and far more compelled to take its murderous — and suicidal — path than the rest.

By the same token, since modern imperialism employs so many more millions of people in its “peaceful” exploitation, as well as in its interminable wars; since it calls into being the literate, the skilled and semi-skilled, the intellectual and artistic legions that are indispensable for its sway, it must also employ deceit on a hitherto unknown scale to keep these legions in line.

It must cover up. It must even find funny names for its most murderous weapons. It must make hypocrisy and cynicism fashionable and even admirable. Where the old capitalism made honor, love and friendship into saleable commodities, the new imperialism must turn them into apologetic jokes.

Modern youth has already begun to fight against all this. But the fight, including especially the fight against the war, must become a struggle against the imperialist-capitalist system itself. It cannot be restricted merely to the excesses of the system.

Imperialism is not a question of a policy that can be chosen at will by one group of corporations and dropped by another. And this applies with exactly the same force to the political instrument of those corporations: the government.

Imperialism is a system. It has a built-in tendency to expand — and expand abroad — because it is based on the private ownership of the now social means of production.

Since it produces for private profit instead of for the general good, it cannot employ all its own people, nor even feed them, nor can it rise beyond a certain level of production without attempting to conquer other countries.

Imperialism must be replaced with a different system — a system in which society not only operates the productive forces, as it does now, but owns and manages them

in its own interest. This simple, but of course extremely difficult transformation, when it is accomplished in all countries, will make war superfluous, and as ridiculous in fact as it now is in theory. The ideal that has been sought for centuries and even millennia will be realized through the logical means of eliminating the material cause of war.

For every war in history — even the dynastic wars and the so-called “religious wars” and the wars over national prestige or monarchical vanity, including such semi-mythical events as the seizure of Helen of Troy — every war was over material, economic interests. And except for the occasional armed collisions between barbaric tribes desperate for hunting and living space — which are also economic causes — all these thousands of wars were in the interest of one or another exploiting class.

Even the revolutions, before the Russian Revolution, were the overthrow of one exploiting class by another — the feudal monarchy by the bourgeoisie; before that, the overthrow of the more purely feudal power by the semi-bourgeois monarchy; the overthrow of the ancient Roman monarchy by a new coalition of landlords and tradesmen to found the Republic and so on.

Up to very recently, the working masses of society never had the material possibility of removing their exploiters and finishing with them for good. But modern machinery and modern technology have now provided such a possibility.

They have made it possible for the masses to dispense with an owning and exploiting class altogether, and to produce a full and abundant life for themselves in the bargain.

From the book “Expanding Empire,” written in 1969 by Vincent Copeland, a founding member of Workers World Party. The full text can be read at workers.org.



Join us in the fight for socialism!

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. □



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

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♦ In the U.S.	
Movement brings Delbert Africa home	1
People’s campaign frees Coffey from solitary	3
Government hands off the UAW!	4
On the picket line	4
Life and legacy of Chuck Turner	5
Shelter solidarity struggle wins concession	6
Contract reached for women basketball players	7
Moms 4 Housing brutally evicted, vow to return	7
Students resist imperialist speaker at MLK Week	8
Stop denying disaster relief to Puerto Rico!	8
S.F. Labor Council anti-war, pro-peace resolutions	8
♦ Around the world	
The global war drive of big business	2
‘Women’s rights are human rights!’	6
France: Strike over pensions enters sixth week.	9
Imperialism in Africa	9
Jan. 25 – Global Day of Protest – No war on Iran!	9
Lebanon protests storm banks, demand new gov’t	10
How People’s China cleaned up Beijing’s air	11
♦ Editorials	
Oscars still so white, so male	10
French and African workers, unite!	10
♦ Noticias en Español	
La huelga más grande	12
Poniendo la verdad tras las rejas	12

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Movement brings Delbert Africa home

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. Though the undeniable fact and 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 captured on video that have followed it, from the beating of Rodney King to the murder of Eric Garner.

After nearly half a century, no amount of cell phone videos, surveillance camera 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 reinstatement of the death penalty so he could round up all remaining MOVE members and “throw the switch” himself.

Rizzo threatened reporters with retaliation for negative coverage and said that he hoped to get revenge on them during his tenure. Three years later, President of the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists Mumia Abu-Jamal, who had been most critical of Rizzo, would be shot by police and falsely framed for murder.

By Rizzo’s side was District Attorney Ed Rendell, stridently defending the city’s decision to bulldoze the MOVE house on Powelton Avenue, destroying exculpatory evidence and completely erasing the crime scene within hours of the police attack. Rendell would go on to become mayor, then Pennsylvania governor and then chairperson 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 Malmed, who admitted he hadn’t “the faintest idea” who shot Ramp, gave each of them 30- to 100-year prison sentences.

Delbert Africa spent six years in “the hole,” or solitary confinement, a practice regarded as torture under the United Nations Charter. It is estimated that as many as 100,000 people may be currently held in solitary confinement across the U.S. As the years wore on, the toxic conditions and white supremacist guards took their toll on MOVE 9 members. Both Phil and Merle Africa were killed by the prison system. A shock went through the community earlier this year when Delbert went missing in a situation that closely resembled the events that culminated in both Phil’s and Merle’s deaths.

Friends and family, even his lawyers, were unable to contact him and prison staff refused to state whether Delbert was alive or dead. Supporters learned that he had been transferred to the hospital after a medical emergency and was being held there without the ability to communicate with the outside world.

The movement responded by demonstrating at the hospital and flooding the phone lines with calls demanding Delbert’s release. After two tense days, Delbert was finally able to leave the hospital and put out a statement thanking everyone for the successful effort to save his life.

