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SocialistViewpoint

★ The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it. —Karl Marx ★

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Army Recruitment Now Based on Student Debt

BY COURAGE TO RESIST

The U.S. Army wants a 500,000 active-duty force by the end of this next decade, about 25,000 more than today. And preying on low-income high schoolers is apparently how they intend to do it.

This past month the Army announced that they have already surpassed their recruitment goals for 2019—with three months still to go. That’s a big change from recent years’ where unsuccessful recruiting outcomes have been the norm. So what changed?

Recruiters are no longer using patriotism as their main marketing strategy. And wars in the Middle East are not on the talking points either.

Major General Frank Muth, head of Army Recruiting Command, stated this past month that discussion of the endless wars and their potential outcomes “was not really part of the discussion” recruiters are having with high schoolers. Today, recruiters have

found a new niche to meet their 2019 goals: the national student debt crisis.

“One of the national crises right now is student loans, so \$31,000 is [about] the average,” Muth told reporters at the Pentagon. “You can get out [of the Army] after four years, 100 percent paid for state college anywhere in the United States.” The Army has refocused their marketing efforts to take advantage of our national education and financial crisis.

It is noteworthy that it’s also being reported this past month that the Trump Administration has been blocking an independent watchdog agency, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, from investigating student loan servicers’ shady business practices with the other federal possibility for college access.

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, which began in 2007, is intended to offer public sector workers (teachers, firefighters, nonprofit work-

ers...) forgiveness of their student loans after ten years of service and timely payments. Instead it is being reported that 99 percent of those applying for this new program are being denied.

This loan forgiveness program was intended to offer another way for those committed to civic duty to be able to afford college—without joining the Army. Instead the program is being blocked while the Army manipulates the national student debt crisis.

Extreme economic inequality continues to expand in the U.S. and low-income youth increasingly are forced to consider joining the Army in order to reach their dreams of college, a living wage and joining the middle class.

Youth should not have to become soldiers in order to attain higher education.

—*Courage to Resist*, October 23, 2019

<https://couragetoresist.org/army-recruitment-student-debt/>



JROTC fitness performance at Lemon Bay High School in Englewood, Florida.

SocialistViewpoint

November/December 2019 Vol. 19, No. 6

SOCIALIST VIEWPOINT
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Socialist Viewpoint (ISSN 1535-5438) is published bi-monthly by the Socialist Viewpoint Publishing Association, 60 29th Street, #429, San Francisco, CA 94110. Rates: For one year (6 issues): Introductory rate in the U.S. \$20.00; Regular rate in the U.S. \$30.00; Bargain rate: \$35.00 for two years; All other countries \$50.00 (Money orders, checks, etc., should be in U.S. dollars.)

Periodicals Postage Paid at San Francisco, California.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Socialist Viewpoint, 60 29th Street, #429, San Francisco, CA 94110

World in Revolt

By BONNIE WEINSTEIN

People are in revolt all over the world. Strikes and protests are popping up everywhere from the Chicago teachers' strike, the UAW General Motors strike, to mass protests in Spain over the jailing of the leaders of the Catalan independence struggle, massive protests in Hong Kong over democratic rights, government corruption and economic inequality. And in Chile alone, on October 26, 2019, 1.5 million people were in the streets of Santiago also protesting income inequality, corruption and injustice. There were protests of similar issues in Ecuador, Haiti, Argentina, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq—all in addition to the massive climate crisis strikes and demonstrations that have been taking place all over the world.

In fact, according to an October 23, 2019 *New York Times* article by Declan

Walsh and Max Fisher titled, "From Chile to Lebanon, Protests Flare Over Wallet Issues. Pocketbook items have become the catalysts for popular fury across the globe in recent weeks":¹

"In Chile, the spark was an increase in subway fares. In Lebanon, it was a tax on WhatsApp calls. The government of Saudi Arabia moved against hookah pipes. In India, it was about onions.... Small pocketbook items became the focus of popular fury across the globe in recent weeks, as frustrated citizens filled the streets for unexpected protests that tapped into a wellspring of bubbling frustration at a class of political elites seen as irredeemably corrupt or hopelessly unjust or both. They followed mass demonstrations in Bolivia, Spain, Iraq and Russia and before that the Czech Republic, Algeria, Sudan and Kazakhstan... experts dis-

cern a pattern: a louder-than-usual howl against elites in countries where democracy is a source of disappointment, corruption is seen as brazen, and a tiny political class lives large while the younger generation struggles to get by..."

Their pocketbooks and ours

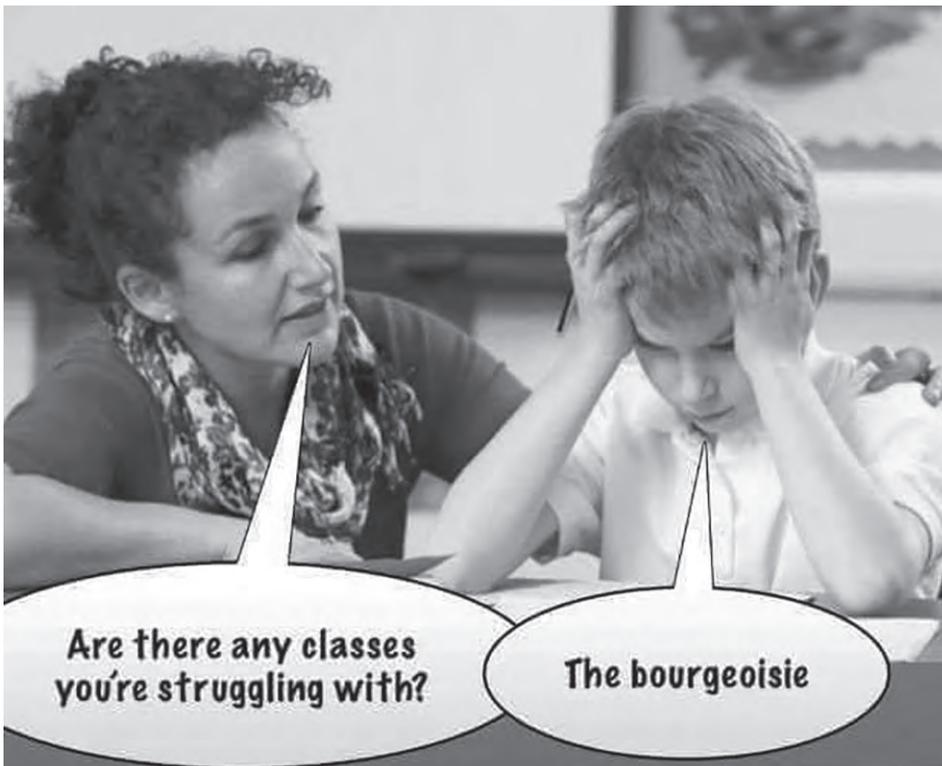
Meanwhile, in an earlier October 11, 2019 *New York Times* article by Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman titled, "How to Tax Our Way Back to Justice:"²

"During his presidency, Barack Obama argued in favor of reducing the federal corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 28 percent, with a lower rate of 25 percent for manufacturers. In 2017, under President Trump, the United States cut its corporate tax rate to 21 percent. In France, President Emmanuel Macron is in motion to reduce the corporate tax in 2022 to 25 percent from 33 percent. Britain is ahead of the curve: It started slashing its rate under Prime Minister Gordon Brown in 2008 and is aiming for 17 percent by 2020."

