

Iraqi protests demand

U.S. troops get OUT!

By John Catalinotto

Hundreds of thousands — maybe millions — of Iraqis demonstrated in Baghdad, Basra and other major Iraqi cities on Jan. 24. They demanded the U.S. pull its remaining 5,200 troops out of Iraq. U.S. imperialism has occupied Iraq since the 2003 illegal invasion of the country, carried out under the phony pretext that the Iraqi government was developing “weapons of mass destruction.”

The demonstrators, who approached the “Green Zone” where the U.S. Embassy is located, waved the Iraqi flag and shouted: “Out, out with the occupier!” and “Yes to sovereignty.” Iraq Security Forces estimated the crowd at 250,000. Other estimates reached as high as 2.5 million.

Organizations associated with the influential Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr initiated and organized the protest. It



Massive anti-U.S. outpouring in Baghdad, Jan. 24.

took place three weeks after Washington murdered Iranian General Qassem Soleimani and Iraqi military leader Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis in a drone strike.

While the Iraqi population in general opposes the U.S. troop presence, this

opposition has grown stronger since the assassination of the two leaders. The Iraqi people fear and resist having Iraq be the scene for a military confrontation between the U.S. and Iran. In response to the assassinations, the Iraqi Parliament voted to expel the U.S. troops from their country on Jan. 6.

At the Jan. 24 demonstration in Baghdad, a spokesperson for Al-Sadr read the Shiite leader’s statement demanding the withdrawal of U.S. troops, the cancellation of “security agreements” with Washington and the closure of Iraqi airspace to military aircraft. He warned the U.S. president not to be arrogant toward Iraqi representatives, saying that if the U.S. did not meet the demands, it would

be considered “hostile to Iraq.”

The New York Times of Jan. 24 reported that many marchers carried signs in English aimed at the U.S. public such as: “To the families of American soldiers. Insist on the withdrawal of your sons from our country or prepare their coffins.”

The reasons for the hatred of the U.S. occupation should be easy to understand: From 1990 to 2003, strict U.S. sanctions against Iraq caused the death of 1.5 million Iraqis, including 500,000 children under the age of five. The 2003 U.S.-led invasion and occupation killed hundreds of thousands more Iraqis and displaced millions. Also, the U.S. exacerbated religious and ethnic differences that virtually destroyed Iraqi society.

Parallel to the movement led by Al-Sadr, a massive movement over the past months has been protesting corruption within the Iraqi government and demanding Iraqi sovereignty. Al-Sadr withdrew his prior support for this movement right after the Jan. 24 demonstration. Iraqi government forces then severely repressed anti-government demonstrators on Jan. 25 and 26.

Despite the internal contradictions in Iraqi society — which if underestimated would lead to political errors — a large majority of Iraqis share opposition to the ongoing U.S. occupation of their country. □

47 YEARS AFTER ROE V. WADE

Fight continues for reproductive justice

By Sue Davis

The 47th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision that legalized women’s right to choose abortion, was Jan. 22. While religious anti-abortion forces have been trying to overturn it ever since, the threat has never been greater—especially with woman-hater,

racist, anti-LGBTQ2+ Trump in control of the state.

Trump took a bold step on Jan. 24 by being the first acting president to address the so-called “March for Life” in Washington, D.C. The reactionary, white supremacist march has been organized by the Catholic Church-backed, misnamed

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We say NO to imperialist war! 2, 6-7



Philadelphia, Jan. 25 Global Day of Protest.

WW PHOTOS: JOE PIETTE

Honoring King’s radical legacy



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Buffalo, N.Y.

Police, private security try to suppress antiwar rally

By Nigel Bouvart
Buffalo, N.Y.

In conjunction with actions in the U.S. and internationally, some 50 anti-war activists demonstrated Jan. 25 in the Canalside district of the Buffalo harbor on Lake Erie. The activists called for an end to U.S. aggression against Iran and for U.S. withdrawal of all military personnel from the entire Middle East region.

Protesters chanted “Iran wants peace, U.S. out of the Middle East,” “1 2 3 4, we won’t fight a rich man’s war” and “Not U.S. land, not U.S. oil, U.S. off Iraqi soil!” Several gave speeches against U.S. imperialism, the devastating repercussions of U.S. wars abroad for people at home and of the desire for peace that the people of Iran share with people in the U.S.

When protesters attempted to march around the block, they were intercepted by private security forces employed by LECOM Harborcenter, the property of natural gas billionaires, Terry and Kim Pegula. Activists were falsely informed that the Harbor sidewalk was private property and told to immediately step into the busy street.

While demonstrators attempted to determine if this was a legal order, a security guard pushed one protester, first into the street and then into a parked vehicle. The guard then began shouting at a



Buffalo, N.Y.

WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE



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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

National Lawyers Guild legal observer.

Several protesters intervened when the guard attempted to place the NLG observer in a headlock and finally freed them from the guard’s grasp. Around a dozen cars from the Buffalo Police Department soon arrived, including officers wielding billy clubs and lieutenants who ordered protesters out of the street and off the adjacent Metro light rail line.

In the end, no arrests were made, and the Buffalo AntiWar coalition is determined to continue demonstrating whenever and wherever necessary.

The successful demonstration was organized by the Buffalo Antiwar Coalition, which includes WWP-Buffalo, IAC-Buffalo, Western New York Peace Center, Green Party of Erie County, Veterans for Peace 128, DSA-Buffalo, U.S. Friends of the Soviet People-Buffalo and U.S. Peace Council-Buffalo. □

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.

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Following release from prison

Delbert Africa speaks

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

A historic press conference was held at the Kingessing Library in West Philadelphia on Jan. 21 to officially welcome home MOVE 9 activist Delbert Africa from his over 41-year imprisonment. The room was packed with press, MOVE supporters and several people who had witnessed the police siege and attack on MOVE’s Powelton Village home that led to Delbert’s 1978 arrest.

Pam Africa, Minister of Confrontation for the MOVE organization, stated, “While this was the first press conference we’re having concerning Delbert’s release, there will be more press conferences as we have more people coming home.” Several speakers noted that MOVE 9 member Chuck Africa expects to be released soon. Court appeals for Mumia Abu-Jamal are in progress.

Pam Africa introduced MOVE members Consuela Africa, Carlos Africa and Sue Africa, noting the number of years each had been imprisoned by the state. With them was Delbert’s daughter, Yvonne Orr-El, and Ramona Africa, the sole living survivor of the state’s infamous bombing of the MOVE family house in 1985—who Pam introduced as “Fire Walker.”

They were later joined by Fred Hampton, Jr., whose father, Fred Hampton, a leader of the Black Panther Party, was murdered by Chicago police on Dec. 4, 1969.

‘It lifted me right up’

Delbert began, “My name is Delbert Africa and I’m out here free and feeling



From left to right: Fred Hampton, Jr., Yvonne Orr-El, Delbert Africa, Ramona Africa and Pam Africa speaking at Jan. 21 press conference.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

good — any questions?” He contrasted his experience of four decades of imprisonment with being in the midst of family, friends, supporters and loved ones. “It lifted me right up,” he said.

Delbert recalled his time in prison with Phil Africa, who died while incarcerated. MOVE 9 member Merle Africa also died in prison. Delbert said, “I wish Phil and Merle could be here with us today. Once we get Chuck Africa out and free Mumia, we’ll have all our MOVE family with us.”

Since being released from Pennsylvania’s State Correctional Institution Dallas on Jan. 18, Delbert has yet to formally meet with his parole officer. He addressed the issue of parole restrictions: “The system always throws barricades onto people being and working

together. The judge who sentenced us in 1978 threatened us as a family. He gave us 30 to 100 years, and they kept denying us parole saying: ‘You have no remorse.’ But they had no remorse for what they did to our family in 1985. We have no regrets because we were innocent in 1978.”

Delbert continued: “As a family and organization we are still on the move. They claimed we were violent — but we were trying to eliminate violence in our community, trying to stop the exploitation. You live over there with eight houses, yet I live here in a tent. We’re trying to stop that. The system wants to push people down, oppress you, but John Africa taught us that we don’t have to take it anymore. It’s been a long time caught up on somebody else’s schedule, but now I’m back on MOVE’s schedule.”

Constant police attacks on MOVE

Delbert told the audience about the confrontation with Philadelphia Police Commissioner Frank Rizzo in May 1977: “MOVE was peaceful, but we were suffering brutality at the hands of the police—so brutal that they physically kicked a baby out of the womb of one MOVE member and murdered Janine Africa’s baby, Life Africa. We made up what people thought were weapons so we could make an impression on city officials who saw a bunch of primarily Black people rescuing animals and growing our own food in an area of Philadelphia where the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel wanted to expand.

“Rizzo went nuts and started a blockade — not so much to keep us in but to keep community supporters out,” Delbert explained. “But the neighborhood responded and brought us food. The city tried to evict us. They got warrants naming people who never lived in the house. But just because it’s legal, don’t make it right. Slavery was also ‘legal.’”

Delbert related the events of Aug. 8, 1978: “Neighbors warned us that police were surrounding the house. We got the children and everyone into the basement. They emptied water cannons into the basement. At a press conference after the attack, police bragged about emptying rounds of machine gun fire into the house. During the attack I was shot in the chest, but was able to come out of the house through a window.”

Delbert described the immediate police attack on him when he went outside the house: “One cop hit me with a steel helmet on one side of my face. Another cop used his shotgun against my head to break my jaw. One cop pulled me by my hair across the street where they all started to jump

on me, beating me. Their excuse was to claim I was armed, but I had removed my shirt and was naked from the waist up.”

Supporters shout: ‘On the MOVE!’

“At the hospital they removed the shot-gun pellet from my chest without using anesthesia,” Delbert stated. “But when I finally got moved to the Round House [police headquarters], there were literally 20 or more people from the neighborhood yelling, ‘On the MOVE!’”

MOVE 9 members were sentenced collectively in connection with the death of Police Officer James Ramp, who was off-duty then and had not been assigned to the scene.

“We thought he came there for the chance to kill some Black folks,” Delbert said. “On Aug. 9 and Aug. 10, newspapers reported that firemen who were facing our house complained about gunfire coming in from behind them. None of the MOVE people had any gun residue on our hands.”

Community activist Walter Palmer, who was in the audience, backed this up: “I was facing the MOVE house and heard gunshots from behind me. I had to hit the ground to avoid being shot. James Ramp was standing outside by a corner of the house. MOVE never killed officer Ramp, and MOVE did not shoot first.”

Several people who attended the press conference were residents of Philadelphia’s Powelton Village during the police siege and shootout. All of them told of MOVE’s support for the people in the community. Those who spoke seemed to welcome Delbert’s release as an opening for them to finally tell their own stories.