In the last few years, an unprecedented number of former Black Panthers and other radicals have been released. Debbie, Michael, Janet, Janine and Eddie Africa have all been released on parole since 2018, after 40 years of imprisonment.

Global campaign brings Delbert home

As Delbert Africa’s parole hearing 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 Parole for 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 gunning 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, had his hearing and is now awaiting a decision from the parole board. Mumia Abu-Jamal, another former Panther and world-renowned author and journalist, is still fighting for exoneration in the courts and against serious health issues after 38 years in notoriously toxic coal-country prisons. Indeed, the fight will not be over until the shackles are taken off of every prisoner in the U.S. The system of mass incarceration uses criminality only as a pretext to round up and lock up oppressed working-class people, overwhelmingly Black,

Brown, Indigenous people in huge disproportionate numbers. Prisons do not “correct” or “rehabilitate,” nor is that their intended purpose. Prisons are concentration camps for the poor. They enable the capitalist ruling class to keep millions of workers in captivity, a labor force on retainer who get paid pennies per hour—if at all. And the bosses have managed to turn this modern-day slavery into a billion dollar industry—through contracts with finance capital, tech firms, arms manufacturers and other corporate profiteers. No person, no matter what their alleged crimes or past history, should be forced to languish in hell for the crude profits of the 1%. This is why when we say “Free Chuck! Free Mumia!” we say, “FREE ‘EM ALL!” □



‘Delbert’s home — Free them all!’

Philadelphia — Very early in the morning of Jan. 18, three carloads of supporters made the two-hour trip from Philadelphia to SCI Dallas, near Wilkes Barre, Pa., to bring MOVE 9 member Delbert Africa home from prison. They waited from 8:15 until 9:30, when Delbert was finally released — after 41 years in prison for a crime that none of the MOVE 9 had committed. On his arrival in West Philadelphia, he was warmly welcomed by other MOVE 9 members, MOVE organizers and community activists, including members of

Workers World Party, Food Not Bombs Solidarity, Mobilization4Mumia, 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, 1201 South 51st St. at 2 p.m. — Report and photo by Joe Piette

‘I have a right to write’ People’s campaign frees Coffey from solitary confinement

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 activist Jerome 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 his attorney Martha Conley complained that he was taken out of his cell on Jan. 5 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. 11 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) Albion 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 be allowed to call his sister to confirm he was all right. Jeanne Coffey told Workers World she got “many, many calls” from people about their calls to the prison. One prison official told Coffey they got thousands of calls. By late afternoon on Jan. 13 callers were told he was being taken out of solitary.

Lockdown: collective punishment

The struggle wasn’t over yet. Coffey still wasn’t 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 Bryant 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.” (tinyurl.com/sx7aa21/) 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 Albion 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 unbelievable. 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



Jerome Coffey

talks about, all the so-called reforms, I don’t see none of that. You got young white guards out there spraying people. It’s all messed up, man. They broke my foot locker, they broke my remote control, they stole my sweatpants, they broke my lamp. The only thing—they didn’t mess my typewriter up. So I still got my typewriter.” □

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 [a takeover] is one of the options.” (Detroit Free Press, Jan. 10)

In other words, the capitalist state — overtly hostile to organized labor, especially under the Trump administration — could take advantage of documented corrupt practices to sue the union under the Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO). This could lead to federal oversight.

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

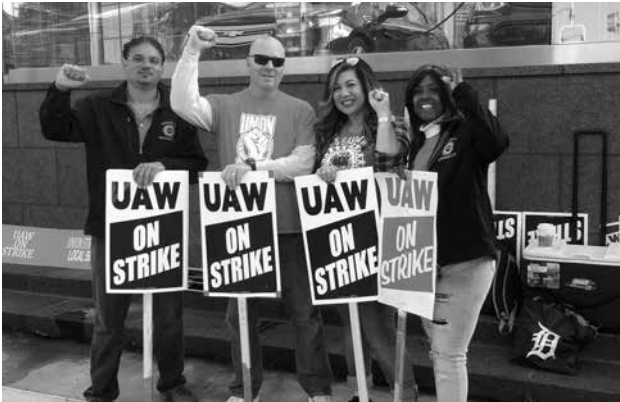
These threats follow a federal investigation into corrupt practices by top UAW leaders and staff. First to be charged were individuals in the union’s Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) Department, who were accused of taking bribes from the company in exchange for agreeing to inferior contract terms and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

Further federal investigation uncovered multimillion-dollar scandals involving vendor kickbacks and expropriation of union funds. The people implicated include retired UAW President Dennis Williams and former 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 whom they trusted to fight in their best interests.

That doesn’t mean they want anti-union government 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 capitalist media that have



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Striking GM workers picket GM World Headquarters on Oct. 9, 2019. Rank-and-file workers organized this protest independently of the International UAW leadership.

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 accidents with a faulty ignition switch that General Motors installed to save money. It’s not the union that kills and maims autoworkers, here and in other countries, because corporations won’t spend the extra money to make the workplace safer. Chrysler (now FCA) once fought the federal government over airbag requirements, although they knew airbags save lives.

“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 nepotism and cronyism. The leadership fully embraced class collaborationism and rejected class struggle. They epitomize what the leader of the 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 a new mechanism to elect the International Executive Board. Currently, the IEB is elected by delegates at the quadrennial Constitutional Convention. What UAWD seeks is quite 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 constitution requires that resolutions of support be passed by locals representing at least 20 percent of the total UAW membership — about 80,000 members. Right now UAWD is nearing the halfway point.

The UAWD platform, still a work in progress, 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.

Breaking up labor-management cooperation is necessary 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 picket line
By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

‘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 signatures to management during their break on Dec. 23, the workers read their demands for a meeting with management 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). “[I]t was good to show people we can stick together.”