The greed of world capitalism is what is spurring a new upsurge of workers across the globe. The question is, what is the best way to fight this growing, brutal capitalist inequality—an inequality reinforced by war, racism, sexism and the scapegoating of immigrants fleeing from the wars and the poverty and destitution they bring—all inflicted on us by capitalism's ever-increasing demand for more wealth for themselves and austerity for us.

Internationalism

Clearly, the labor movement, especially here in the belly of the most powerful capitalist beast, must solidify with all these workers who are protesting



against the same enemy—even many of the very same corporations raking in the profits—corporations that plunder the wealth of other nations, exploit cheap labor, and routinely pollute the environment in their quest for increased profits.

Universal problems and universal solutions

Workers all over the world face the same kinds of issues—corroding infrastructure, corrupt government, increases in taxes, lack of healthcare, lack of adequate education, lack of housing, clean drinking water, unequal access to healthy food, combined with low-paying jobs or no jobs at all.

Workers must pay for everything

All over the world working people pay taxes on almost everything we buy, we pay taxes on our income at a higher rate than the billionaires. Yet we pay the same traffic fines and tolls and public transportation fees as the wealthy. But a \$75.00 parking ticket for someone making \$10.00-an-hour is a whole lot different than for someone who makes a thousand-dollars-an-hour. Even if you have health insurance on your job, your boss pays the same insurance rates and deductibles as you do, but makes way more money. These kinds of taxes are called flat taxes. They are used to pay for social services, schools and infrastructure—and they impact workers on a massive scale yet have absolutely no detrimental impact on the wealthy. It's so much pocket change for them—if they have to pay them at all.

At the same time, there is a massive amount of work that needs to be done for the good of society in general. There needs to be a massive effort to build schools, housing, hospitals, expand mass transportation to cut

down on pollution. We need to stop manufacturing products designed to fall apart and start manufacturing products to last. And especially, we need to stop manufacturing the implements of war and police oppression—guns, bombs, weapons of mass destruction, jails—these are industries that use the most resources, cause the most pollution and, of course, the most death and destruction.

All of these weapons of oppression are designed and used to control us and to preserve a system that puts corporate profits above everything else—above human needs and the preservation of our planet.

The revolutionary party of the working class

There is no dispute that the interests of the world's working class are the same. We want a world of peace, prosperity, democracy, equality (economic and social), a clean environment, healthy food, universal healthcare, secure and comfortable housing, excellent schools, efficient and safe transportation free to all.

To achieve these things we need to form our own international organizations—organizations that we control

and that can formulate programs and tactics to achieve our goals in unity and solidarity with each other no matter what country we live in.

We need a mass party of the working class that crosses all borders as the capitalist corporations do. We need a party of the working class that can identify and organize against our common enemy, the capitalist class, and their system of capitalist exploitation enforced by war, incarceration and oppression.

And we need a common goal—socialism—to create a world where production is democratically based upon the needs and desires of everyone, instead of for the profit of the few. A system that can put an end to war, bigotry, exploitation, slavery and the destruction of our planet—a system that can strive to create a paradise on earth.

A socialist world of equality and justice for all is well within our reach and is the only hope for the future of us all.

1 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/23/world/middleeast/global-protests.html?module=inline>

2 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/11/opinion/sunday/wealth-income-tax-rate.html?action=click&module=Opinion&pgtype=Homepage>



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Revolutionary Socialism is the Primary Political Ideology of The Red Nation

ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 6, 2019 BY THE RED NATION



“I firmly believe that the philosophy of my ancestors lines up quite tidily with the philosophy of communism. I make no apology for my principles.” —Lee Maracle

“Socialism is for the people. If you’re afraid of socialism, you’re afraid of yourself.” —Fred Hampton

Introduction

This position paper of the Third General Assembly formally adopts revolutionary socialism and liberation as the primary political ideology of The Red Nation. While incomplete, the purpose of this proposal is to articulate the basic principles of revolutionary socialism and Marxism and its connection to Indigenous socialism and communism. By adopting this proposal, we commit ourselves to the study and practice of revolutionary socialism (also known as scientific socialism) by aligning ourselves with the long traditions of resistance that predate Marxism itself. Nonetheless, Marxism has become the weapon of the poor and colonized throughout the world and largely outside of Europe, a weapon we now take up as our own. Marxism is the five-fingered fist—the hand of the worker, the peasant, the colonized—and our traditions of resistance are the power behind that fist.

Marxism is a tool for making revolution, first and foremost. But it is a useless tool unless wielded properly by the oppressed. Our traditions of Indigenous resistance wield Marxism, not to uphold European traditions, but to emancipate ourselves from the colonizers by destroying that which destroys us, and building and rebuilding our nations according to our traditions and cultures so that our human and nonhuman relations and thus all people may live. And we cannot merely destroy capitalism, without the foresight and knowledge of replacing it with a more humane and just system without rulers and without colonizers. That system is called socialism, which seeks to destroy the class system and the ruling classes, redistribute land and wealth to its proper owners, and restore dignity to the humble people of the earth. Put simply, socialism is people power. Socialism puts people before profits. Socialism aligns with Indigenous traditions of relationality as we seek to be good relatives to other humans and other-than-humans. Socialism is the natural state of humanity, to live and work towards peace and justice.

**Marxism is the
five-fingered fist—the
hand of the worker, the
peasant, the colonized—
and our traditions of
resistance are the power
behind that fist.**

Communism is the greatest expression of love for the people and our nonhuman relatives. And it is the only solution for a planet on the brink of

destruction at the hands of the ruling bourgeoisie and their backwards ideologies and institutions.

U.S. imperialism is the number one enemy of the planet.

Our socialism is rooted in Indigenous resistance, African slave rebellions, and European labor history. It is also rooted in the nations of the Tri-Continental—of Asia, Africa, and the Americas—that aligned themselves against the primary enemy of the planet: U.S. imperialism. Indigenous peoples were the first victims of European imperialism and invasion. The U.S. inherited that mantle and has exported the settler colonial project to the rest of the globe by plundering and killing other darker nations. We are internationalists.