Yvonne Orr-El spoke about her mother who was an official in the Chicago chapter of the Black Panther Party. Orr-El told of the circumstances of her birth on the side of a lake as her parents fled police threats against BPP members in Illinois. When she was nine years old, she was traumatized in school witnessing television coverage of her father being dragged from the MOVE house and brutally beaten by police.

Palestinian solidarity with MOVE

Palestinian activist and writer Susan Abulhawa, who was in the audience, welcomed Delbert home on behalf of Palestinian people. She expressed solidarity from the people of Palestine to the MOVE organization, stating: “The MOVE family is not just a local struggle. It is an international struggle. My people in Gaza live in an open-air prison. We are with you.”

Fred Hampton, Jr. said: “I’m honored and humbled to be here on our terms. The will of the people is greater than the man’s technology. We are the original victims of terrorism: Dec. 4, 1969; Sept. 11, 1971; Aug. 8, 1978; May 13, 1985. We have to acknowledge the war we are in and put this in war terms. Prisons are concentration camps. We have to make this part of every conversation in barber shops and more.”

Editor’s Note: Fred Hampton, a Black Panther Party leader, was killed in an assault by Cointelpro forces on Dec. 4, 1969. On Sept. 11, 1971, leaders of the Attica Prison Uprising presented demands of the incarcerated men to the state of New York, which then launched a massacre of inmates. The Philadelphia Police Department orchestrated the brutal attack on the MOVE family and house on Aug. 8, 1978. The state bombed the MOVE house, killing 11 members of the family, including five children, on May 13, 1985.



Delbert Africa the day of his release, next to photo of Mumia.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Delbert Africa: Free!

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

This column was transcribed from an audio recording posted on prisonradio.org on Jan. 20.

MOVE member, Delbert Africa, held in prison since the Confrontation of August 8, 1978, has walked out of a PA prison after 42 years.

Delbert, in the 69th year of his life, came out to meet other members of the MOVE Organization: Ramona, Pam, Janet, Janine, Mo, Mary, Carlos and Consuela Africa, who greeted him with a hearty chant: “Long Live John Africa!” — and a MOVE salute.

Del was in a good mood and in high spirits, cracking jokes and eating sandwiches.

August 8, 1978, was a date of infamy, for it marked an attack on the MOVE house in West Philadelphia’s Powelton Village, when hundreds of cops fired

thousands of shots into the structure where men, women and babies huddled in the basement. Gunfire was joined by water cannons, deluging the MOVE people, who fought to avoid drowning in that dark place.

When Delbert exited the house, he was beaten by several cops, rifle-butted, kicked and stomped viciously.

When several of the cops were charged with assaulting Delbert, they had nothing to worry about for the trial judge, Stanley Kubacki, ignoring videotapes, acquitted them all, citing among other things, Delbert’s muscles as justification for the beating.

Ironically, one of the cops charged might’ve been luckier if sent to prison, for several weeks thereafter he was shot and paralyzed by his wife—who also happened to be a cop!

Delbert Africa, MOVE member, walks free after 42 years in the joint. □

Houston

Students, community demand fair pay for construction workers



Student-worker rally at University of Houston, Jan. 23. WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

University of Houston students, professors and community activists joined the Workers Defense Project and construction workers at a rally on Jan.23 to protest conditions faced by these workers at the University of Houston’s Quad Housing project. They have not received prevailing wages or overtime pay as required by state law.

After months of dealing with the general contractor and subcontractors, the workers are taking their issue of unpaid wages to the university administration.

Speaking at the rally during their lunch break, some construction workers appealed to students to support their efforts to pressure the administration to deal with thieving contractors.

At the rally, student activist Natasha Ulow, representing the Young Socialists of America, affirmed student support for the workers: “We stand with the workers of the Quads who have suffered wage theft.

We unequivocally condemn the university administration, up to and including UH President Renu Khator, for condoning the conduct of those who have committed wage theft.”

Ulow asserted, “We intend to continue standing and fighting alongside the workers for as long as it takes to bring about justice. It is an affront that workers are under a threat of retaliation if they speak about the conditions of their employment, that students will be living in dorms built by workers who have suffered wage theft. We urge the administration to respond, not only to pay them in full their stolen wages but to sincerely apologize to the workers and their families.”

Other speakers included representatives of the AFL-CIO and the Workers Defense Project. After the rally the crowd of over 50 people marched through campus to UH President Khator’s office to deliver their message.

Rubac was a union carpenter in New York and Houston for nearly 10 years.

Vancouver, Wash.

Significant win for Clark College faculty

By Lyn Neeley
Vancouver, Wash.

On the third day of their strike, 96 percent of the over 400 Clark College faculty voted to accept a new three-year contract that gives full-time faculty raises up to \$11,064 a year and awards adjuncts, who are part-time teachers, equal status and similar pay raises as full-time teachers.

The contract will prevent Clark College in Vancouver, Wash., from shifting course loads to lower-paid part-time faculty. Instead of being paid a flat rate for each credit hour, adjuncts will be making a

salary that is 65 percent of the full-time rate, based on their course load, with raises of 7 percent over three years. The union will push for the 65 percent to continue to rise until it reaches at least 85 percent.

This is the third successful strike by college faculty and adjuncts in the region. Portland Community College instructors won a contract in December that will pay adjuncts 70 percent of the full-time rate by Fall 2022. In June 2018, Washington’s Evergreen State College in Olympia won a similar contract for adjuncts.

The strike came after 15 months of negotiations by the union, Clark College Association of Higher Education, an affiliate of the Washington Education Association. “I see this as much bigger than just Clark College,” CCAHE President Suzanne Southerland told Northwest Labor Press. “It will influence other colleges, and ultimately the education that students are going to get.” (nwLaborPress.org, Jan. 17) □



Suzanne Southerland, president of Clark College Association for Higher Education, at strike rally Jan. 13.

Seattle



King Day in Seattle, Jan. 20. PHOTO: CHERYL MCARTHUR

10,000 march to honor Martin Luther King

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

The 38th annual march celebrating the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Jan. 20 was larger than usual this year. The racism and hatred spewed by President Donald Trump and his political allies, and the crisis of poverty faced by so many people, no doubt motivated many demonstrators to participate.

There was agreement among the crowd with this statement made from the podium: “We can make the Trump era the final thrust of the beast of white supremacy!”

The march and rally were part of an all-day program, organized by the Seattle MLK, Jr. Organizing Coalition. There was a morning job and opportunity fair at Garfield High School in Seattle’s historic Black community, followed by 26 workshops dealing with social justice issues and then a midday rally in the gym. A youth cultural rally was held the day before.

The Duwamish Nation, the first people of Seattle, welcomed demonstrators to the event. A representative of the Muckleshoot Nation was thanked for a large donation to the march. Singer Josephine Howell led the crowd in singing the Black national anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing.” Michael “Quess” Moor from Take ‘Em Down NOLA gave a spoken word performance about their grassroots struggle which led to the removal of four white supremacist monuments in New Orleans.

Speakers also honored local veterans of the Civil Rights struggle, including the late Jackie Jones-Walsh, a “pillar of the community.” She was vice president of the local Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and the Martin Luther King Celebration Committee and served on the executive board of the Washington State Labor Council.

Honoree Larry Gossett spoke at the rally. He recently retired from his 25-year stint as Martin Luther King County councilperson. Gossett helped found the Black Student Union and worked on the struggle that won affirmative action for students at the University of Washington.

In 1983, community leaders exposed the fact that King County had been (outrageously!) named after William

Rufus DeVane King, a member of one of the largest slave-owning families in Alabama. He was also vice president for six weeks in 1853 in President Franklin Pierce’s administration.

Along with other members of the Black community, Gossett was a key organizer in the struggle which pressured the government to rename Seattle’s King County after Martin Luther King and to put Dr. King’s picture as a logo on all Metro buses and other county properties.

Hotel and hospital workers, Machinists march

On the way to downtown Seattle for another rally, the multinational march, which included a large youth contingent, detoured to protest a new jail for youth being built in the Black community. Members of UNITE HERE, who are fighting attacks on their livelihoods at the Edgewater Hotel, marched alongside members of the Machinists union who work at Boeing.

The marchers stopped at Swedish/ Providence Hospital to hear hospital workers speak. Members of SEIU Healthcare 1199 NW appealed to demonstrators for support in their struggle against severe staffing shortages and low wages. Some 8,000 workers from three unions are set to strike from Jan. 28 to 30 at the giant hospital chain. It is anticipated that thousands of workers from around Washington state could join this unfair labor practice strike.

As the protestors continued on to the King County Correctional Facility, a large banner displayed near the front of the march read: “Cops and King County jail guards are brutalizing womxn and girls: Black Womxn’s Lives Matter!”

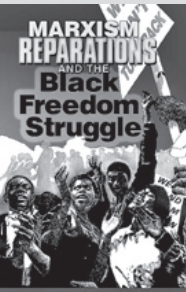
Outside the penal facility, activist Nikita Oliver denounced the jail as “a place where Black and Brown people are disproportionately locked up for crimes of survival.”

The march ended at City Hall Park where Gossett explained: “The reason we are congregating here is because homeless people, our own people, hang out at this park.”

A community meal was provided for everyone at Garfield High School after the march. An atmosphere of solidarity and unity prevailed among those who participated in the day’s activities. □

Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle

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



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47 years after Roe v. Wade

Fight continues for reproductive justice

Continued from page 1

“Right to Life” for the last 46 years and since 2017 reinforced by white evangelicals.

“Unborn children have never had a stronger defender in the White House,” Trump stated. Too true. Contrast that with his administration’s plan to reduce funding for food stamps, which means free school meals for nearly a million poor children are in jeopardy and up to 5.3 million people, including thousands of children, could be cut from the program. (cbsnews.com, Dec. 10) Other government services which assist low-income children are at risk.

In his attack, Trump made the preposterously false claim that Democrats support infanticide and bragged that he will withhold federal money from California if it does not drop a requirement within 30 days that private insurers cover abortions.

Both the Guardian and the New York Times called Trump’s appearance an election appeal—which ironically coincided with the final formal argument in the Senate for his removal from office. The Guardian, calling it “a sign of desperation,” stated: “Trump is well aware, of course, that evangelicals don’t seem to give a damn about moral deficiencies—just as long as he cracks down on women’s reproductive rights they’ll continue to support him. So that’s exactly what he’s doing.” The Times reported that 80 percent of white evangelical voters helped crown King Trump in 2016.

Refuting Trump, Alexis McGill Johnson, acting president and CEO of the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, said in a counterstatement: “[W]e’ll be standing with the nearly 80 percent of Americans who support abortion access. We’ll never stop fighting for all the people in this country who need access to sexual and reproductive health care, including abortion.”