Like other Amazon workers, those at DSM1 are harassed by ever-increasing productivity goals. One job is sorting and scanning packages. The rate of scans per hour was recently increased from 180 to 300, while workers were gradually cut. Complaining about the stress, a worker noted: “[E]very part of the labor process [is] to get the same amount of volume done with fewer people” — classic capitalist maneuver!

Some DSM1 workers, called Amazonians United Sacramento, went public about organizing last September. Around 100 workers are wearing buttons reading, “Amazonians United for PTO.” (Labor Notes, Jan. 3) Stay tuned.

Florida teachers march on Tallahassee capitol

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

Lack of consistent pay increases has produced over 3,500 vacant teaching positions across the state. Florida ranks in the bottom 10 states in educational funding, with spending below pre-recession levels. The state is 26th in starting pay, according to the National Education Association.

Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis has proposed spending \$603 million to raise the state’s starting teacher pay and another \$300 million in bonuses for highly effective teachers. Though legislative leaders are skeptical, teachers call DeSantis’ proposal a “good start.” They are seeking a 10 percent across-the-board pay raise for all classroom teachers and school staff. According to Tallahassee.com, Florida teachers are emboldened by gains made by teachers from Arizona to West Virginia. (Jan. 13)

Teamsters show solidarity with French strikers

Even though the U.S. corporate press hasn’t paid much attention to the massive strike beginning Dec. 5 in France, the Teamsters union has. On Dec. 18, it issued a solidarity statement protesting the government’s

proposal to drastically change retirement benefits for the working class, and on Jan. 9 the Teamsters held picket lines at and delivered letters to the French Embassy in Washington, D.C., and the Consulate General in Los Angeles. The letter began: “The 1.4 million members of the Teamsters Union stand in solidarity with workers in France during their struggle to maintain a pension that allows them to retire with dignity and respect after years of hard work.” The letter also demanded the French-owned, U.S.-based company Airgas respect the workers’ right to organize, free from harassment and intimidation, and sign a contract with adequate retirement benefits. (teamster.org, Jan. 9)

DOL attacks franchise workers

The Department of Labor issued a rule Jan. 12 to make it harder to prove that corporations are responsible when franchise owners or contractors violate wage laws. Labor Secretary Eugene Scalia said the Trumpian rule, first proposed last April and slated to go into effect on March 13, was to limit “joint employers” and “promote entrepreneurs.”

The DOL ruling chopped Obama administration wording, expanding the definition of joint employers: corporations that set policies about hiring, firing and supervising workers and set pay and maintain employment records that franchises must follow. McDonald’s workers have taken advantage of that wording. However, last October a San Francisco federal appeals court ruled that McDonald’s was not responsible for such wage law violations by franchise owners.

Rebecca Dixon, executive director of the National Employment Law Project, stated the new DOL rule “makes it easier for corporations to cheat their workers and look the other way when workplace violations occur.” She added that DOL’s reversal exposes “millions of workers to wage theft.” (The Hill, Jan. 13) No wonder Fight for \$15 has posted a petition calling for support at fight4fifteen.com. □

Massive turnout honors life and legacy of Chuck Turner

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 LGBTQ2+ 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 Constituent Service 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 performance by Foundation Movement, Boston’s premier hip-hop band and Chuck’s beloved loyal comrades.

Mel King, 91 years old, set the tone for the day, reciting a poem he had composed entitled the “Power of Love.” King had worked with Chuck on countless campaigns, including the historic I-95 Federal Highway struggle of 1969. This project threatened to decimate Boston’s Black and Brown communities. Their coalition, called Operation Stop, took on the federal government and won, providing invaluable lessons for struggles ahead to protect the integrity of the community.

Charles Yancey met Chuck as a teenage college activist. He bears the honorable distinction of being the sole City Councilor to “Stand with Chuck,” when the Council took an illegal, racist vote to remove Chuck after his 2008 federal frameup. Yancey stated, “We are Chuck Turner.”

Speakers tell of his early struggles

Also on the program was Bill Strickland, Chuck’s Harvard classmate, who after meeting him at a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee convention in 1963, joined him in New York City as editor of the Northern

Student Movement newspaper. The NSM was begun by northern students providing support for the movement in the South. It later shifted to Black community organizing in New York, Hartford and Boston, a trajectory that led Chuck back to Boston in 1966.

In those three years, he joined a rent strike in Harlem and then became NSM director in Hartford, where he organized a campaign to confront police brutality. This led to confrontations between the police and the community, resulting in Chuck’s arrest and charges of sedition — charges that had not been used since the days of Sacco and Vanzetti. After Chuck was given probation, he moved to Roxbury, Mass.

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

President Andre François 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 1958, 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, racist frameup.

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



Chuck Turner, ipresente!

WW PHOTO: STEVAN KIRSCHBAUM

justice, in Massachusetts and around the globe. Turner’s prosecution in 2008 was part of a politically motivated pattern of prosecutions of elected officials of color 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.”

Chuck was innocent! Yet he served 2 ½ years in federal prison in West Virginia. He handled this fight with the same principles, dignity and grace that characterized his life’s struggles. He organized within the walls and returned to Boston stronger than ever.

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.

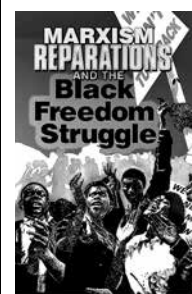
An internationalist to the core, Chuck fought for workers and the oppressed worldwide: from Palestine to Puerto Rico, Haiti to India, Iraq to Afghanistan. He consistently supported Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier and all political prisoners.

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 of the weight of its own evil. Let us prepare ourselves to remake the world in the image of Brotherly and Sisterly Love.”

Chuck Turner, ipresente!” □

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

Download it from workers.org/books.