As Indigenous nations, who are in the United States but not entirely of it, we align ourselves with the Third World. We seek to end the oppressive relations between European nations and the Third World. This means opposing U.S. imperialism at all turns, denouncing all U.S. imperialist wars, and aligning ourselves with the poorer nations of the world in the defense of their sovereignty and self-determination. The U.S. must get out of everywhere, including Turtle Island!

Global climate change is also not a Third World problem—it’s a first world problem. Nations like the United States consume and produce the most carbon. This concentration of wealth and consumption derives from the histories of African slavery, Indigenous genocide, and European settler colonialism. Thus, the struggle against the multinational oil and gas corporations is an anti-imperialist struggle in which Indigenous nations are leading the fight. But we also recognize that our socialism, our

freedom and emancipation, can never come at the expense of our Third World comrades and relatives.

Marx and Engels developed their theories of change and history from the vantage point of the laboring European proletariat. Industrial capitalism, however, didn't begin solely in the English factory. The hands that picked the cotton that was weaved in English textile mills were African—stolen from their homelands and enslaved by European masters. The land where the cotton grew had to be cleared of Indigenous people and Indigenous title to make way for the plantation economy, the main driving force behind the expansion of modern capitalism. Thus, the expansion of African slavery fueled the dispossession of Indigenous peoples.

U.S. settler colonialism was thoroughly a racial project of genocide and Indigenous elimination, which is an enduring structure that changes over time. After all, even the so-called Five Civilized Tribes who had adopted the plantation economy and African slave system from their European counterparts were themselves dispossessed and extirpated from their lands. And both freed Africans and Indigenous people fought as soldiers and scouts for the U.S. settler wars of extermination against western Indigenous nations and overseas campaigns of conquest. Despite their military service in the U.S. imperialist army, their stations within settler society have always been subordinate to white Europeans. They faced Jim Crow segregation, police violence, mass incarceration, and the continued settler occupation of Indigenous lands. We reject settler colonialism and U.S. imperialism as the means of emancipation for the working class and for colonized people.

Our communist and anti-imperialist principles to which we ascribe are as follows:

1. End the unequal relations between European and colonized nations.

2. End the violent competition between the nations of exploiters and colonizers.
3. End the plunder of the earth for profit.

Marxism is not European. Socialism is Indigenous.

Marxism is founded on the expropriated knowledges of non-capitalist Indigenous societies. Although Marx himself was wrong about many things, Marxism, as a science, has a built-in self-correcting mechanism that has helped revolutionaries throughout the world build off the political theory Marx first formulated. If this were untrue, there would be no Russian Revolution, no African Revolution and decolonization movement, no Vietnamese liberation, no Bolivarian Revolution, no Cuban Revolution, no Chinese Revolution, *etc.* Each adopted Marxism and applied it to its specific and unique circumstances by building off the long struggles against exploitation and European imperialism.

Socialism is the natural state of humanity, to live and work towards peace and justice.

Even for Indigenous peoples in the Americas, the concepts and theories of decolonization explicitly derive from Marxist revolutionary movements. It's dishonest for us to not recognize this history. It's not because of Marx or European thinkers that these revolutions were successful. It's because Marxism is the science of revolution for the poor masses, the colonized, and the wretched of the earth. Fundamentally, Marxism is the science of how to get free. It is the study of class struggle.

If capitalism upholds the systems of racism, settler colonialism, heteropa-

triarchy, and imperialism, then we cannot use capitalism to undo these systems. It's not enough to just be anti-capitalist. Like our ancestors we must be forward-thinking by drawing from and amplifying our non-capitalist social relations as Indigenous peoples, not to make Indigenous traditions relevant to Marxism or socialism but to make socialism and Marxism relevant to our struggle as Indigenous peoples.

You cannot fight fire with fire. You cannot fight capitalism with Indigenous capitalism. You cannot fight nationalism with hyper-nationalism. You can only fight fire with water. And the solution to all these ills—and it is what capitalists and colonists hate the most—is socialism. If capitalism is burning the planet, then socialism is the water to douse the flame. Water is life. We all need water to live, but we don't need capitalism.

And for us to fight colonialism, we must ensure that our nations can live. But our nationalism cannot mirror the bourgeois settler nationalism of colonial states, which is premised on exclusion and white supremacy. We adopt a revolutionary Indigenous nationalism that aligns with the most oppressed and marginalized first, within and outside our own communities. And we recognize that by organizing production—for our food, medicines, resources, *etc.*—according to need and not profit is the only possible path forward according to our traditions.

The philosophy of communism neatly lines up with the philosophy of our Indigenous ancestors. Friedrich Engels admitted as much when in the 1888 English edition of the *Communist Manifesto* he added a footnote to the famous line: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle." He clarified, "That is, all written history," making note specifically of Lewis Henry Morgan's study of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, which was a communistic, classless,

and democratic society before European invasion. Moreover, it was the relative gender equality of Indigenous societies that inspired the suffragettes—white women seeking parity with white men. The study of Indigenous societies, the inherent equality and freedom they engendered among producers and the common ownership of property and social institutions, also inspired European workers to demand eight-hour workdays and the abolition of child labor. And, in the final analysis, despite their own limited understandings, Marx and Engels, the founders of the modern communist movement, had developed theories of emancipation largely from the expropriated knowledges of Indigenous and communal people, whose examples they relied on to prove that capitalism is neither inevitable nor natural. But, in fact, communism is both natural and inevitable.

This is not to suggest Indigenous societies were utopias—no society is perfect. It is, however, important to understand that Indigenous peoples have been knocked off the path of their natural social development to live in balance and correct relations. We are not trying to recreate the past so much as steer Indigenous nations back on their communal developmental path that has been destroyed or seriously distorted by capitalist social relations.

The United States is not a “nation of immigrants” but a nation of colonizers.

Whereas contemporary racial identity politics attempts to mask or obscure class antagonisms, a class struggle that doesn’t overturn white supremacy and settler colonialism frees no one. We are not seeking parity with colonizers or further integration into a colonial system. We’re seeking to end settler and white supremacy entirely over Black, Indigenous, and colonized people. We aim to end the colonial system entirely.