Right-wing attacks

Meanwhile, there are at least four ways the blatantly patriarchal Trump administration is using state power to attack women and other gender-oppressed people.

On March 4, the legal case, June Medical Services LLC v. Gee, comes before the Supreme Court. The case is identical to one plank of a Texas law the Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional in 2016, Whole Woman’s Health v. Hellerstedt. The disputed Louisiana law, Act 620, would prevent doctors from providing abortion care in the state unless they have admitting privileges at a local hospital. The goal of the law is to limit the number of abortion clinics (as happened in Texas) and restrict access to surgical abortions.

The Center for Reproductive Rights is arguing against the Louisiana law—backed by dozens of medical, legal and other organizations promoting rights for women, LGBTQ2+, various nationalities and people with disabilities. It seems the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals flouted the Supreme Court when it upheld the Louisiana restriction. Should the court overturn its own decision—thanks to Trump appointees Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh—the case could be used by anti-abortion state legislators to limit access to surgical abortion across the country.

Anti-abortion state legislators introduced a record number of near-total abortion bans, so-called “reversal laws” and other restrictive legislation in 2019. Undoubtedly emboldened by Trump’s braggadocio, they are continuing to introduce bans this year even in states like New



PHOTO: CENTER FOR WOMEN'S HISTORY/NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Women Strike for Equality Day, Aug. 26, 1970, New York City. Women of Youth Against War and Fascism, including Sue Davis, were in the march.

Hampshire where there is a strong pro-choice majority.

Another legislative anti-woman ploy is passage of “abortion reversal” laws based on the pseudoscience that medication-induced abortions can be reversed and the myth that people who have abortions often regret their decision. New research, published the week of Jan. 13 by the journal Social Science & Medicine on emotional responses post-abortion, shows that 99 percent of women don’t regret their abortions after five years. The Guttmacher Institute, which conducts in-depth research on reproductive needs, corroborated that no evidence shows abortion is responsible for mental health problems. (rewirenews.com, Jan. 15)

But what cannot be quantified are the effects of Trump’s Department of Health and Human Services, stacked with anti-abortion, misogynist bigots who issue and promote anti-reproductive health care rulings like “conscience clauses” and the “domestic gag rule.” The latter was designed to reduce access to reproductive health care, particularly abortion, by exercising state power over some of the most in-need, vulnerable people in this country: the 4 million low-income women and gender-oppressed people enrolled in Title X.

By significantly adulterating Title X of the Public Health Services Act, passed in 1970 during the Nixon era, the revamped regulations do not allow Title X providers, as of Aug. 19, to conduct abortions alongside other services or offer patients referrals for abortions. All Title X recipients are poor people of color, youth, rural residents, im/migrants, people with disabilities and survivors of domestic violence. (For background, see WW article, “While rate of abortion declines/Title X gag rule will only increase need for abortion,” Oct. 4)

The primary target of these changes was Planned Parenthood, the largest private provider of comprehensive reproductive health services, serving about 40 percent of more than 1.5 million women and gender-oppressed people who need contraception, testing for cancers, treatment for sexually transmitted infections and abortions. Planned Parenthood stood up to the Trump-Pence assault by opting out of Title X on Aug. 19.

The most important question is: How is the gag rule affecting Title X patients? The Guttmacher Institute cannot provide such data. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to get DHHS authorization to survey all 4 million Title X patients and clinics that opted in.

How many clinics have been forced out of Title X, denying convenient, timely, affordable access to abortion and other medical services? How many patients are unable to find licensed health centers that address their needs, excluding abortion? How many patients can’t afford to travel for reproductive care? How many need an abortion but can’t afford to travel? (That can cost hundreds of dollars on top of surgical fees.)

Reproductive justice now!

While anti-abortion politicians and activists cite blatant misinformation and outright lies that also stigmatize and slut-shame to promote their views, Guttmacher supplies facts to refute them: (1) Safe, legal abortion is common and at its lowest rate since Roe in 1973. (2) State restrictions are not driving the recent decline in abortion. The decrease is due to long-lasting, more effective contraception.

Many pro-choice groups, promoting medical, legal and civil rights for women and gender-oppressed people, issued statements on Jan. 22 recognizing Roe:

Destiny Lopez, co-director of All* Above All denounced the Dec. 20 DHHS ruling mandating separate billing for abortion care. That ruling and Roe “remind us abortion rights in theory are not enough. We must also fight [for] equitable access to ... safe, healthy and autonomous decisions about our lives, bodies and futures [which are part of] the fight for dignity and equity.” She added: “[R]esearch has shown that someone who wants an abortion but is denied ... leads to a significant increase in household poverty. Health insurance that respects our decisions and upholds our health must cover abortion.”

Andrea Miller, president of the National

Institute for Reproductive Health: “[W]e’re writing a new playbook for abortion access by focusing on passing proactive laws to protect and expand access to abortion at the state level. ... In 2019 alone, more states passed proactive protections for abortion rights and expanded access than in any previous year.”

Voto Latino spokeswoman Sandra Sánchez wrote in defense of abortion rights for people of color, low-income folks and the LGBTQ2+ community: “[W]e’re ... fighting to ensure that all Latinxs have access to abortion. ... Research shows 73% of Latinx voters want to see SCOTUS uphold the right to abortion, and 87% say they would support a loved one who received one—because that’s what our community does, we support each other. ... No politician should be able to take that away.”

Yamani Hernandez, executive director of the National Network of Abortion Funds stated: “[H]elp end abortion stigma by sharing loving and bold messages about abortion. It’s up to us to break cycles of shaming and oppression. When we envelop people having abortions in the fierce love and power that’s built in community care, we bring the world one step closer to ending the harmful stigma that isolates us from each other—and our collective power.”

Kimberly Inez McGuire, executive director of youth-focused and -led Unite for Reproductive and Gender Equity, was quoted in Truthout: “McGuire expressed a frustration heard and repeated over and over by activists, advocates and social-justice minded legislators and academics. In real life, the ‘promise of Roe’ never reached those who needed it most: the poor, youth, people of color, LGBTQIA people and rural populations.”

Followup article will discuss increase in medication abortions.



PHOTO: ALEXANDER REA

Pensacola Women’s March

Women’s liberation must be anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist!

By Devin Pensacola, Fla.

On Jan. 18 over 200 people took to the streets of downtown Pensacola to reaffirm the struggle against capitalism and Trump—a symptom of capitalism—and for women’s liberation. People of all races, genders and backgrounds carried signs demanding the end to the patriarchal ruling class that harms and kills women every day. They all marched slightly over a mile to historic Seville Square where multiple speakers spoke on Black liberation, im/migration, LGBTQ2+ struggles, environmentalism and other movements against oppression.

This writer spoke on the ongoing

genocide against Black trans women—a large majority of all trans women killed last year—and the need for the women’s liberation movement to always bring forward trans women of color and work toward an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist front.

Several socialist groups set up at the rally, including Workers World Party-Pensacola, Strive (Socialist Trans Initiative), Party for Socialism and Liberation, and Dream Defenders.

It was announced that MOVE political prisoner Delbert Africa had been released from prison that morning in Pennsylvania, which drew thunderous applause.

A luta continua! □

JANUARY 25 Global Day of Protest rally

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

The U.S. state continues its war drive, pushed by ruling-class desperation to maintain capitalist economic domination. While the U.S. has not carried out further military strikes on Iran, it has imposed even harsher sanctions in an economic war that could claim untold numbers of Iranian lives. More than ever, “war by sanction” is the U.S. weapon of choice.

World resistance to U.S. aggression is growing. A Global Day of Protest on Jan. 25 called for “No War on Iran! U.S. out of Iraq!” Through international cooperation and on short notice, actions were mounted in 210 cities, with almost 200 groups endorsing. (tinyurl.com/slchkue)

Broad and deep organizing included the International Action Center (IAC), Answer Coalition, CODEPINK, Popular Resistance, Black Alliance for Peace (BAP), National Iranian-American Council, Veterans For Peace (VFP), U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW), Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, United National AntiWar Coalition (UNAC), Pastors for Peace/Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization, International Workers Solidarity Network, United For Peace and Justice, FIRE (Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere), Alliance For Global Justice, December 12th Movement, World Beyond War, Catholic Worker Movement, Dominican Sisters-ICAN, Nonviolence International, No War on Venezuela, Food Not Bombs, Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) Anti-Imperialism Network, NuclearBan.US, Roots Action, MADRE, U.S. Peace Council, Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), People’s Opposition to War, Imperialism and Racism and many more.

Further actions against sanctions and

economic war are called for March 13-15. (sanctionskill.org) Here are a few snapshots of the many Jan. 25 actions in the U.S.

Joining protests around the world, hundreds of **Boston** activists rallied in the Commons near the Massachusetts Statehouse, an action initiated locally by Answer. Brian Shea, a long-time disability rights leader with the IAC, said: “Four million people in Iraq [yesterday] served an eviction notice on U.S. empire and its occupying troops. We need to follow the example ... and be hitting the streets!”

After the speakout, students, people of color, women, LGBTQ2S+ and disability rights activists, socialists, trade unionists, families, veterans, clergy, anti-war and peace activists then had a spirited march through downtown. Kristen Turgeon, a Workers World Party youth leader, galvanized the crowd, belting out the union song, “Which Side Are You On,” reminding everyone: “We’re on the side of the workers worldwide!”

In **New York City**, people rallied at Columbus Circle in pouring rain and harsh weather, demanding “No U.S. War and Sanctions on Iran!” Speakers mentioned the march of millions in Iraq demanding “U.S. Out!” and called for an end to U.S. coups and sanctions, including those that have killed more than 1 million Iraqis. The rally was co-chaired by representatives of the IAC and Answer.

In cold gale-wind conditions, **Jersey City, N.J.**, grassroots activists from the Filipino, Latinx, and peace and social justice communities marched. Members of Anakbayan - North Jersey, NJ Action 21, Jersey City Peace Movement and VFP Chapter 021 took part.

Around 100 people braved heavy rain for a **Philadelphia** day of protest. A rally at City Hall started the demonstration, with participants sheltering under a covered



Houston WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC



Atlanta PHOTO: AFSC ATLANTA



Cleveland WW PHOTO: SUSAN SCHNUR



Portland

walkway. Then they marched down Market Street for a speakout at a military recruitment center, ending with a march to a second military center on Chestnut Street — a block from historic Constitution Hall. Participating groups included the IAC, BAP, Young DSA-Temple, Korean Peace Now, PSL, Green Party, WWP, Socialist Alternative, Philadelphia Tenants Union, Poor People’s Economic Campaign, REAL Justice and Socialist Resurgence.