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

PHOTO: USW LOCAL 8751

Women’s March Global: ‘Women’s 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, Asia, 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, people of color, low-income communities, workers, LGBTQ2+ people, individuals with disabilities and seniors. Racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, misogyny, homophobia and transphobia have emanated from the White House.



Indigenous women led the Women’s March in Washington, D.C., to call attention to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

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. Reproductive 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 im/migrants, 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 grouping 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 there 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 contingent 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, with the “Sanctions Kill Women” flyer on the reverse side. There was also a contingent 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 Ellie Dorritie



Buffalo, N.Y.



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

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

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 shuttling 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 centers only hold 700. That means that even with this additional 145 beds, we are still 255 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.

“With 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 that the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute presented at their fact-finding 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 by state compromise. We will continue to fight for shelter and dignity for all people.” □

s are human rights!



New York City

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

individuals with disabilities, and for halting the climate crisis.

The International Action Center held a popular sign reading, “Solidarity with Palestinian Women Is Not anti-Semitism.” Workers World Party distributed newspapers with an editorial titled “Together in solidarity — and toward socialism.” One WW placard read “Reproductive Justice Now for Women and Gender Oppressed People.” Gabriela New York handed out International Working Women’s Day Coalition fliers.

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

Members of Las Tesis 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 Benjamin Franklin Parkway despite cold, wet weather. Under the theme “The Year of the Woman,” participants 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 capitalist elections, marchers’ signs addressed a wide range of issues: abortion rights, the #MeToo campaign against workplace sexual misconduct, equal rights for the LGBTQ2+ community, racial equality, equal pay for women and environmental concerns.

— Contributed by Betsey Piette □

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 Cross and Tolani, two of the mothers, plus two of their supporters. All were taken to Santa Rita Jail.

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 Action (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, TurHa 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



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Moms and supporters celebrate release from jail.

demonstrators had gone to the house to show support for the Moms and to stop the eviction. Nothing happened that night. Dominique Walker, one of the founders of the Moms group, was not at the house when the eviction happened. She was in the middle of an interview with “Democracy Now!” when she found out about it.

She raced back to the house while the Moms were being arrested. “If you are not angry, you should get angry. Our tax dollars went to this extreme force to evict mothers and children at 5 o’clock in the morning. We are saying no, we are standing with Misty and Tolani,” Walker said.

The Moms were released on bail shortly after being arrested. They are facing misdemeanor charges of resisting arrest and obstructing the eviction. The Moms and their supporters have vowed to continue their campaign to house all the unsheltered, unhoused people in Oakland.

In an interview with the San Jose Mercury News the day of the arrests, Misty Cross stated unequivocally: “This is only a piece of it. We’re going to be out in a minute. We’ll be back. We’ll be right back.”

Fife of ACCE Action summed up the situation succinctly: “We know that the paramilitary police forces are not to protect the people; they are to protect property. The people need to continue to rise up because we are going to break the back of capitalism,” 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 moms4housing.org. □



Nneka Ogumike, president of WNBA.

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 pending an election among the players from the current 12 WNBA teams and approval of the WNBA’s board of governors. 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, competitions, and team and league marketing deals. Each player, regardless of whether they are rookies or veterans, will be guaranteed 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 cover free agency, postcareer job preparation, and mental health, domestic violence/partner abuse, nutrition and women’s health programs. Most importantly, players who become mothers finally have paid maternity leave, a child care stipend, two-bedroom apartments for players with children, workplace accommodations for nursing mothers, and family planning benefits.

A progressive and historic step forward

WNBA President Nneka Ogumike, 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 were really happy 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 we deserve, we know that we deserve — we have women’s soccer, we have women’s hockey that are looking up to what we are looking 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 struggle for pay equity and equality, is not isolated from the rest of this capitalist, 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 popularity of the NBA, founded in 1946, compared to the WNBA founded in 1996. The total revenue for the NBA in 2018 was \$7.4 billion, but only \$60 million for the WNBA. The highest paid annual salary for an NBA player (Stephen Curry) in 2018 was \$40 million, compared to \$113,500 for a WNBA player (Brittney Griner). (wsn.com, July 18, 2019)

Despite these huge remaining gaps, WNBA players and others in the sports world view this new CBA as a progressive, 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 16 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 lucrative TV and livestreaming contracts, especially in small city markets, compared 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 because of sexism.

Whitney Medford 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 proud of the women who 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 including 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 compared to the NBA, the fact that there is a contract with defined, guaranteed terms will inspire workers of all nationalities, genders and abilities, from low-wage workers to professional athletes, to fight for a union. □

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, “Honoring MLK’s Legacy of Peace,” to highlight Dr. King’s true legacy of anti-militarism. KSUnited, Young Democratic Socialists of America-KSU and Students for Justice in Palestine were organizers of the events.

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 organization. University officials on the way to the Legacy Luncheon at the Convocation 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 on Earth,” “Lockheed Martin supplied weapons for the conflicts in Yemen and Syria” and “16,706 civilian



WW PHOTO: ARIELLE ROBINSON

Kennesaw State students affirm Dr. M.L. King’s anti-war legacy on Jan. 16.