Why? The United States, as a nation of European colonizers, had no feudal or communal past. Unlike other nations in history who transitioned from feudalism to capitalism, the United States was the first nation born entirely as a capitalist state. It was constructed from the ground up according to the nightmare vision of European slave owners and Indian killers—the nation’s founding bourgeois ideologies. The United States began as an oppressor nation, as a colonizer of oppressed people, and its function remains so. It not only has a capitalist ruling class, but all strata and classes of white Europeans among its ranks are encouraged to become preoccupied with the aims of the ruling class through petty racial privileges and private property ownership, the guiding stars of white settler nationalism. We reject those national and settler aspirations and ask our comrades in struggle to reject them as well.

The land where the cotton grew had to be cleared of Indigenous people and Indigenous title to make way for the plantation economy, the main driving force behind the expansion of modern capitalism. Thus, the expansion of African slavery fueled the dispossession of Indigenous peoples.

The current U.S. colonial state is not only an instrument of racial and class rule; it is also an instrument of imperialist plunder and the oppressor of nations. It thus obscures its own internal divisions of colonizer and col-

onized. The United States fabricates national myths by calling itself a “nation of immigrants” to hide its unnaturalness and crimes. Immigrants come to a land to integrate within the existing legal, social, and political orders. The first European settlers came to colonize, to destroy and replace existing Indigenous legal, social, and political orders. The United States is, therefore, more accurately described as a “nation of colonizers.” Immigrants don’t come in chains; you can’t immigrate to a land you already belong to; and refugees fleeing imperialist violence are not immigrants.

We recognize that the colonial state keeps in place irreconcilable class antagonisms, between rich and poor, between settler and Native. The state is first and foremost police and military violence. Its legitimacy is maintained by force. It’s primary function is enforcing capitalist social relations. The veneer of “representative democracy” is only possible because the ruling classes have crushed and will continue to crush any alternative to capitalism by mobilizing the police and military.

In this sense, Indigenous people are the first “Red Scare.” Because we held land in common and represented an alternative to the settler state (whether it be by taking in escaped slaves or mounting armed resistance,) we had to be annihilated. Today, because we adopt revolutionary socialism as our struggle and vision for a free society, we are the second coming of the “Red Scare.” But we are not exclusive in our struggles for freedom. We align ourselves with all colonized and oppressed people of the world. Only imperial borders and nation-states that are not of our own making divide our common humanity. Therefore, our struggle transcends the state, but we are not naive enough to turn away from the state as a site of struggle.

We understand that state power is nearly impossible to achieve, since

Indigenous peoples are a minority. Yet, in alliance with other colonized and oppressed peoples, we can take state power, not to become the new rulers of a capitalist society, but to use the mechanisms of the state to wage our rightful struggle against our class enemies—the rich. A socialist state uses the power and democracy of the masses to undo the privileges and wealth of the ruling classes and the colonial elite, even among our own people. A socialist state seeks to destroy itself because it is built in the shell of the old. But it has to be wielded by the oppressed in the service of the oppressed to achieve freedom and the abolition of the state itself, because, whether we like it or not, the state is the primary organizer of society. And through a decolonized socialist state, we will reorganize society to redistribute wealth and land by taking it back from those who stole it from us in the first place.

We recognize the fallacy that capitalists and settlers will simply give up their wealth and privilege if we win their hearts and minds. Their wealth and privilege were earned by force and it is kept in place by violence. Any challenge to that authority, whether it's democratic or "non-violent," will always be met with violence. Even the fallacy of democracy is upheld by force. A capitalist government, even if it is "democratic," will always serve the interests of the ruling classes no matter how much we reform it. As revolutionaries, our focus is not to organize and appeal to the oppressors for our rights. Our role is to organize the oppressed to build authentic democracy from the ground up. And we cannot wait for someone else to save us. Only we can save ourselves.

Marxism and socialism take up the position of the poor. That is why they are derided and hounded by the rich and powerful, because they work in the interests of the colonized and oppressed. We advocate for socialist revolution as the only means of achieving decolonization.

Indigenous liberation is the tip of the spear.

Class is fundamentally about power. The class system was imported to our lands and it upholds racism, sexism, homophobia, and settler colonialism. Indigenous nations are not immune to this system, and, in fact, have internalized it as their own. Indigenous nations face a double class oppression—first as Native people colonized by a foreign power and second as poor people. Only revolutionary socialism that seeks decolonization and the abolition of the class system can emancipate us from the ills plaguing our nations.

We are internationalists.

Only through creating a revolutionary organization can we hope to facilitate decolonization on the path towards socialism. No revolution in history ever came about spontaneously. The conditions of a rebellion (war, slavery, starvation) may have been spontaneous, but the successful defeat of the oppressors always required determined and effective organization of a disciplined and highly-trained revolutionary cadre. This is the difference between rebellion and revolution. Rebellion is a temporary protest that seeks the recognition of those in power to change their minds. Revolution seeks to build power from below and doesn't require the recognition of the rulers—but seeks to entirely replace them with people power and the organized masses. Rebellion is a nascent phase that can lead to revolution. But it is not guaranteed. Revolutionaries, however, guide rebellion to revolution. To do so requires a lifetime commitment, building the revolutionary organization which is the vehicle of democracy and struggle, and the unwavering belief that things can and will change.

The Red Nation is a multinational organization, representing many dif-

ferent Indigenous nations. Yet we recognize a common oppression, a common experience, among Native people. We are oppressed because of our Indigeness. Therefore, as our name suggests, we are seeking to unify as a nation in this hemisphere and beyond. But our nation is one in which many nations fit. We do not privilege one Indigenous experience over the other (for example, Lakota or Diné, urban or Rez, Anglo or Spanish, *etc.*). But our diversity and our plurality is our strength, not our weakness. We should actively seek to create and build alliances with non-Indigenous people and struggles but our primary struggle is dedicated to building our organization and unifying our people and nations. Only a revolutionary organization, dedicated to the principles of socialism, equality, democracy, freedom, and Indigenous liberation, is capable of doing that work. But we must submit to a collective will for liberation by abandoning bourgeois individualism and narrow nationalism.

We recognize that we cannot simply make use of the ready-made machinery of the capitalist state, and that we must work towards the abolition of the police, prison, and related systems of capitalist and colonial violence. We fight for the reorganization of the economic system according to socialist principles and the democratic control over the means of production and distribution of goods, while also not reproducing unequal colonial relations. We support the growth of workers' unions and seek to revolutionize unions towards decolonization and socialism. We reject the notion that capitalism can be administered or reformed towards more humane ends. We do, however, support policies and office-holders (even our own members if elected) that work against the interests of colonialism, capitalism, and the ruling classes, while maintaining socialist revolution as the only solution.