Global protest brought more than 100 people to Piedmont Park in midtown **Atlanta**. They took to the streets, marching on Peachtree Street, the city’s main thoroughfare, to the Georgia Tech Research Institute. The lead banner declared, “No Tech for War,” protesting the GTRI’s contracts for hundreds of millions of dollars to develop drone and automated weapons delivery systems.

Speakers focused on war machines in our midst—killer drones at a public educational institution and militarized cops occupying neighborhoods of poor and working people, especially those of color. Collaboration among organizers included Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition, IAC, American Friends Service Committee Atlanta, Answer, Metro Atlanta DSA, Georgia Detention Watch, KSUnited (Kennesaw State) and Housing Justice League.

A crowd gathered at Market Square in **Cleveland** to keep the pressure on against U.S. war. Many signs emphasized sanctions as a war weapon, alerting protesters to watch for ever-present threats of imperialist intervention against oppressed nations. Speakers included representatives from Al Awda: The Palestine Right to Return Coalition, JVP, WWP, Cleveland State University Middle East/North Africa Student Association, PSL, Cleveland Peace Action and Inter-Religious Task Force on Central America.

A cacophony of honking horns rang out for two hours as **Houston** activists protested. Responding to WWP signs, “HONK for No War!” drivers at a busy intersection obliged, car after car, including almost all METRO bus drivers. Zac of PSL chaired a militant rally that included speakers from WWP, Answer, veteran antiwar activists and youth. Speakers were strongly anti-imperialist, demanding removal of all U.S. military bases around the world, including more than 800 in the Middle East. An Indian community representative announced a protest at the Indian consulate Jan. 26 to condemn recent India citizenship laws discriminating against Muslims.

Elsewhere in Texas, a spirited rally against U.S. war was held in **San Antonio**.

Over 500 people marched in **Denver**



Boston PHOTO: HOWARD ROTMAN



New York WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN



San Antonio WW PHOTO: TERESA GUTIERREZ



Denver PHOTO: VIVIANA WEIN

Worldwide mass protests slam Modi’s anti-Muslim law

By Martha Grevatt

Hundreds of thousands of people protested on Jan. 26 across India and in many cities abroad to oppose the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Citizens Registry that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is pushing. The CAA would deny citizenship to India’s 200 million Muslims, and the NRC would create a national registry. Those who do not register would not be considered citizens.

Tens of thousands of protesters formed “human chains” that stretched for miles in several Indian cities. A protest in Mumbai, the financial hub of India, drew 20,000. Women led many of the actions, including an all-woman demonstration of 20,000 in a suburb of Mumbai. In the midst of another mass protest in New Delhi, Modi held a military parade and feted Brazil’s fascist President Jair Bolsonaro.

Jan. 26 is celebrated in India as Republic Day, marking the day the country’s constitution went into effect.

There were huge demonstrations in 30 U.S. cities, including Atlanta, where 1,000 marched from CNN to the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. Another big protest took place in Washington, D.C., while the largest was reportedly in Chicago, where participants formed a huge human chain.

The newly formed Coalition to Stop Genocide initiated the U.S. demonstration. It includes the Indian American Muslim Council, Equality Labs, Black Lives Matter, Jewish Voice for Peace and Hindus for Human Rights.

Thousands of demonstrators marched in London, organized by United Against Fascism in India, despite efforts by the Modi regime to get the British government to ban the protest. □



Members of the Mumbra-Kausa Women’s Association shout slogans during a protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act, National Register of Citizens and National Population Register on the outskirts of Mumbai on Jan. 26.

ies against U.S. war



nd, Ore.

WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY



San Francisco

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

under the slogans “No justice, no peace! U.S. out of the Middle East!” and “No War on Iran!” A broad spectrum of speakers, including independent socialists as well as members of the Green Party, Poor People’s Campaign, Denver Peace Council and Answer, detailed how the cost of war hurts all working people, wasting money needed for the environment and infrastructure, and cutting funds for housing, education and health care.

The anti-war protest brought almost 1,000 people into the streets of downtown **San Francisco**. Though the morning rally had to be moved due to the annual right-wing anti-abortion parade down Market Street, a broad coalition of activists gathered and marched to Union Square, a very busy shopping district. The demonstration was primarily organized by USLAW, CODEPINK, Answer and the Arab Resource and Organizing Center. A speaker from BAP, Yahne Ndgo, tied the fight against the U.S. war machine to the struggle of unhoused

people in San Francisco for housing justice.

Nearly 200 people demonstrated in **Portland, Ore.**, for immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Middle East. A large grouping of left, progressive, anti-imperialist and peace groups organized the protest and plan to continue together as the Portland Anti-War Coalition. Its next event is a panel on the impact of U.S. sanctions, invasions and coups. Some groups involved are WWP, Portland DSA, Gabriela-Alliance of Filipino Women, the International League of People’s Struggles, Sanctions Kill PDX, VFP and the All-African People’s Revolutionary Party. Communications Workers Local 7901 passed a resolution endorsing the Jan. 25 rally.

Contributing to this article were Judy Greenspan, Teresa Gutierrez, Michael Kramer, Dianne Mathiowetz, Violet Millhauser, Lyn Neeley, Betsey Piette, Gloria Rubac, Brenda Ryan, Susan Schnur, Maureen Skehan, and Viviana Weinstein.

UNAC 2020 Conference

Unite the antiwar movement!

By Scott Williams



STEIN

With protesters marching in hundreds of cities around the world against the U.S. empire’s war plans against Iran and Iraq, including millions in Baghdad, the need for a unified anti-imperialist movement in the U.S. has grown. Central to organizing of hundreds of demonstrations against U.S. wars, sanctions and occupations has been the United National Antiwar Coalition. One of the largest progressive alliances in the U.S., UNAC works with hundreds of organizations across the country.

UNAC will hold its first national conference since 2017 from Feb. 21 to 23 in New York City at The People’s Forum.

UNAC drew over 350 activists to its 2017 conference in Richmond, Va. Since then, UNAC has sent delegations to Venezuela, Ukraine, Syria and Cuba and has organized conferences on U.S./NATO military bases in Baltimore, Md., and Dublin, Ireland. UNAC has actively opposed AFRICOM, the militarization of police departments and punishing sanctions against 39 nations. Members of UNAC, as part of the Embassy Defenders Collective, face charges for fighting to prevent the illegal Venezuelan coup government from taking over Venezuela’s Embassy in Washington, D.C.

The theme of the 2020 conference is “Rise Against Militarism, Racism and the Climate Crisis — Building Power Together.” UNAC has always linked the struggle against racism, oppression and repression in the U.S. to imperialist plunder and devastation abroad.

Speakers including Ajamu Baraka (Black Alliance for Peace), Frank



Chapman (National Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression) and Glen Ford (Black Agenda Report) will connect the struggles workers and the oppressed face here and abroad.

Makasi Motema (Peoples Power Assemblies-NYC), Sara Flounders (International Action Center), Bahman Azad (U.S. Peace Council) and others will address the devastating impact of U.S. sanctions and the new campaign, Sanctions Kill (sanctionskill.org).

Joe Lombardo, a coordinator of UNAC since its founding 10 years ago, Medea Benjamin (CODEPINK) and Margaret Flowers (Popular Resistance and Venezuelan Embassy Protectors) will be among those speaking on the growing movement against U.S. regime-change wars.

This conference promises to handle tough questions on how the antiwar movement should view developments in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Iran, Iraq, Libya, the People’s Republic of China, Syria, Yemen, among other countries.

Workers World Party has been part of UNAC since its founding, bringing an understanding of the critical need for a united front against imperialism that focuses first and foremost on the crimes of the U.S.

For more information and to register, go to unacconference2020.org/. □

Oakland Moms 4 Housing win

Reclaiming King’s radical legacy

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

January 20 was not only the day to honor the radical legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. It was also a day to acknowledge a victory for a group of Oakland mothers (#MomsHouse), who had been brutally evicted Jan. 14 from a house they “repossessed” in November. A press conference at Oscar Grant Plaza turned into a celebration for the Moms 4 Housing battle a half hour before the sixth annual MLK event.

Moms 4 Housing organizers had announced the win in a text: “Huge news: We have reached an agreement to purchase #MomsHouse. Wedgewood will negotiate in good faith with the Oakland Community Land Trust (OCLT) to purchase the Magnolia Street home for ‘a price not to exceed the appraised value.’” Wedgewood is the multimillion-dollar investment firm that owns the previously vacant house.

The text continued: “This isn’t just a win for us. We fought for all of Oakland.” The organizers said Wedgewood Properties had promised to work with the Oakland Housing Department and OCLT to “negotiate a right-of-first-refusal program on [all] properties owned by the company.”

Carroll Fife, director of Oakland’s ACCE Action (Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment), said this means Wedgewood will give the city, the land trust or other community groups the first chance to buy the homes, “so they remain permanently affordable.” (tinyurl.com/udupoz2)

The well-attended press conference featured the Moms and their supporters. Oakland City Councilmembers Rebecca Kaplan and Nikki Fortunato Bas announced the agreement with Wedgewood Properties. Fife berated the sheriffs for brutally evicting the Moms in the first place, “It is important to not criminalize women who are trying to bring attention to justice and humanity for everyone. They are not the criminals.”

Dominique Walker of Moms 4 Housing said in a statement, “Today we honor Dr. King’s radical legacy by taking Oakland back from banks and corporations.”

March honors MLK legacy

The sixth annual MLK march began immediately after the press conference. The event was organized by the Anti Police-Terror Project, a group that has been working for more than 10 years to counter police terrorism and violence against Black and Brown people in Oakland and around the country. APTP also supported the struggle of Moms 4 Housing.

The march in downtown Oakland began with a rally on a flatbed truck next to Oscar Grant Plaza — renamed by the community to commemorate Oscar Grant, who was killed 11 years ago by BART transit police at Fruitvale Station.

A large banner on the truck read, “We stand with the Moms. Housing is a Right.”

The first speakers were parents and family members of young people murdered by police. The mother of Shaleem Tindle reminded the crowd that it had been two years since her son was killed by BART police in West Oakland. Family members and



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Moms 4 Housing press conference, Jan. 20.

supporters held pictures of their deceased loved ones during the rally.

A moving statement was read by two LGBTQ+ disability rights activists. “Our disabled kinfolk are queer, trans, Black, Indigenous, people of color. Family members are dying. The cops are killing us. We are in detention centers, institutions, jails, prisons. We are thrown away on the streets.” The activists spoke about Kayla Moore, a transgender person murdered by the Berkeley police. Their parents and the community are still fighting for justice.