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. KSUnited 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 McLean’s

achievements as a Black engineer who went to an HBCU, which represents Black success in an historically oppressive society. However, his standing as a keynote speaker at an MLK Legacy luncheon also represents KSU’s direct support of war, which opposes Dr. King’s message of non-violence. King recognized the three major evils of society as racism, poverty and war. King stated: ‘The bombs in Vietnam explode at home; they destroy the hopes and possibilities for a decent America.’ MLK was an anti-racist, anti-capitalist and anti-war revolutionary, and to pick and choose aspects of his philosophies is a common tactic used by elitists to water down Dr. King’s legacy.” Previously, Martin Luther King Week at KSU had been an event open to the metro Atlanta public on weekends, 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 KSU administration seizing 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, President Trump has threatened Iranian cultural sites with attack, a threat which, if carried out, is a war crime; and Whereas, the Trump administration recently approved a defense budget that, at \$738 billion dollars, is higher than [military spending of] all the [other] countries of the world combined, despite the continued struggle of workers for health care, housing, and good-paying jobs; and Whereas, according to the Wall Street Journal, the United States, governed by both Democratic and Republican administrations, has spent more than \$5.6 trillion in involvement in post-9/11 conflicts; and Whereas, incalculable harm has been done to the region through the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives, the vast majority of them innocent Iraqi citizens; and

Whereas, unions, the voice of the organized working class, continue to fight for a more just and dignified economy, civil rights, social justice, racial equity and a genuine democracy here at home; and Whereas, the AFL-CIO has twice passed anti-war resolutions at its national conventions and made the connection between the cost of war and the need to fund the needs of working people; and Whereas, US Labor Against the War, a national organization of unions and other

labor organizations founded in January of 2003 to oppose President George Bush’s then threatened war on Iraq, was instrumental in passing the historic 2005 resolution at the national AFL-CIO convention; and Whereas, thousands of people in over 90 cities in the United States took to the streets on January 4, 2020, demanding “No war with Iran,” and creating the stirrings of a new anti-war movement; and Therefore, be it resolved that the San Francisco Labor Council restates the AFL-CIO’s Resolution 50 passed during its 2017 National Convention, promoting and advocating for a foreign policy based on the international solidarity of all workers, mutual respect of all nations and national sovereignty, and calls upon the president and Congress to make war truly the last resort in our country’s foreign relations, and that we seek peace and reconciliation wherever possible; and Be it finally resolved, that the San Francisco Labor Council endorses the call for 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 47% of the vote in the October 20 national election in Bolivia, and Whereas there has not been any demonstrable evidence of election fraud in this election, despite claims of the OAS, and Whereas under Evo Morales’s 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

the coup regime has issued a decree giving police and military impunity when they kill protesters, and Whereas AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka has said, “The AFL-CIO joins the @ituc @CSA_TUCA [International Trade Union Confederation/Trade Union Confederation of Workers in the Americas] in condemning military interference in Bolivia’s election process. Morales reduced widespread poverty and fought for the inclusion of the Indigenous majority. Bolivians must be able to vote peacefully and freely in new elections,” and Whereas Brazilian nurses’ union President Shirley Diaz Morales condemned the coup: “We in Latin America cannot tolerate that every time any leader stands up against social injustice, they face a coup,” and Whereas the United States government has a long history of undermining the sovereignty of Latin American countries, including Bolivia, to take advantage

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. Speaker after speaker criticized the Trump administration for refusing to allow \$18 billion in post-hurricane aid to be sent to the U.S. island colony. Without citing a valid reason to deny the Congress-approved aid, Trump has delayed upgrades that would repair the island’s infrastructure, which was severely damaged by hurricanes Maria and Irma in 2017. After recent earthquakes reaching 6.4 in 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



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

New York City protest against U.S. war on Iran, Jan. 4.

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 5,000 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 implement its 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



Workers all over France continue to resist.

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 Bouhafs, who had been a parliamentary 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 online site revolutionpermanente.fr, 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 chain 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 lawyers, which has a hefty surplus, have been protesting a government takeover of their funds. They are throwing their robes into piles and not participating in normal activities.

Doctors in the underfunded public hospital system have been fully providing care to their patients, but not signing off on bills going to insurance companies.

Upcoming events

While the number of workers participating in the strike and the national protests has been declining, the spirit and resolve of those still active have increased. Even when UNSA, the union representing most Parisian subway workers, announced that service to most of the subway would be restored on Jan. 20, it stressed that it was not abandoning the struggle and would fully participate in the next national day of action called for Jan. 24.

The French government is betting that it can outlast the workers and force them back. But it is meeting stubborn resistance. □

Imperialism in Africa

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 \$110 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 800 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 Boubacar Keita, Burkina Faso's Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, Niger's Mahamadou Issoufou, Mauritania's Mohamed Ould Ghazouani and Chad's Idriss Deby. This meeting was originally set for December but was



Protest against the French military presence in Bamako, Mali.

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 4,500 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 get 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. □

Jan. 25 — Global Day of Protest — No war on Iran!

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 38 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 Iraqi Parliament 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. 25, 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/we555kt/.

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 the 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, FIRE (Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere), 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/yx7f7gxx/. □

WORKERS WORLD

editorials

Oscars still so white, so male

In 2015, a former Black woman lawyer, April Reign, created the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite on Twitter to bring special attention to the extreme lack of diversity in the Academy Award nominations, especially for actors of color, female and male, in lead and supporting role categories. In that year, all of the nominees were white.

Once #OscarsSoWhite went viral, it brought to light that of the approximately 6,000 members belonging to 17 branches in the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, 92 percent were white and 75 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 percent male. (variety.com, Jan. 15)

Actors of color have been nominated and even won Oscars for acting after 2015, like Lupita Nyong'o, Regina King, Rami Malek and 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 critically acclaimed performances, including Lupita Nyong'o in "Us," Jennifer Lopez in "Hustlers," Awkwafina in "The Farewell," Alfre Woodard in "Clemency" and others.