We encourage our membership to develop revolutionary socialism within their own nations so long as it is dedicated to the liberation of all relations. We also recognize that our traditions have been distorted as tools for oppression. If a tradition becomes a shackle, it must be broken. And while our specific nations and the lands in which we inhabit take priority for our political, cultural, and spiritual development, it should never come at the expense of others or exclude people or beings removed by force or displaced from their homelands. Therefore, the struggle of The Red Nation may take on national Indigenous characteristics depending on region and geography, but it is fundamentally dedicated to national liberation for all Indigenous peoples, which is contingent upon the liberation of everyone and the planet.

—*The Red Nation*, September 7, 2019

<https://therednation.org/2019/09/07/revolutionary-socialism-is-the-primary-political-ideology-of-the-red-nation/>

**Marxism is the
science of revolution
for the poor masses,
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Fundamentally,
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class struggle.**

Class Struggle is Still the Issue

BY ANN ROBERTSON AND BILL LEUMER

The Manifesto of the Communist Party by Marx and Engels famously begins with: “The history of all hither existing societies is the history of class struggles.” The United States is no exception, although for many decades it was depicted as a classless society. Later they add: “The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.”

One might add that the basic categories with which we formulate our ideas also come from the ruling class. If these categories are uncritically adopted, they can deflect our social reflections and blunt our criticisms.

In particular, the corporate media either avoids the concept of “class” or makes it virtually meaningless. The *New York Times* restricts “working class” to workers who lack a college education and typically perform manual work, while “middle class” designates more educated workers performing “white collar” jobs. The “middle class” is then situated between the “working class” and the rich.

But this division only obscures the deep convergence in the life experiences and interests of these workers. Those who lack higher education can make more money than those with college degrees, if they have a strong union. Many teachers with college degrees are barely scraping by. All workers share fundamental interests: the desire for job security, a comfortable wage, full healthcare benefits, a secure pension, job safety, the social benefits of education, transportation and a clean environment, and to be treated with dignity and equality. It makes much more sense to merge these groups into a single working-class category.

Not surprisingly, a term like “capitalist class” is missing in most mainstream publications. But people who own large businesses and employ

workers have their own set of common interests and are highly organized. They want to be able to layoff or fire workers easily. They want regulations on corporations reduced in order to compete effectively. They are usually anti-union because they would like to suppress wages, again for competitive reasons. The antagonistic class interests between workers and capitalists then give rise to an ongoing struggle in pursuit of their respective interests.

This inclusive definition of the working class along with the identification of the capitalist class help clarify other categories and social developments.

For example, when describing different political ideologies, the corporate media uses categories like “left,” “liberal,” or “progressive” on one end of the spectrum and “right” or “conservative” on the other end. These are multi-class categories. For example, only 26 percent of the population identifies as liberal. Many capitalists believe that the role of government should be kept to a minimum and are therefore labeled conservative, but many other capitalists believe that government can play a positive role in society by providing a social safety net. They are considered “liberal” or “progressive.” The working class is divided on questions of immigration, gun regulation, and restrictions on abortion rights.

Jeffrey Sachs, professor at Columbia University and a special adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General and certainly no Marxist, has argued liberal and conservative categories are secondary:

“The greatest problem in Washington is not polarization but lying. The legislative machinery has ground to a halt not because of the great divide between liberals and conservatives but because of the great divide between the lobbyists

and the people. The lobbyists want things that are against the public interest, and they use lies and secrecy to try to win.”

The most powerful corporations

Sachs goes on to identify the four most powerful lobbyists in Washington: big oil, Wall Street, the military-industrial complex, and big healthcare. These lobbyists, of course, represent corporate interests. And they stand in stark opposition to the interests of “the people,” who are overwhelmingly working class. In other words, Sachs is basically describing class divisions between capitalists and the working class. Without clear class definitions the class basis of this conflict is obscured.

With “class” as a fundamental analytical category, class conflict is brought into relief. In the 1930s the working class rose up and through massive demonstrations and strikes succeeded in pressuring politicians to impose restraints on their employers. By winning the right to unionize, workers were able to expand unionization until 35 percent of the workforce was covered. This was a major cause of the rising standard of living of the working class during the late 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.

However, during the 1970s the corporations launched their counter offensive. They started playing hardball with union organizing and gradually succeeded in reducing the unionized workforce to its current rate of 10.5 percent. The standard of living of the working class has experienced a steady decline.

1. Between 2003 and 2013 the net worth of the median household dropped 36 percent.
2. Between 1999 and 2014 income of the median household dropped by over \$4000 a year.
3. In 2013 labor compensation as a share of the economy dropped to its lowest point since 1948.
4. Involuntary part-time work has grown 40 percent since 2000.

5. The number of hours people in a household work has gone way up as women have entered the labor market to support their families. In 1960 slightly more than 40 percent of women between 25 and 54 were in the workforce. In 2018 the number was slightly less than 80 percent. The need for all adults in the family to work has placed significant strain on the household.
6. Traditional pensions, which are a relatively secure retirement plan, have dropped. In the past they covered almost half of the workforce. Now they cover less than one-fifth. Instead, more workers have 401k retirement plans, which usually provide less money for retirees and, because they are tied to the stock market, are not guaranteed. Hence, it is now predicted that half of California retirees will face “significant economic hardship” when they retire.
7. Inequalities in wealth have been constantly expanding. In the 1940s and ’50s, 73 percent of newly created wealth went to the bottom 90 percent of the population. Now virtually all new wealth goes to the wealthiest ten percent of the population.

While the corporate media has supplied plenty of statistics in terms of median household income and household net worth, they fail to connect the decline of the working class with class struggle. It takes someone like the billionaire Warren Buffett to bring this concept into public discourse: “There’s class warfare, all right, but it’s my class, the rich class, that’s making war, and we’re winning.”

“Is Sanders a socialist?”

Because the corporate media has slashed the definition of the working class, the term “socialist” has been rendered almost meaningless. These media giants typically label Bernie Sanders a socialist. Even genuinely socialist orga-

nizations such as the Democratic Socialists of America embrace Bernie Sanders as one of their own and refer to him as a socialist. But Bernie Sanders emphatically repudiates social ownership of the means of production.

Here is how he describes his politics:

“The right to quality healthcare, the right to as much education as one needs to succeed in our society, the right to a good job that pays a living wage, the right to affordable housing, the right to a secure retirement, and the right to live in a clean environment.” “That,” he continued, “is what I mean by democratic socialism.”

“So the next time you hear me attacked as a socialist, remember this, I don’t believe the government should own the means of production, but I do believe that the middle class and the working families who produce the wealth of America deserve a fair deal. I believe in private companies that thrive and invest and grow in America instead of shipping jobs and profits overseas.”

For Sanders, socialism is little more than a New Deal program. But somehow this qualifies as socialism.