A 17-year-old “Oakland born and raised” young woman from Youth vs. the Apocalypse told the crowd, “Climate change is fueled by the same systems of white supremacy, racism, colonialism and greed that are running concentration camps at the border, closing our schools here in Oakland, enabling police murder and brutally throwing people out to live in the streets and fueling American imperialism.”

Following this rally, the crowd marched to the office of Alameda County Sheriff Gregory Ahern to protest his use of AK-47s, a tank and a battering ram against the Moms. Ahern is the top sheriff responsible for police terror against Black and Brown communities in Alameda County.

A large and vibrant group of children led the march chanting, “Housing is a human right.” The disability rights contingent followed the children. At a rally in front of the Sheriff Ahern’s office in the Alameda County Courthouse, speaker after speaker criticized the brutality and racism of the sheriff’s department and conditions at Santa Rita Jail, the county prison for women. They continued to celebrate the victory of the Moms in winning a home for their families and reminded the crowd that the struggles for housing and the fight against police violence and terrorism in Oakland will continue until justice is won for all. □



Oakland MLK Day march.

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Workers in France say ‘No!’ to government attack on retirement plan

By G. Dunkel

In France 1.3 million workers and their supporters struck, marched and protested Jan. 24 against the Macron government’s plan to create a single, point-based retirement plan to replace the current system.

In Paris, 350,000 to 400,000 people came out, and there were big marches in most major French cities; these events were generally militant but not confrontational.

Yellow Vest protests on Jan. 25 were attacked by the cops with baton charges, tear gas and arrests. A number of protesters were injured. French police have come under increasing criticism for their brutality, documented in widely seen internet videos.

The current retirement system has 42 specific plans for groups of workers who face difficult conditions on the job. So ballet dancers, who start performing at age 10 and whose bodies are exhausted by age 40, get to retire then, rather than be fired

for “nonperformance.” Sewerage workers, whose life expectancy is 17 years less than the French average, also get to retire early. Transportation workers, who are outside in difficult weather conditions, get specific protections in their retirement plan.

The unions, which have been leading the struggle against the government’s plan since Dec. 5 with massive political strikes and six national demonstrations, assert that the current system—though it needs improvement—is based on solidarity, not individual performance.

While the exact percentage varies, all public opinion polls on this issue say a solid majority in France support the unions’ position. The government has bet on splitting “reformist” unions, like the CFDT (French Democratic Confederation of Labor), from the more militant unions like the CGT (General Confederation of Labor). Some sections of the CFDT, however, have resisted accepting the government’s plan.

A sign of strong popular support for the strikes and union participation are

the “Rosie the Riveter” performances at protests and marches that began in early January. YouTube videos, some receiving tens of thousands of views, document groups of women dancing, punching and kicking in chorus, dressed in workers’ blues with yellow gloves and red bandanas. They move to the song, “A cause de Macron,” which demolishes Macron’s plan as promoting “fake” equality and diminishing financial protections for women. (tinyurl.com/tvyvcoe) Attac France has an organizing kit on its website with the words, choreography and directions for costumes.

A Conseil d’Etat, a government advisory panel which goes over proposals the government submits to parliament, met Jan. 24 to examine the government’s retirement proposal. It found serious problems with its “financial projections,” especially with respect to the age of retirement, senior



French women workers march, dressed as iconic female worker ‘Rosie the Riveter,’ in Paris, Jan. 24.

employment, unemployment insurance and minimum payouts.

There will be a new national protest/strike Jan. 29, the day before a government conference on funding the new retirement plan. The ongoing dock strike, which has shut down all of France’s major ports, will still be in force, along with the strike of electricity workers, which has led to scattered outages. Workers at some transportation hubs have decided to strike one day a week as long as the struggle against the government’s plan continues. □

Quakes unearth undistributed supplies Puerto Ricans protest

By Betsey Piette

Still grappling with the aftermath of devastating earthquakes, Puerto Ricans reacted with protests when they learned Jan. 19 that massive amounts of vital material aid have been warehoused since 2017. The aid arrived after two major hurricanes struck the Puerto Rican archipelago that year.

The donated aid included generators, emergency radios and batteries, portable stoves, mounds of blue tarps to replace lost roofs, baby diapers and more. Pallets of water and food, including “Ready Meals” with signs “FEMA, Not for Resale” — much of it held past due dates — were also uncovered.

The warehouse in Ponce holding these goods suffered structural damage. Ponce is one of several cities in the main island’s southeastern region that was hardest hit by the earthquakes. Gregory Gonzalez, mayor of Peñuelas, whose city was impacted by the quakes, said, “We have a

mountain of lost supplies, and people are suffering.” Gonzalez expressed certainty that the Ponce warehouse may be one of many holding critical unused supplies. (Buzzfeed, Jan. 21)

Puerto Rico’s current Gov. Wanda Vazquez announced on Twitter that she had fired top emergency official Carlos Acevedo and others after news of the hidden supplies surfaced. Meanwhile, massive protests erupted denouncing the lack of aid from the U.S., the island government’s corruption and calling for Vazquez and Puerto Rican Senate President Thomas Rivera to resign.

Acevedo publicly stated that Vazquez, the head of the National Guard and other Puerto Rican officials were aware of the warehoused supplies. Buzzfeed reported that since 2017, Puerto Rico’s emergency management agency has rented facilities to stock supplies at the cost of \$890,000.

‘Where is Wanda?’

Demonstrators have been massing outside the governor’s mansion and in front of the Capitol building in San Juan since Jan. 20 to demand an end to corruption. Carrying models of guillotines, waving flags and banging on pots, protesters chant: “Where is Wanda?” “Wanda! Turn over the disaster supplies” and “Let them rot in jail.” (AP, Jan. 20) On Jan. 23, police used tear gas to disperse demonstrators gathered in downtown San Juan.

Earlier in January, Puerto Ricans in the diaspora held demonstrations in cities around the globe. The protests criticized the Trump administration for refusing to release \$18 billion in post-hurricane aid slated for 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 is still severely damaged by hurricanes Maria and Irma.

All these demonstrations come roughly six months after intense

anti-government protests on the island in July 2019 forced the resignation of former Puerto Rican Gov. Ricardo Roselló. Millions participated in protests at that time, and a general strike shut down one of Puerto Rico’s major highways, which made it impossible for Roselló to stay in office.

The government of Puerto Rico was then in chaos, as elected officials scrambled to find a successor to Roselló. In less than 20 days, two newly appointed governors were also forced to resign, leaving Vazquez next in line.

PROMESA: unrelenting austerity

The rapid and sloppy secession of the island’s governors brought no benefit for the people, but was instead a concession to the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA), a Wall Street-driven austerity program the Obama administration forced on Puerto Rico in 2016.

Beginning earlier in 2019, scandals resulting in arrests of several officials appointed by PROMESA left colonial puppets of the capitalist class in complete disarray. PROMESA was designed to restructure the debt acquired by the Puerto Rican government over the last several decades. The plan was simple — unrelenting austerity.

PROMESA board members, all unelected, unleashed a plan of crushing budget cuts resulting in school closures and underfunding, cuts in pensions and health care, a severe reduction in hourly wages, destruction of the island’s infrastructure — including its power grid — and more. Driven by PROMESA, the island’s debt continued to pile up. Its economy never recovered.

The two devastating 2017 hurricanes killed over 3,000 people in Puerto Rico, leveling

entire neighborhoods and destroying much of the island’s infrastructure. With the population still in recovery, the Dec. 28 magnitude 4.7 earthquake, followed by a swarm of some 950 quakes so far this year, have terrorized residents and compounded recovery problems. (tinyurl.com/voktjjx)

Yet it was Wall Street’s intentional economic destruction of this U.S. colony, purposely underfunding and causing the mismanagement of much of the island’s infrastructure, that must be understood as the underlying reason why the physical destruction has rendered the island ungovernable. The struggle in Puerto Rico is a struggle against imperialism.

The impact of hurricanes, earthquakes and Wall Street bankers may seem insurmountable. But in the end, the power of the people is extraordinary and, when concentrated, its force can overturn any empire. □



Protesters carried a guillotine aloft as they marched in Old San Juan Jan. 23.

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Embassy Protectors speak in New York City

The four American peace activists who protected the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington, D.C., for 37 days during the attempted coup, spoke at The People's Forum in New York City Jan. 24. The event was part of a speaking and fundraising tour by the four. Margaret Flowers, Kevin Zeese, Adrienne Pine and David Paul face trumped-up charges of “interfering with certain protective functions” of the government for their effort to prevent the transfer of the Venezuelan Embassy to Juan Guaidó, illegally appointed president of Venezuela by the U.S. government.

The trial will begin Feb. 11 at the federal courthouse in Washington. The four are each charged with a misdemeanor, with a maximum penalty of one-year imprisonment and \$100,000 fine.



WW PHOTO: TYLER WOODSMALL

Margaret Flowers speaking at The People's Forum.

Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center, and Margaret Kimberley, editor and senior columnist of Black Agenda Report, who are members of the Protectors' Defense Committee, co-chaired the event. Flowers explained that the four stayed at the embassy to try to stop the U.S. from violating international law, noting the Vienna Convention states that embassies are inviolable. “We were there to try to hold that space while the U.S. and Venezuela negotiated for a mutually protecting power agreement.” She noted that when there is a breach in diplomatic relations between countries, they are to find a third country to be a protecting power for the embassy.

— Workers World New York City bureau

Embassy Protectors face court A trial of our times

By Lauren Smith

Smith is an independent journalist.

On Feb. 11, four American peace activists, known as the Embassy Protectors Collective, will be tried before the U.S. empire for “interfering with certain protective functions” of its federal government for their occupation of the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington, D.C., to prevent it from being handed over to coup leaders sponsored by the Trump administration.

Their occupation ended on May 16, 2019, when federal agents broke into the sealed embassy, against international law, and arrested them in a SWAT-style raid. The government's accusation against them is merely a pretext used for their arrest and prosecution, since they haven't broken any laws. Matter of fact, their true crime in the minds of the Trump administration is just the opposite — it's their brilliant defense of international law and Venezuela's sovereign right to self-determination against Yankee imperialism.

Although the Trump administration didn't want President Maduro to win a second term, 67 percent of Venezuelans did. This stands in stark contrast with President Donald Trump's own experience, since he lost the popular vote in 2016 to former Senator and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, a candidate despised by her own Democratic Party base — who only managed to secure her place as a presidential nominee due to the fraud perpetrated by the party's elite.