Besides the lack of nominations for actors of color, not one woman was nominated 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 category. But women of color directors were also overlooked for their work, like Kasi Lemmons for "Harriet," Chinonye 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 Kathryn Bigelow for 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 identity, sexual orientation, disability, First Nations status and age." (Jan. 15)

Not surprisingly, Hollywood reflects the rest of U.S. class society with its sordid history of funding racist, sexist and homophobic films for mass consumption since the late 1800s. In the same op-ed, Reign remarked, "[O]f the black actresses who have been nominated for best actress or best supporting actress, the vast majority play women dealing with trauma: women in abject poverty, women 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 playing not just one, but two fully realized characters in 'Us'? Those are the questions we need to be asking."

This is because the heads of major studios, who control multimillion-dollar budgets for films, have been majority rich, white males. There are only a small handful of filmmakers of color, along with women, who have the clout to write, 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—known as the "Indies," held the evening before the Academy Awards broadcast—recognize films with much smaller budgets that portray in a more positive light people of color, women and LGBTQ2S+ people 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 brutally crushed by the capitalist state two months later, was the first example of the working class in power. In 1968, another French Revolution came close to bringing down the government.

Since then, the labor movement has engaged in many powerful strikes.

The words to the famous proletarian revolutionary anthem, "The Internationale," were written in 1871 by a leader of the Communards, Eugène Pottier. The recent upsurge in France,

from the Yellow Vest movement to the strike now in its second month, brings to mind this moving call to action—"Debout, les damnés de la terre!" ("Arise, ye wretched of the earth!")

This general strike has made its impact felt. French President Emmanuel Macron dropped a proposed law to raise the minimum retirement age. But the workers are still off the job and in the streets.

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 solidarity with workers of their home country's former colonies and today's neocolonies.

At this time the role of French imperialism in suppressing the masses of its former African colonies is increasing. France has just sent more troops to augment 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 countries are demanding just that.

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

Victory to the French strike! Imperialism out of Africa! □

Lebanon Demonstrators storm banks, demand new gov't

By Karin Leukefeld
Beirut, Lebanon

Published in the German daily newspaper Junge Welt, Jan. 16. Translation: John Catalinotto.

For some people in Lebanon a "Week of Wrath" has begun; for others it was the "Tuesday of Wrath." In the Hamra commercial district of Beirut, demonstrators attacked numerous bank branches during clashes with police on Tuesday evening, Jan. 14. The protesters' primary target was Lebanon's central bank, which had been hermetically sealed by security forces.

During hours of street fighting, the demonstrators destroyed windows, doors and ATMs, using stones and iron bars. They also plastered walls of the banks with slogans such as "The people want to overthrow the banks."

Communist youth groups, anarchists and other left-wing organizations claimed responsibility for the bank storm. Numerous non-governmental organizations criticized the violence. The police reacted with truncheons and tear gas, arresting 59 people. According to the Lebanese Red Cross, 65 people were injured, most of them not seriously.

Demonstrators also clashed with



Demonstrators block highway in Jal-el-Dib, north of Beirut, Lebanon, on Jan. 14.

security forces in the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli and in the southern Lebanese port city of Saida. They blocked important main roads with sit-in blockades, using dumped garbage containers or burned tires. From a tire fire in the Beirut district of Achrafieh, a black pillar of smoke rose high into the sky above Beirut.

An economic and financial crisis in October had provoked a wave of protests, which then decreased during the Christmas and New Year holidays. Now the protesters are back in full force, an unnamed demonstrator told journalists. If the government is not replaced with a new one within 48

hours, they said, the actions will expand.

Currently, university professor Hassan Diab is in charge of forming the new government. He plans a government of technocrats, a strategy supported by the overwhelming majority of the population. It is questionable how the political power blocs in Lebanon—which have been divided according to religious affiliation since the 1975-1990 civil war—will react.

An alliance built around Hezbollah [the anti-imperialist Shiite-based organization] had won the last parliamentary elections in May 2018. In the previous government there were four ministers

close to Hezbollah. In order to preserve the religious proportion between Christians, Sunnis and Shiites, and to preserve peace within Lebanon, the Sunni Muslim Saad Hariri was again elected prime minister at that time, although he lost a lot of votes. When the protests began, Hariri resigned, and in the interim he has been an active supporter of the protest movement.

The population accuses the political leadership—which mostly agrees with the country's financial elite—of having enriched itself with the people's money. On orders from the central bank, banks have blocked private accounts with foreign currency—U.S. dollars and euros—and account holders are only allowed to withdraw a small amount in foreign currency per week. Transfers to foreign countries are prohibited, and transactions from abroad to Lebanon are also subject to the withdrawal ban.

The Lebanese pound, which was previously pegged at 1,500 pounds to the U.S. dollar, has fallen to 2,400 pounds to the U.S. dollar.

On the morning of Jan. 15, Hamra was calm. Business opened as usual. The shattered windows at the banks were removed, new surveillance cameras were installed, damage was recorded. New protests were expected in the evening. □

How People’s China cleaned up Beijing’s air

By Joshua Hanks

The United Nations Environment Programme recently released a report called “UN Environment 2019: A Review of 20 Years’ Air Pollution Control in Beijing.” It sheds new light on the astounding cleanup of air pollution in China’s bustling capital city of 22 million people.

The report summarizes a treasure trove of data that has consistently shown sharp improvements in Beijing’s air quality over the past several years. These improvements accelerated after the central government declared a “war on pollution” in 2014. (tinyurl.com/r2q5o4m/)

The Western corporate media, which a decade ago showed endless images of Beijing’s smoggy skies and devoted plenty of coverage to what was dubbed the “airpocalypse,” are conspicuously silent now that blue skies are the norm in that huge city.