The classic Marxist definition of socialism includes as an essential component the socialization of the means of production. If large corporations are allowed to persist, the working class will be unable to democratically run the economy. Workers will still take orders at work. Corporations will have the power to impose their will on the political process with their abundant financial resources. Even if corporations are broken up and downsized, the laws of capitalism with its winner-take-all competition will eventually result in the reappearance of large corporations. Competition means the winners grow by devouring the losers.

Instead of labeling Bernie Sanders a socialist, it would be much more accurate to define him as a “progressive capitalist,” where “progressive” means wanting to introduce reforms that will

help the working class within the bounds of capitalism.

Lacking a clear class analysis and an appreciation for the class struggle that has resulted in the decline in the standard of living of the working class, Bernie Sanders's role in the rise of "socialism" has been greatly exaggerated. Some have credited Sanders alone for the astronomical growth of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). Others have gone so far as to credit Sanders for the wave of teacher strikes.

But while Sanders might have played the role of a catalyst in the DSA growth, he is not the cause. Instead, the looming environmental catastrophe which capitalist politicians refuse to abate, students graduating deeply in debt, the high cost of housing in major U.S. cities, steadily rising healthcare costs, and the long-standing decline in the standard of living of the working class have led the youth to question the merits of capitalism.

The declining teacher salaries that have forced teachers to take on second jobs is the major factor driving teachers out of the classroom and onto the picket line, not Bernie Sanders. Sanders' growing popularity itself is the result of these economic developments.

The Democratic Party

Without a clear class perspective, socialists can also be led to believe that working within the Democratic Party will secure important gains for the working class. Although the Democratic Party is sometimes called a "friend of labor" and unions have given Democrats generous contributions in an attempt to buy favors, it is a capitalist party both in form and content. Its program embraces capitalism.

As for its structure, it is not a membership party where the rank and file are the highest governing body. Rather, it operates as a collection of atomized individuals who often act in isolation from one another and sometimes in competition with one another. The

decision to run for office is made by the isolated individual. Democrats who are financially wealthy have an advantage when running for office, and if they win, they become part of the Democratic Party leadership. In essence, the party's structure mirrors the social relations engendered by capitalism. It is top-down and individualistic. But workers derive their power from collective action where policies are determined by a democratic vote and where everyone has an equal voice. The Democratic Party excludes this form of activism, and Sanders' campaign is no different.

The Democratic Party can brag that it is the lesser evil when compared with the Republican Party. But the results of the working class relying on the Democratic Party have been disastrous: The standard of living of the working class has been in a steady decline whether the Democrats or the Republicans hold the reins of government. And this should come as no surprise. After all, the objective role of the Democratic Party is to politically disarm the working class and keep it disorganized.

Even Robert Reich, life-long Democrat and Secretary of Labor under Bill Clinton, described the Democratic Party in these terms (in November 2016):

"It was the Democrats' embrace of neoliberalism that won it for Trump."

"Democrats have occupied the White House for 16 of the last 24 years, and for four of those years had control of both houses of Congress. But in that time they failed to reverse the decline in working-class wages and economic security..."

"They stood by as corporations hammered trade unions, the backbone of the white working class—failing to reform labor laws to impose meaningful penalties on companies that violate them, or help workers form unions with simple up-or-down votes."

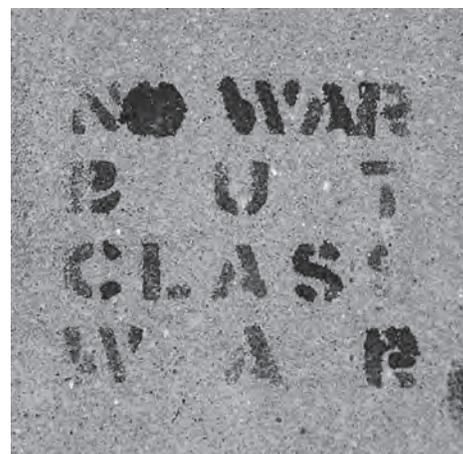
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez ran on the Democratic Party ballot line in New

York with politics that did not exceed reforming capitalism. But she made it clear she was a member of DSA. When she won, the DSA membership shot way up. Accordingly, many in DSA have concluded that the road to socialism lies in the ballot box, even using the Democratic Party ballot line.

Reforms to capitalism can be achieved incrementally, but they are always tenuous. They exist only until the capitalist class decides to mount a counter offensive. However, the abolition of capitalism and its replacement with socialism require a complete break and a seismic overturn. The working class must see its interests as directly opposed to those of the capitalist class. It must overthrow the capitalist class, take control of the state, transform it into an instrument that functions democratically, and then proceed to construct a new society that operates in the interests of the vast majority. As Marx and Engels insisted: "The emancipation of the working class must be achieved by the working class itself." Working within the Democratic Party and electing candidates who are content with reforming capitalism will only create barriers to building socialism.

—CounterPunch, October 14, 2019

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2019/10/14/class-struggle-is-still-the-issue/>



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How the U.S. Military Undermines the U.S. Economy (An Excerpt)

By DAVID ROSEN

Military spending for the period October 1, 2019, through September 30, 2020, is at \$989 billion and covers the Department of Defense, veterans' benefits, international military assistance, nuclear weapons spending and military intelligence.

A 2018 Congressional Research Service (CRS) report notes that the "intelligence community" consisted of 17 components and its influence "is significant."

In fiscal year FY2017 alone, the aggregate amount (base and supplemental) of appropriated funds for national and military intelligence programs totaled \$73.0 billion (\$54.6 billion for the NIP [National Intelligence Program], and \$18.4 billion for the MIP [Military Intelligence Program]). For FY2018, the aggregate amount of appropriations requested for national and military intelligence programs totaled \$78.4 billion (\$57.7 billion for the NIP and \$20.7 billion for the MIP).

The CRS notes, "there are four defense NIP programs, eight non-defense NIP programs, and ten MIP programs. Six U.S. intelligence community (IC) components have both MIP and NIP funding sources."

Perhaps more alarming, a 2017 *New York Times* story drew attention to the influence of this taxpayer-funded and highly profitable enterprise. "Roughly ten percent of the \$2.2 trillion in factory output in the United States goes into the production of weapons sold mainly to the Defense Department for use by the armed forces."

Drawing upon data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the *Times* reminds readers that "public money flows to factory owners in many ways—often as a result of the frequent bidding by municipal governments to persuade a manufacturer to locate a factory in one community rather than another. ...That

outlay of taxpayer money is concentrated in eight sectors of manufacturing, including ammunition, aircraft, guided missiles, shipbuilding and armored vehicles." It states: "To put the matter graphically, factories in the United States churn out one rifle barrel for every nine auto fenders."