Even the Republican Party's use of targeted racist and classist voter suppression and purge techniques could not secure Trump winning numbers at the polls. In the United States of America, as demonstrated by Trump, a loser can win the presidency. Compare this with former President Jimmy Carter's 2012 declaration that “the election process in Venezuela is the best in the world.” (VenezuelaAnalysis.com, Sept. 21, 2012)

Nonetheless, the Trump administration set its heart on Juan Guaidó, a man who was not even a candidate in the 2018 election. Yet, with the superpower's backing, what would be a farce in any other context still remains a threat — as Guaidó, left to his own devices, is merely a self-appointed president as well as being a self-appointed leader of a self-appointed assembly.

What elevates this trial in our collective consciousness is the fact that these brave activists struck a successful blow

against imperialist aggression from inside the belly of the beast — literally from within Washington, D.C. For 37 days, the Trump administration was powerless against the guile and guts of pediatrician Margaret Flowers; medical anthropologist Adrienne Pine; attorney Kevin Zeese; and activist David Paul as they bravely upheld Article 22 of the 1961 Vienna Convention.

The four were aided by a strong coalition of activist groups. In solidarity, 70 members of the various groups, including journalists, took turns staying inside the embassy with them. As conditions worsened, or for personal reasons, they disbursed prior to the raid. However, many remained outside the embassy protesting the siege conditions faced by their comrades inside and delivered food despite facing assault and arrest. Even the veteran civil rights defender, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, personally took part in a food delivery to the Embassy Protectors. Fortunately, unlike the 72-year-old president of Veterans for Peace, Gerry Condon, he was not assaulted by police and arrested in this process.

It is this grassroots collective that protected the Venezuelan Embassy from seizure by Trump's federal agents, local police, and an Astroturf fascist, racist and sexist mob — making their united act of resistance epic and their prosecution a trial of our times.

Despite the best efforts of the biased judge who ruled on Dec. 13 against their right to critical information needed for their defense, their acts of bravery cannot be silenced — as activists will ensure their story is told. On Jan. 29, Judge Beryl Howell will hear pretrial arguments concerning a recent motion filed by government lawyers that even more severely restricts what can be discussed during their Feb. 11 trial.

If Judge Howell grants the government's motion, it will leave the Embassy Protectors virtually defenseless. The government wants the prosecution to be limited exclusively to three things: (1) the four were in the embassy, (2) they were given a notice of eviction by the police, and (3) they refused to leave. Essentially, the government wants the jury that decides their fate to be blindfolded. This will ensure the Trump administration's desired outcome — which is to convict the Embassy Protectors and make them a model for how it intends to deal with challenges to its illegal foreign and domestic policies.

The fact that Howell is assigned the

case is no accident as she is the chief judge of the U.S. District Court and co-author of the unconstitutional Patriot Act. Under the Patriot Act, protections against unreasonable search and seizure are waived, and incarceration can be indeterminate and without charge. So, it's no surprise, with her intelligence community background, that Judge Howell referred to the embassy protectors as a “gang,” stated facts in a way that supported their guilt, and made it clear that a trial will result in their conviction.

Among the issues the Trump administration is asking to not be discussed in the Embassy Protectors' trial are the following:

- That Nicolás Maduro is the democratically elected president of Venezuela. More than 300 election observers for the 2018 election agreed that the election met international standards. Additionally, more than 150 governments around the world recognize him as the President of Venezuela as does the United Nations.
- That Juan Guaidó has no legitimacy to represent the Venezuelan government. Also, he is under investigation for his role in the “humanitarian aid” corruption scandal.
- That Carlos Vecchio, whose demand that the Embassy Protectors leave the embassy was the basis for their eviction, is not an ambassador from Venezuela but part of Guaidó's failed coup. Additionally, Vecchio, a former Exxon oil executive, is charged with fraud, embezzlement and money laundering to the tune of U.S. \$70 million through CITGO, Venezuela's U.S.-based subsidiary of the state oil company PDVSA.
- That they were in the embassy with the permission of the elected government of Venezuela.
- That they received advice that they were in the embassy legally.
- That negotiations were ongoing between the U.S. and Venezuela for a mutual protecting power agreement which would have resulted in Switzerland protecting the U.S. embassy in Caracas and Turkey protecting the Venezuelan Embassy in D.C. And that the Embassy Protectors



PHOTO: EMBASSY PROTECTORS COLLECTIVE

Banner hangs from Venezuelan Embassy before protectors were evicted May 16, 2019 by U.S. federal agents.

had stated that they would leave voluntarily when that agreement was reached.

Additionally, the day before the four were arrested, Samuel Moncada, the Venezuelan ambassador to the U.N., held a press conference where he discussed the negotiation for a protecting power agreement and reconfirmed that the Embassy Protectors were in the embassy with Venezuela's permission.

- That they were surrounded by a coup mob that was blocking food from coming into the embassy.

- That the electricity and water were turned off on them.

- That the Vienna Convention was violated by federal agents, who had no legitimate right to enter the embassy to arrest them.

- That the Embassy Protectors were acting within their First Amendment rights.

The Embassy Protectors face federal charges punishable by up to one year in prison, a \$100,000 fine each, and restitution to the government for police time and damages, which is considerable given the duration of their occupation and the absurd amount of armed forces used in the embassy raid — as they remain four unarmed senior and middle-aged peace activists.

Since their charges are unjust and anything can happen in prison, especially to dissidents, people of conscience must ensure all charges are dropped. So, let us stand on the right side of history with the Embassy Protectors and show solidarity by attending their trial in Washington, D.C., which begins on Feb. 11, donating to their legal fund (tinyurl.com/v2q8sfx/), and spreading the truth widely of what's really happening. □

WORKERS WORLD

☆

editorials

Trump, Bolton and the impeachment process

As the process to impeach Donald Trump moves forward in the U.S. Congress, it raises important questions that need to be addressed by the progressive movement.

Which political grouping within the U.S. ruling class has the upper hand at this point? Is it those who favor liberalism, that is, the politicians who want to dampen the class struggle by making economic and political concessions to the people?

Or is the impeachment process being used to push a more militarist agenda by those more aggressively hawkish than Trump? And are mainstream Democrats in an opportunistic alliance with those forces?

Yes, it's tempting to view favorably anyone in conflict with the odious billionaire real estate tycoon in the White House. But we can't. Evidence suggests that Trump has burned his bridges with many hard-liners in the military-industrial complex, who see him as incompetent, unpredictable and lacking in the slick political skills needed to keep the people in line when the Pentagon decides it needs a war.

John Bolton, the president's former National Security Adviser, whom Trump forced out last September, has reemerged, announcing that he is eager to testify in the impeachment hearings. A former deputy to Bolton, Fiona Hill, has already appeared as a damaging witness against Trump.

Bolton is reported to have voluminous records showing what Trump did to pressure Ukraine to investigate Hunter Biden, son of Joe Biden, a potential Democratic candidate in the upcoming U.S. election.

So who is John Bolton? As we wrote in an editorial last November: "Bolton is a notorious foreign policy hawk. Prior to his resignation, Bolton was calling for a 'tougher line' against Iran, Venezuela and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (north Korea). He is credited with having torpedoed the talks between Trump and DPRK leader Kim Jong Un held in Vietnam last February."

Before Trump forced him out, Bolton got the administration to freeze Venezuela's assets, boasting: "This is the first time in 30 years that we are imposing an asset freeze against a government in this hemisphere."

This former Trump administration official is now reported to have written a book that "presents an outline of what Mr. Bolton might testify to if he is called as a witness in the Senate impeachment trial," according to a front-page article in the Jan. 27 New York Times. It describes his revelations as "explosive."

Bolton's reemergence in the impeachment process should set off alarm bells in the progressive movement.

'A bunch of dopes and babies'

And there is more, much more, to show

that some of the most hawkish insiders in the establishment want Trump out.

The Washington Post on Jan. 17 published an article called " 'You're a bunch of dopes and babies': Inside Trump's stunning tirade against generals." The article is adapted from the book, "A Very Stable Genius: Donald J. Trump's Testing of America," published Jan. 21 by Penguin Press.

The book is misnamed. Trump's "testing of America" detailed in this article is actually his testing of the military establishment. Even the president isn't supposed to call the generals and admirals "dopes and babies," as the book says he did in one of his first meetings with the Pentagon chiefs.

The military brass are not used to this. They expect and demand the utmost servility toward their power. No surprise if they would be furious and want him gone — impeached or even court-martialed, if possible.

Trump's real "testing" of the people in this country has been through all his horribly reactionary, racist and sexist acts and statements, which are legion. His murderous policy against migrants. His assaults on the environment. His equating Nazis with progressive protesters. His stacking of government departments with appointees chosen by his corporate buddies — although this is certainly not a crime unique to Trump.

Why isn't he being impeached for all this?

We don't have a pipeline to the inner circles of the Pentagon or the White House. We don't know all the struggles that may have taken place over the attack on Iran — whether Trump eagerly backed the assassination of Iran's leading general or carried it out under pressure from the military brass. Probably, at some point, someone will write a book on that.

It was clearly a war crime, one carried out by the Pentagon and Trump with absolutely no authorization from Congress. The U.S. Constitution says only Congress can declare war. So the military-industrial complex doesn't bother to ask Congress to declare war any more — and hasn't done so since 1941 when it authorized U.S. entry into World War II. They just make it happen.

Thus, flanked by all the generals, Trump went on TV to announce the attack. Whether he wanted it is moot. He has learned to carry out their orders, and not vice versa.

That's what the movement needs to take away from all this. Getting rid of Trump may be popular with lots of people, even if it means Vice President Mike Pence becomes president, but it will not get rid of the oppressive imperialist state. Only the struggle of the masses of people can bring about real change. □

Washington embraces Bolivia's rightists

The Jan. 23 announcement that the U.S. would resume diplomatic relations with Bolivia's government — after breaking them with Evo Morales' progressive government 11 years ago — should come as no surprise. The current regime in the Andean country was established by a right-wing coup, carried out by racist, anti-Indigenous forces and backed by the military and police. All this makes it a good friend of U.S. imperialism.

Breaking relations with popular governments and supporting fascist and/or military coups are the standard Washington ploy when U.S. corporate and financial interests are threatened, even if the threat is only lower profits. And this strategy is shared by U.S. imperialism's two major political parties, the Republicans and the Democrats.

That shared strategy was shown when the Obama administration quickly recognized and supplied aid to the reactionary coup regime in Honduras after

the 2009 overthrow of democratically elected President Mel Zelaya. In 2019, the Trump gang backed ultra-rightist Jair Bolsonaro's "lawfare" in Brazil. It has repeatedly tried to overthrow the Bolivarian government in Venezuela.