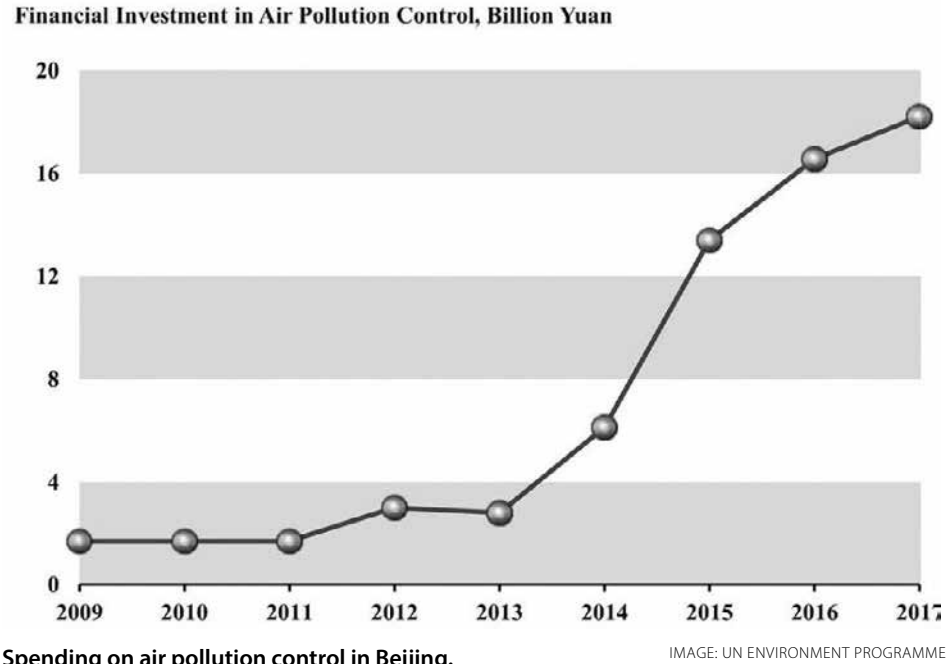
Yet the data speak for themselves. The steps China took provide a model for other cities, especially in the developing world, which are currently grappling with air pollution. China presents an environmental success story at a time when so much environmental news is negative.

Beijing’s efforts actually go back to 1998, when the municipal government launched several measures aimed at combating pollution. Since then, the annual average 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.

Mass 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 18,600 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.

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 Stephon 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 supports 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 women 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 overwhelmingly positive, helping to engage the public more fully and actively in environmental efforts, says the report.

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 reduce pollution. This reality contrasts with what the Western media report about China — the false characterization of the country as an “authoritarian dictatorship” that couldn’t care 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.

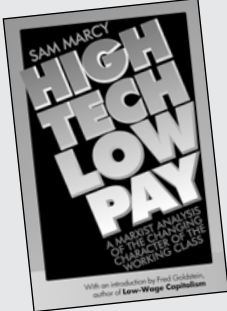
Meanwhile, in the U.S., the supposed land of freedom and democracy, there are actually more poor people than in China, according to the 2015 Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report — despite China having over four times the population and a less developed economy.

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.

As 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. □

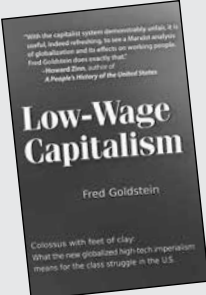


Chinese cities now get much of their energy from solar panels, like these outside Chongqing.



High Tech, Low Pay
A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class

By Sam Marcy with an updated introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of *Low Wage Capitalism*.



Low-Wage Capitalism
Fred Goldstein



Colossal, with foot of clay: what the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.

Low-Wage Capitalism

Describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class in the United States of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx’s law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval.

Capitalism at a Dead End
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For more information on these books and other writings by the author, **Fred Goldstein**, go to **LowWageCapitalism.com**



Books are available at major online booksellers.



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 mil millones de personas. Más de 928 millones están en “edad laboral” (15 a 64 años; estadísticas de worldometers.info) El 8 de enero, una de cada cuatro personas en este grupo de edad, 250 millones, se quedó sin trabajo en la huelga 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 neumáticos en llamas. Coches de policía y edificios gubernamentales fueron atacados en algunos lugares.

La huelga tardó tres meses en hacerse. “Hemos estado haciendo campaña desde septiembre”, dijo Amarjeet Kaur, Secretario General del Congreso de Sindicatos de Todos los Indios, dos días antes de la huelga: “La ira de la nación culminará el 8 de enero”. AITUC es una de las 10 federaciones laborales indias que conjuntamente se llama “bandh” (cierre). Kaur predijo un “bandh completo” en 10 a 15 ciudades y una participación masiva en toda la India. (NewsClick, 6 de enero)

La huelga se convocó inicialmente en torno a un programa de 12 puntos que protestaba contra la legislación anti-trabajadora del primer ministro Narendra Modi y los planes masivos de privatización, que afecta a activos nacionales como aerolíneas, ferrocarriles y refinerías de petróleo. Otros puntos abordaron el alto desempleo y la inflación en la tercera economía más grande del mundo y pidieron aumentar el salario mínimo y las pensiones. Dos tercios de la población viven con menos de \$2 por día; casi la mitad de ellos son “extremadamente pobres” y subsisten con \$1.25 por día o menos.

Como explicó Subhashini Ali, un líder



Mujeres huelguistas en Mumbai, India, el 8 de enero.

del partido comunista de Delhi, “cuando se convocó originalmente esta huelga, fue para registrar la ira contra las leyes anti-laborales y la venta de los activos del país”. Pero ahora es más amplio porque no hay trabajos. Modi está destruyendo el futuro de los jóvenes.” (The Guardian, 8 de enero)

Las banderas rojas de hoz y martillo eran prominentes en muchas fotos de la huelga.

Los huelguistas también mostraron, en signos y cánticos, una oposición generalizada a la Ley de Enmienda de Ciudadanía del Primer Ministro Modi para negar la ciudadanía a los musulmanes.