"Roughly ten percent of the \$2.2 trillion in factory output in the United States goes into the production of weapons sold mainly to the Defense Department for use by the armed forces."

The online journal, *24/7 Wall St.* identifies the following top five military-funded corporations for 2017:

Lockheed Martin—it received \$50.7 billion of its total

\$51.05 billion revenue; it supplies military aircraft, missiles, drones, fire control systems, helicopters, ships and space systems.

Boeing Co.—it received \$23.36 billion of its total \$93.39 billion revenue; it supplies the KC-46A tanker, the F/A-18 Super Hornet and Apache combat helicopter.

General Dynamics Corp—it received \$15.34 billion of its total \$30.97 billion revenue; it supplies Abrams main battle tank and information systems and technology.

Raytheon Company—it received \$14.66 billion of its total \$25.35 billion revenue; it supplies missile systems, radar, sensor and guidance systems as well as cybersecurity technology.

Northrop Grumman Corp.—it received \$11.19 billion of its total \$25.80 billion revenue; it operates in three main divisions: aerospace systems, mission system and technology services and supplies control systems for the F/A 18 (as a partner with Boeing), the B-2 bomber and the A-10 Warthog."



Photograph Source: Danny Myers, U.S. Air Force photo – Public Domain

Insight into the top five intelligence-complex corporations is provided by financial data for 2017 from DataLab (with detailed breakdown per agency/function) and a 2016 analysis by *The Nation*:

“Leidos Holdings—total contacts for \$1.68 billion with military and NSA for Leidos Innovations Corp. and Leidos Management Systems; merged with Lockheed Martin’s Information Systems and Global Solutions division of, the global military giant.

“Booz Allen Hamilton—total contacts for \$4.24 billion; it is partly owned by the Carlyle Group and Booz personnel ‘rapidly track high-value individuals’ targeted by the U.S. military in a system now ‘deployed, and fully operational in Afghanistan.’

“CSRA—total contacts for \$1.4 billion; its CSRA Information Service unit has a \$10.4 million contract with the Army and—following a merger between CSC (which develops and manages the NSA’s classified internal-communications system) and SRA International (involved in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance has close ties to the Air Force.

“SAIC (Science Applications International Corporation)—total contacts for \$3.6 billion with \$906.5 million for the Army, \$735.5 million for the Navy, \$263.4 million for the Air Force, \$94 million for the Defense Department and \$547.8 million for Defense Logistics; recently acquired Scitor that manages satellites for the NSA and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA).

“CACI—total contacts for \$670.5 million; with \$508.3 for the Army, \$116.2 million for the Navy and other funding under different corporate names (e.g., CACI Federal, CACI Information Systems, CACI NSS, etc.) and recently acquired two companies doing extensive work for the NSA and the CIA: National Security Solutions (bought from L-3 Communications) and Six3 Intelligence Solutions.”

David Rosen is the author of Sex, Sin and Subversion: The Transformation of 1950s New York’s Forbidden into America’s New Normal (Skyhorse, 2015).

—*CounterPunch*, October 4, 2019

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2019/10/04/how-the-u-s-military-undermines-the-american-economy/>

Encryption and Privacy

BY EDWARD SNOWDEN

The U.S., UK and Australia are taking on *Facebook* in a bid to undermine the only method that protects our personal information.

In every country of the world, the security of computers keeps the lights on, the shelves stocked, the dams closed, and transportation running. For more than half-a-decade, the vulnerability of our computers and computer networks has been ranked the number one risk in the U.S. Intelligence Community’s Worldwide Threat Assessment—that’s higher than terrorism, higher than war. Your bank balance, the local hospital’s equipment, and the 2020 U.S. presidential election, among many, many other things, all depend on computer safety.

And yet, in the midst of the greatest computer security crisis in history, the U.S. government, along with the governments of the UK and Australia, is attempting to undermine the only method that currently exists for reliably

protecting the world’s information: encryption. Should they succeed in their quest to undermine encryption, our public infrastructure and private lives will be rendered permanently unsafe.

In the simplest terms, encryption is a method of protecting information, the primary way to keep digital communications safe. Every email you write, every keyword you type into a search box—every embarrassing thing you do online—is transmitted across an increasingly hostile Internet. Earlier this month the U.S., alongside the UK and Australia, called on *Facebook* to create a “backdoor,” or fatal flaw, into its encrypted messaging applications, which would allow anyone with the key to that backdoor unlimited access to private communications. So far, Facebook has resisted this.

If Internet traffic is unencrypted, any government, company, or criminal that happens to notice it can—and, in fact, does—steal a copy of it, secretly

recording your information forever. If, however, you encrypt this traffic, your information cannot be read: only those who have a special decryption key can unlock it.

I know a little about this, because for a time I operated part of the U.S. National Security Agency’s global system of mass surveillance. In June 2013 I worked with journalists to reveal that system to a scandalized world. Without encryption I could not have written the story of how it all happened—my book *Permanent Record*—and got the manuscript safely across borders that I myself can’t cross. More importantly, encryption helps everyone from reporters, dissidents, activists, Non Governmental Organization (NGO) workers and whistleblowers, to doctors, lawyers and politicians, to do their work—not just in the world’s most dangerous and repressive countries, but in every single country.

When I came forward in 2013, the U.S. government wasn’t just passively

surveilling Internet traffic as it crossed the network, but had also found ways to co-opt and, at times, infiltrate the internal networks of major American tech companies. At the time, only a small fraction of web traffic was encrypted: six years later, *Facebook*, Google and Apple have made encryption-by-default a central part of their products, with the result that today close to 80 percent of web traffic is encrypted. Even the former director of U.S. national intelligence, James Clapper, credits the revelation of mass surveillance with significantly advancing the commercial adoption of encryption. The Internet is more secure as a result. Too secure, in the opinion of some governments.

Donald Trump's attorney general, William Barr, who authorized one of the earliest mass surveillance programs without reviewing whether it was legal, is now signaling an intention to halt—or even roll back—the progress of the last six years. WhatsApp, the messaging service owned by *Facebook*, already uses end-to-end encryption (E2EE): in March the company announced its intention to incorporate E2EE into its other messaging apps—Facebook Messenger and Instagram—as well. Now Barr is launching a public campaign to prevent *Facebook* from climbing this next rung on the ladder of digital security. This began with an open letter co-signed by Barr, UK home secretary Priti Patel, Australia's minister for home affairs and the U.S. secretary of homeland security, demanding *Facebook* abandon its encryption proposals.