It was also no surprise that within days of the U.S. Embassy announcement on Bolivia, the coup government broke relations with Cuba. The new Bolivian regime had already expelled hundreds of Cuban doctors who had been providing health care to Bolivia's poor and Indigenous communities. The new right-wing regime has no plans to replace them.

Now the coup government, whose military and police fired live ammunition at protesters and killed dozens, is attempting to give a face lift to its brutal rule by holding elections. However, Evo Morales and some other very popular leaders of his Movement for Socialism (MAS) are banned from running — and de facto threatened with assassination if they

return to Bolivia from exile. The MAS is running other candidates.

Yet despite the repression and the loss of MAS' most popular leaders, the ultra-rightists have no guarantee that the MAS will lose — unless the elections are rigged. The struggle continues.

Meanwhile, Morales made a public comment in mid-January that gives insight into the problems facing Bolivian workers and farmers and MAS supporters in general.

Morales called in from exile in Argentina on Jan. 13 to a radio station located in Chapare, a MAS stronghold in Bolivia. He said that if "I or anyone [from the MAS leadership] were to return to Bolivia, someone would have to organize armed popular militias" such as those in Venezuela. (Lahaine.org, Jan. 13)

Apparently under pressure from his Argentine hosts, Morales walked back those remarks — but not, according to reports, before they were heard with

enthusiasm by many MAS activists.

Not only in Bolivia, but also in other Latin American and Caribbean countries, popular movements are supporting progressive governments like those in Venezuela and Cuba. They are also trying to eliminate repressive neoliberal governments, like in Colombia, Haiti and Chile.

In both cases, the question of which class controls the armed forces and the police has been central. Morales hit that central question right in the bull's-eye with his original remark.

U.S. imperialism and its representatives, in both major parties and in the bureaucracy and state apparatus, understand this perfectly. That's why, alongside the occasional fig leaf praising democracy, they rely on the police club at home and the U.S. Armed Forces abroad to keep the imperialist class on top — while reinforcing brutal regimes like the one currently running Bolivia. □

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China mobilizes to combat coronavirus

By Joshua Hanks

Since a new strain of pneumonia-causing virus hit China in late December, there has been a massive response by the central and local governments.

On Dec. 31, China alerted the World Health Organization that it had detected a pneumonia-like illness in Wuhan, a city of 11 million people in central China’s Hubei province.

By Jan. 7 the cause was identified as a novel coronavirus, dubbed 2019-nCoV, which is in the same family as the common cold and SARS. Two days later the Chinese Center for Disease Control had sequenced the entire genome of the virus, a rapidly achieved feat that will help scientists around the world more fully understand it.

For comparison, during the 2014 outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, it took scientists two months to completely sequence that virus’ genome.

Data from Chinese scientists have been published in international medical journals, such as the New England Journal of Medicine and the Lancet, as well as in the domestic journal China Science Life Sciences.

Huge government effort to contain the virus

China’s response to the outbreak has been swift and massive. In cooperation with WHO and the international scientific community, it is taking this outbreak very seriously.

“Party committees and governments at all levels must take novel coronavirus outbreak prevention and control as the top priority of their work,” said President Xi Jinping at a Jan. 25 meeting of the Central Committee of

from taking similar measures because of how greatly such a move would disrupt their markets and profits.

The Spring Festival holiday will be extended, with schools and many public facilities remaining closed, to slow the spread of the virus. The China Banking and Regulatory Commission announced it is freezing payment obligations on mortgages, loans and credit cards for those who do not have an income due to the outbreak. This is unheard of in Western capitalist countries, where every flu season many are forced to go to work sick or face deep debts and even homelessness.

Over a thousand civilian medical workers have been sent to Wuhan from around the country, along with hundreds of medics from the People’s Liberation Army. Another 12 teams with more than 1,600 medical workers are preparing to go there. As a whole in Hubei province, over half a million medical workers have been mobilized for epidemic prevention, control and treatment of patients.

The government plans to complete two entirely new hospitals in six to seven days to deal with patients, beating a previous record set in Beijing during the 2003 SARS outbreak. Using prefabricated buildings and an army of workers—who are being paid three times the usual wage—the Leishenshan Hospital will have nearly 1,500 beds, while the Huoshenshan hospital will have up to 1,000 beds.

The two new hospitals are being built by state-owned firms and financed by China’s public banking system, allowing for a swift and coordinated response that can focus on meeting the public’s needs instead of extracting short-term profits. Unlike capitalist companies, state-owned firms can operate at a loss.

State-owned Telecom China Mobile has set up a special 5G network in a Wuhan hospital to facilitate telemedicine, which will reduce exposure of medical workers to the virus. Factories have been ordered to massively increase production of medical supplies, like masks and gloves, after some shortages of these items were initially reported. Prices for these items spiked, but e-commerce giant Alibaba announced it would work to eliminate price hikes.

Two very different responses

No response to an outbreak like this will be perfect, but on-the-ground reports attest to the efficiency and seriousness with which it is being handled. This reporter spoke with Victoria Sinclair, a U.S. citizen living in the city of Dalian in northwest China. She said, “I’ve always been impressed with how quickly Chinese construction workers manage to work. Our highway was done in a few weeks, and I have no doubt the new hospitals they are building in Wuhan will be done quickly.” Sinclair added, “The buses and subway are still running in our city, but they [workers] are taking extra precautions and sanitizing them twice daily.”

Coverage in the Western media has been largely negative, portraying China’s response as inept and lacking transparency, despite the central government calling on all cases of the virus to be immediately reported and several local officials in Wuhan facing repercussions for not



PHOTO: XINHUA

A medical team from 51 medical institutions in Shaanxi leaves Xi’an for Wuhan.

acting swiftly enough. That doesn’t sound like the central government is trying to cover up the outbreak; yet it has been a major talking point in Western reporting.

Despite the rapid and massive measures China has taken — only possible in a country with large amounts of public ownership, economic planning and leadership of the Communist Party — the Western media seem largely devoted to only criticizing China.

It should be remembered that the Reagan administration not only ignored the AIDS crisis in the 1980s but mocked and ridiculed the tens of thousands of people dying from that deadly disease. And during the 2017-18 flu season in the U.S., more than 60,000 people died — a fact rarely mentioned — which puts China’s current outbreak into perspective.

The current U.S. flu season has already seen over 6,000 fatalities, presenting a much greater threat at present to public health than the coronavirus. Yet the Western corporate media, driven by an endless need for more viewers and more advertising revenue, choose to put forward a sensationalist narrative regarding China — to grab people’s attention and generate more clicks.

Resurgence of diseases in U.S.

There has been a resurgence in the U.S. of leprosy and typhus in Los Angeles’ homeless population and measles and mumps in unvaccinated people.

The U.S. actually has a lower vaccination rate than the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, which has a much smaller population and economy so it can spend much less on health care. A 2016 study published by the National Institutes of Health investigated vaccination rates of children living below the poverty line in four states and found that 40 percent had not received a single dose of the vaccine for rotavirus. Before introduction in 2006, rotavirus caused 20 to 60 deaths a year among children and up to 70,000 hospitalizations.

Racism is also apparent in how little concern Western reports seem to have for the well-being of non-Western people hit by a deadly viral outbreak. While the accidental burning of Notre Dame in Paris and the massive wildfires in Australia both brought out public displays of sympathy and huge donations from Western corporations and billionaires, China’s coronavirus outbreak has not garnered the same sympathy and support.

This is the inevitable result of a new Cold War being waged against China as the imperialist West attempts to hold on to its position as the global power center. □



PHOTO: CGTN

Construction began on the second coronavirus hospital in Wuhan on Jan. 26. The Leishenshan Hospital will be 30,000 square meters and house 1,300 beds. The hospital will open in a week and a half.

the Communist Party, which set up a high-level task force to combat the virus. Led by Premier Li Keqiang, the task force arrived in Wuhan on Jan. 26 to coordinate efforts to contain the outbreak. As of Jan. 27, the Ministry of Finance has allocated \$8.74 billion to combat the virus.

Wuhan and several other cities have been put under partial quarantine, shutting down public transit and restricting travel by private cars, even as Chinese New Year/Spring Festival celebrations kicked off what is the largest annual human migration in the world.

This is an unprecedented response to a viral outbreak. Free-market capitalist countries have been inhibited

Desafíos al movimiento progresista en Nuestra América

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en sus varias vertientes, la dignidad de los pueblos aborígenes, la dignidad nacional, etc.)

Pero ni la amplitud de estos movimientos ni su evidente legitimidad han conseguido poner fin al reinado del neoliberalismo. Ni en Chile ni en Colombia o Haití —donde las protestas no cesan—, ni en Ecuador que parece estar en un momento de indecisiones los gobernantes de turno parecen dispuestos a ceder, y en sus momentos más críticos, cuando todo parecía indicar que les había llegado la hora, una voz clara y enfática puso el sistema a resguardo: la voz de los cuarteles y el garrote de la policía, con un balance de

mueritos, heridos, presos y desaparecidos que no se registraba desde hace décadas (a excepción quizás de Colombia, un país “democrático” en el cual la represión se ha mantenido desde siempre y los militares funcionan no solo al margen de la ley sino con total independencia del poder gubernamental).

Solo Venezuela parece haber resuelto este dilema limpiando literalmente las filas de militares y policías de elementos reacios a todo cambio y carentes de cualquier inspiración realmente nacionalista, de cualquier sentimiento de lealtad nacional. Por eso allí han fracasado hasta ahora los muchos intentos de golpe de Estado, de intervención de los cuarteles en defensa de los intereses de la clase dominante

tradicional y de intereses extranjeros, a tal punto que al parecer Washington y sus aliados europeos parecen haber desistido de sacar a Maduro por la fuerza de las armas y proponen ahora una “salida pactada”.

Este es un desafío de enormes dimensiones. Mientras no se consiga al menos neutralizar a militares y policías, siempre existe el peligro de la derrota aunque el movimiento popular cuente con una dimensión considerable, altos grados de consciencia y organización y plena legitimidad. Sin embargo, aunque difícil, la tarea no es imposible y no sería la primera vez que desde los cuarteles un grupo de militares y policías nacionalistas y progresistas permitan que el movimiento

popular alcance sus objetivos.

Grandes reformas en el continente han sido impulsadas por grupos de militares nacionalistas en Argentina (Perón), Brasil (Vargas), México (Cárdenas y Calles) o Perú (Velasco Alvarado), a pesar de la suerte posterior de estas revoluciones que, en el fondo pusieron de manifiesto la débil constitución de una verdadera burguesía nacional y la insuficiencia del movimiento popular.

Han sido casos excepcionales, sin duda, pero su impacto en la historia de la región es inmenso y demuestra que no siempre desde los cuarteles, necesariamente, se ha de regar con sangre la protesta popular y los deseos de cambio. □



El pueblo puede luchar por sus propios intereses.