Kaur informó que en algunos sectores económicos la participación en huelga fue del 90-100 por ciento. “La clase trabajadora está en las calles hoy”, dijo. La huelga involucró a toda la población, incluidos un gran número de trabajadores del sector informal y agricultores. Las dificultades económicas han llevado a los suicidios publicitados de varios agricultores.

Solidaridad mundial

Las organizaciones estudiantiles en la India y en el extranjero estaban firmemente detrás de la huelga. Una huelga nacional de

educación de estudiantes boicoteando clases y pidiendo educación asequible coincidió con el bandh del 8 de enero. Una declaración de solidaridad con estudiantes fue firmada por 21 grupos, incluyendo United Students Against Sweatshops y una docena de sindicatos de estudiantes de posgrado de EE.UU. Los estudiantes indios en los EE.UU. planean manifestarse en cinco ciudades el 26 de enero.

Trabajadores indios en huelga en las calles, 8 de enero

Las declaraciones de solidaridad sindical estuvieron en línea incluso antes del 8 de enero. “La Federación Sindical Mundial, que representa a más de 97 millones de trabajadores de 130 países en los 5 continentes, se mantiene firme y militante del lado de la clase trabajadora india y expresa su solidaridad internacionalista con [la] huelga general de toda India el 8 de enero de 2020”, publicó la FSM el 7 de enero. Condenamos la estrategia nacionalista del gobierno de dividir y fragmentar a la clase trabajadora sobre una base étnica y religiosa que no solo es reaccionaria, inaceptable y vuelve a las

tácticas colonialistas, sino que también es inconstitucional”. (wftucentral.org)

Otras declaraciones vinieron de las federaciones mundiales de trabajadores de la construcción y la educación y la Unión Nacional de Trabajadores de Ferrocarriles, Marítimos y Transporte en Gran Bretaña.

Los capitalistas se alinean con Modi

La pobreza de las masas indias está directamente relacionada con los enormes beneficios que obtienen las empresas estadounidenses que invierten en la India. Incluyen General Motors, Ford, General Electric, Microsoft, Amazon, Pfizer, Coca-Cola y muchos otros que pagan salarios de esclavos. La inversión extranjera directa de EE.UU. el año pasado superó los \$3 mil millones, y este país es el cuarto socio comercial más grande de la India. (business.mapsofindia.com)

El multimillonario presidente de los Estados Unidos, Trump, compartió el escenario en un evento de “Howdy, Modi” en Houston el 22 de septiembre. Modi elogió 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 fuerzas de clase antagónicas. Nuestra lucha es junto a los mil millones de trabajadores, campesinos y estudiantes que cerraron su país el 8 de enero. □

Para leer las entrevistas de Martha Grevatt del 2016 en inglés con Amarjeet Kaur, visite tinyurl.com/qozf64h/ y tinyurl.com/sc22bz5/.

Poniendo la verdad tras las rejas

MUNDO OBRERO

editorial

¿Sabía que uno de los derechos más protegidos en este país es el derecho del gobierno a mentirle a la gente?

Esa es la esencia de la persecución que se está llevando a cabo en este momento contra Chelsea Manning y Julian Assange.

Manning era una analista de inteligencia del Ejército de EE.UU. con sede en Irak cuando, en febrero de 2010, envió por primera vez documentos internos incriminatorios sobre la guerra a WikiLeaks, encabezada por Assange. Anteriormente se había puesto en contacto con el Washington Post y el New York Times, pero no estaban interesados.

La información incluía 750.000 documentos militares y diplomáticos confidenciales sobre las guerras estadounidenses en Irak y Afganistán. Incluía fotos gráficas y videos de tortura y abuso

sistemático en Estados Unidos. Incluyó un video que muestra un ataque aéreo estadounidense en Afganistán que mató a decenas de civiles.

Todo esto perforaba el mito desinfectado que los militares y el gobierno de los Estados Unidos habían creado para justificar sus crímenes de guerra imperialistas en el Medio Oriente.

Por abrir estos documentos dañinos al escrutinio público, el Ejército encarceló a Manning el 27 de mayo de 2010. Fue sentenciada a 35 años de prisión y permaneció tras las rejas durante casi siete años, donde fue retenida en una prisión de hombres y sometida a abuso transgénero—hasta que el presidente Obama la perdonó.

Los halcones de guerra estaban furiosos por su liberación, y el 16 de mayo del año pasado, con un grupo más reaccionario ahora en la Casa Blanca, fue arrestada nuevamente por negarse a testificar contra Assange ante un gran jurado.

El relator especial de la ONU sobre la tortura, Nils 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 arrestarlo desde 2010, cuando hizo público los materiales en línea liberados por Manning y otros que mostraban el verdadero carácter de la brutal guerra de Estados Unidos en Irak. Durante seis años tuvo que refugiarse en la embajada ecuatoriana en Londres.

Pero desde entonces el gobierno ecuatoriano se ha movido hacia la derecha. En abril pasado, bajo la presión de Estados Unidos, Assange se vio obligado a abandonar 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 derechista de los Estados Unidos no ha podido acusarlos 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 que habían sido marcados como “Solo ojos” o “Sin distribución”.

Estos documentos refutan la versión desinfectada de las guerras pasadas y actuales, que se prefieren tanto en declaraciones gubernamentales como en informes de noticias de medios corporativos. El “crimen” de Manning y Assange fue revelar la naturaleza brutal y depredadora de la clase multimillonaria estadounidense. Los súper ricos harán que sus políticos y generales cometan cualquier crimen contra la humanidad si eso ayuda a aumentar sus súper ganancias.

¡Liberar a Chelsea Manning y a Julian Assange! ¡Defiende el derecho del pueblo a saber la verdad! □