Un conflicto amargo en el seno de la clase dominante EE.UU.

Por John Catalinotto

Traducción: María Piedad Ossaba, Lapluma.net.

1 de enero – Un amargo conflicto entre los dos principales partidos políticos que representan al imperialismo usamericano se perfila en el horizonte para el próximo año. Lucharán en su primera ronda en el Senado, en el juicio que seguirá a la votación de la Cámara de Representantes para destituir al presidente. La segunda ronda será la elección presidencial de noviembre.

Tanto el partido republicano como el demócrata son enemigos de los trabajadores del mundo. Ambos son enemigos de la clase trabajadora de EE.UU.. Sin embargo, el mundo entero estará observando este conflicto. Afecta a todo el mundo.

¿Este conflicto –interno de la clase dominante imperialista usamericana – tendrá lugar de una manera que permita a la gente trabajadora común y corriente de EE.UU. intervenir en sus propios intereses? Esto parece improbable en la actualidad, pero han ocurrido cosas más sorprendentes.

Según la Constitución de los EE.UU., para destituir a un presidente, la Cámara de Representantes debe votar, por mayoría simple, para presentar cargos contra un presidente en ejercicio, acusaciones que ella considere lo suficientemente graves como para destituirlo del cargo. El Senado organiza posteriormente un juicio basado en esos cargos. Para condenar y destituir al presidente de su cargo se requiere el voto de por lo menos dos tercios de los miembros del Senado.

En la historia de EE.UU., el presidente Andrew Johnson fue sometido a juicio político en 1868 y Bill Clinton en 1998. Ni Johnson ni Clinton fueron condenados por el Senado. Los republicanos controlan el Senado de hoy. No hay indicios en el presente de que estos republicanos condenen a Trump.

La presidenta de la Cámara de

Representantes, Nancy Pelosi, una de las principales demócratas, dice que enviará las órdenes de destitución al Senado sólo cuando los líderes republicanos de allí garanticen un “juicio justo”. Pelosi se refiere a un juicio en el que los demócratas pueden llamar a los antiguos colaboradores de Trump a testificar bajo juramento. ¿Y a quién quieren los demócratas llamar como testigo? A nada menos que al halcón John Bolton.

Antes de 2016, los estrategias imperialistas –incluyendo a Bolton – habían basado la dominación mundial de EE.UU. en una alianza con otras potencias imperialistas (Europa Occidental, Japón, Australia). Al igual que en la OTAN, EE.UU. es la potencia hegemónica y hace el trabajo militar pesado y se lleva la mayor parte del saqueo imperialista. Trump antagonizó a estos estrategias cuando pareció amenazar a la OTAN.

El odio del pueblo

Por razones completamente diferentes, Trump se ha ganado el odio de grandes sectores de la población usamericana – y del mundo. Ha hecho incesantes comentarios insensibles y groseros, calumniando a los latinoamericanos y a los africanos, insultando a las mujeres. Provoca la violencia ultraderechista.

En sus programas políticos ha hecho la guerra a los pobres. Ha nombrado jueces federales anti-mujeres. Mientras tanto, ha concedido la reducción de impuestos a los ricos, al tiempo que ha abierto las tierras indígenas y los recursos naturales al saqueo por las empresas; para ello, el 0,001% de los más ricos siguen vertiendo sus contribuciones en la campaña política de Trump.

De todos sus crímenes, la dirección del partido demócrata escogió a propósito uno en el que Trump enfrentó a los estrategias de la Guerra Fría. Rechazó la ayuda militar al régimen derechista y anti ruso de Ucrania. Trump (presionó al presidente ucraniano para que investigara a Hunter Biden, el hijo de Joe Biden, que

tenía un cómodo empleo en una empresa ucraniana. Trump hizo esto para obtener estrechas ventajas electorales.

Al escoger este crimen, los demócratas están tratando de demostrar que son más eficaces para representar los intereses imperialistas. También lo hicieron dando un apoyo casi unánime al nuevo presupuesto del Pentágono, que fue aprobado por la Cámara de Representantes por la friolera de 738 mil millones de dólares en diciembre. Al mismo tiempo, un decreto presidencial estaba a punto de expulsar de los cupones de alimentos a casi un millón de personas, incluidos muchos niños y ancianos, y y sumergirlos en la hambruna.

Una de las pocas demócratas progresistas que se opusieron a este regalo al complejo militar-industrial, la representante Rashida Tlaib, de Michigan, declaró que “no puede apoyar un proyecto de ley que proporciona 738.000 millones de dólares para guerras y contratistas de defensa, mientras que este año sólo proporcionamos 190.000 millones de dólares en fondos discrecionales para la atención de la salud, la educación y la creación de empleos”.

La diputada Tlaib, una de las cuatro representantes femeninas de color conocidas como “la escuadra” (The Squad), también criticó la guerra financiada por EE.UU. contra Yemen, la nueva Fuerza Espacial y las nuevas armas nucleares previstas en el proyecto de ley.

Políticos imperialistas y racistas

Trump presta apoyo político a los políticos imperialistas y racistas de todo el mundo, como Boris Johnson en Gran Bretaña, Marine Le Pen en Francia, Matteo Salvini en Italia, que trastocan la solidaridad de la clase obrera. Con sus tuits racistas, el presidente ha envenenado la atmósfera política, dividiendo a los trabajadores usamericanos sobre la base de la raza, el género y la religión.

Hay muchas personas en los EE.UU. que odian –y algunos que temen – a Trump por buenas razones. Miles de personas en todo EE.UU. se manifestaron el

17 de diciembre en decenas de ciudades apoyando el proceso de destitución. En otras ocasiones durante los últimos tres años, estas o similares fuerzas protestaron por millones contra la misoginia del presidente, expresaron su solidaridad con los migrantes o defendieron el medio ambiente en diferentes momentos.

Para estas personas, la dirección del Partido Demócrata sólo ha dado la opción de ponerse del lado del reaccionario régimen de Ucrania y el imperialismo usamericano contra Rusia. Fue el Partido Demócrata bajo el gobierno de Barack Obama el que derrocó al anterior gobierno de Ucrania, permitiendo incluso a las fuerzas profascistas entrar en el nuevo régimen. Tomar partido en este esfuerzo no tiene nada que ver con los verdaderos intereses del pueblo trabajador de EE.UU..

No sólo las personas de la pequeña izquierda antiimperialista, sino incluso algunos miembros del Congreso del Partido Demócrata, como el representante demócrata Al Green de Texas, un africano-americano, han instado a que Trump sea acusado en el proceso de destitución por incitar a la violencia con base en sus comentarios racistas.

La presidencia de Trump ha desatado protestas progresistas en EE.UU. contra la agenda de odio del presidente. Las personas con discapacidades han liderado la lucha por la atención médica; los maestros de los Estados que votaron por Trump han realizado huelgas desafiantes. Las mujeres han encabezado las protestas contra el abuso sexual y por su liberación. Las personas de origen latinoamericano han encabezado manifestaciones en solidaridad con los migrantes. Los pueblos indígenas han liderado protestas contra la crisis climática y para proteger la tierra.

¿Será posible que la dirección del Partido Demócrata frene la lucha contra Trump y la limite a atacar su crimen de buscar ventajas electorales estrechas? ¿O el pueblo romperá estos límites y comenzará a luchar por sus propios intereses? □

Desafíos al movimiento progresista en Nuestra América

Por Juan Diego García

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Para los movimientos populares de América Latina y el Caribe no es suficiente con alcanzar un alto grado de conciencia política y organización mientras las clases dominantes, de una u otra forma, mantienen el control de las fuerzas armadas.

Cuando el sistema político tradicional colapsa y ve agotadas sus energías es posible ganar a esas clases dominantes el control del gobierno (total o parcialmente). Es el caso de Venezuela y Bolivia, sin duda. Cosa bien diferente es arrebatarles el poder económico (y el mediático, vinculado estrechamente a éste último) aunque las formas de capitalismo de Estado (en manos populares) permiten márgenes bastante amplios para emprender reformas políticas y sociales de fondo.

Por supuesto, siempre queda el desafío mayor que es, a partir de ese capitalismo

de Estado, emprender la construcción de un orden económico esencialmente diferente que permita superar la condición de economías de complemento, prescindibles y secundarias en el complicado entramado del mercado mundial. Cuando se tienen recursos naturales abundantes el país se convertirá en objetivo prioritario de las agresiones imperialistas en lucha por asegurarse materias primas, mercados y zonas de influencia; y este peligro no es pequeño en absoluto; pero cuando los recursos (materiales y humanos) son escasos o muy limitados, el desafío es aún mayor.

Solo naciones muy ricas en recursos o de dimensiones continentales (como Brasil o China) tienen la ventaja de contar con condiciones materiales adecuadas para el empuje de un proyecto al menos nacionalista (en el sentido sano del término) y –mejor aún, aunque no necesariamente- de un proyecto de amplias y profundas reformas sociales.

América contra el neoliberalismo

Por fortuna para estos países de la periferia del sistema siempre habrá fórmulas intermedias que permitan superar las limitaciones y hacer frente a las amenazas internas y sobre todo externas. Sin embargo y de forma inmediata, hay un desafío que no es posible descuidar: el poder militar.

No le basta a estos movimientos populares, democráticos y nacionalistas contar con un movimiento de masas organizado y consciente ni con un programa de reformas adecuadas que le den solidez al proyecto. Tampoco es suficiente con una vanguardia política de suficiente garantía, de una dirección a la altura de los desafíos. Todo esto, junto, resulta incompleto, y tal como señalaba el poeta y estratega chino, quienes emprendan procesos de cambios radicales nunca deben olvidar que “en última instancia el poder nace de la boca de los fusiles”.

Si se repasan los recientes

acontecimientos en el área latinoamericana y caribeña se constata cómo, unos regímenes políticos y un orden social profundamente deteriorados, que han perdido toda su legitimidad (caso reciente de Chile, Ecuador, Haití y Colombia) y registran enormes movilizaciones populares exigiendo cambios radicales de todo el orden. Se exige la salida de los actuales gobernantes, se apuesta por un nuevo orden constitucional, se rechaza enfáticamente la política económica neoliberal, se condena sin paliativos la represión policial y la manipulación mediática impulsada por el mismo gobierno y por grupos de intereses económicos nacionales y extranjeros (la intervención imperialista solo es negada por quienes quieren y necesitan hacerlo) y se levantan banderas nuevas que recogen las reivindicaciones populares más recientes (la defensa del planeta expoliado por el capitalismo, la reivindicación de género

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