If Barr's campaign is successful, the communications of billions will remain frozen in a state of permanent insecurity: users will be vulnerable by design. And those communications will be vulnerable not only to investigators in the U.S., UK and Australia, but also to the intelligence agencies of China, Russia and Saudi Arabia—not to mention hackers around the world.

End-to-end encrypted communication systems are designed so that messages can be read only by the sender and their intended recipients, even if the encrypted—meaning locked—messages themselves are stored by an untrusted third party, for example, a social media company such as *Facebook*.

The true explanation for why the U.S., UK and Australian governments want to do away with end-to-end encryption is less about public safety than it is about power

The central improvement E2EE provides over older security systems is in ensuring the keys that unlock any given message are only ever stored on the specific devices at the end-points of a communication—for example the phones of the sender or receiver of the message—rather than the middlemen who own the various Internet platforms enabling it. Since E2EE keys aren't held by these intermediary service providers, they can no longer be stolen in the event of the massive corporate data breaches that are so common today, providing an essential security benefit. In short, E2EE enables companies such as *Facebook*, Google or Apple to protect their users from their scrutiny: by ensuring they no longer hold the keys to our most private conversations, these corporations become less of an all-seeing eye than a blindfolded courier.

It is striking that when a company as potentially dangerous as *Facebook* appears to be at least publicly willing to implement technology that makes users safer by limiting its own power, it is the U.S. government that cries foul. This is because the government would suddenly become less able to treat *Facebook* as a convenient trove of private lives.

To justify its opposition to encryption, the U.S. government has, as is traditional, invoked the specter of the web's darkest forces. Without total access to the complete history of every person's activity on *Facebook*, the government claims it would be unable to investigate terrorists, drug dealers, money launderers and the perpetrators of child abuse—bad actors who, in reality, prefer not to plan their crimes on public platforms, especially not on U.S.-based ones that employ some of the most sophisticated automatic filters and reporting methods available.

The true explanation for why the U.S., UK and Australian governments want to do away with end-to-end encryption is less about public safety than it is about power: E2EE gives control to individuals and the devices they use to send, receive and encrypt communications, not to the companies and carriers that route them. This, then, would require government surveillance to become more targeted and methodical, rather than indiscriminate and universal.

What this shift jeopardizes is strictly nations' ability to spy on populations at mass scale, at least in a manner that requires little more than paperwork. By limiting the amount of personal records and intensely private communications held by companies, governments are returning to classic methods of investigation that are both effective and rights-respecting, in lieu of total surveillance. In this outcome we remain not only safe, but free.

Edward Snowden is former CIA officer and whistleblower, and author of Permanent Record. He is president of the board of directors of the Freedom of the Press Foundation.

—*The Guardian*, October 15, 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/oct/15/encryption-lose-privacy-us-uk-australia-facebook>

Why I'm Voting No on UAW's Deal With GM

A "third-tier" worker speaks

BY MINDY ISSER

After 33 days on strike, the leadership at the United Automobile Workers (UAW) has negotiated a tentative agreement with General Motors (GM). Nearly 49,000 UAW members—concentrated mostly in the Midwest, with a few plants scattered in the South and Northeast—will stay out until their contract is ratified. And although union leadership has encouraged the rank and file to ratify the contract, many workers are unhappy with the highlights of the proposed deal. Numerous workers at the General Motors plant in Langhorne, Pennsylvania, tell In These Times that local union leaders are travelling to Buffalo, New York today, to read the full tentative agreement. Members have until October 25 to vote the contract in or to send the bargaining committee back to the table.

There are many important issues facing UAW members and leadership during this contract fight. The leadership is under a watchful eye by both its members and the media, thanks to multiple corruption scandals. But workers themselves are concerned about a myriad of issues: health insurance, giving temporary workers a path to become permanent, closing the gaps between different tiers of workers, and keeping GM plants in the United States. This tentative agreement does not appear to solve many of these problems—and, in fact, allows the closure of three plants.

In These Times spoke with Raina Shoemaker, a GM employee and a UAW member at a facility in Langhorne, Pennsylvania.

Mindy Isser: Tell me what you do, and how long you've been at General Motors.

Raina Shoemaker: I work in the GM Customer Care and Aftersales (CCA) facility, where we distribute parts to all of the different dealers. I'm in the Philadelphia one that's on the East Coast.

What I do is I pick parts, fill orders, and then they get shipped out. I've been at GM for four-and-a-half years.

Mindy Isser: What's your reaction to the tentative agreement?

Raina Shoemaker: Well, the agreement doesn't bring all of the temps onto immediate hiring stage: I would like to see temps become permanent with this new contract. If you've made your 90 days, you should be brought on permanent. That's what we wanted with this contract. GM has increased some time off for temps, but not nearly enough, I don't think. Because it's such a physical job that we have, our bodies break down. So you need that time off, and we cherish that time off, because we need that time to rest our bodies. So I think it's lousy for the temporary employees.

Mindy Isser: What about for you? You are a tier-two worker, right? Could you explain what being a tier-two worker and what a tier-three worker means?

Raina Shoemaker: Under the new contract, in the manufacturing plants where they make the automobiles, they are all on the same payscale. For your first year, you're paid \$17 an hour. But four years later, you'll be at \$32.32. Everyone in the manufacturing plant gets to that maximum wage. In the GM Components Holdings plants, where they make certain parts, they are all on the same payscale, but that payscale is lower. You only max at \$22.50 after eight years there, which I think is just wrong.

At the CCA, where I am, there are multiple pay scales. The top scale people, which we call tier one, they've been there forever. They have pensions. They max out at \$31.57. With this new contract, the scale below them, which we call tier two, they max out at around the same pay. But they don't get a pension—that's the big difference between them now.

You can consider me tier three, which they call "in progression." It takes me eight years to max out, and my max rate is \$25. But we are in the same building, doing the exact same work. At these other buildings, they're all in the same building, doing the same work, with the same pay scale. But not here. There are different pay scales that go all the way down to the temps, and if you take them all, there are four tiers. We're still not considered one whole union, like we're not all equal.

It's just not a good contract. You can say you want the ratification bonus, yeah, they're giving us \$11,000, they're giving the temps \$4,500, just to sign the contract. That's a one-time deal. That's just not good enough. I don't even want to look at that. If you take that out of the equation, the rest of the contract is lousy.

Mindy Isser: Do you think your coworkers feel the same?

Raina Shoemaker: I think a lot of them do, yes. And you know, they're not even bringing back any of the jobs from the facilities that they're closing. Those plants are done. So we didn't even get job security because of that. So I hope every one of those workers from Lordstown and some of the other plants, I hope every one of them says no to this contract. Because we're going to need numbers.

The only plants that look really good right now are the manufacturing plants, some of the facilities that build the cars. They have a pretty good deal there. But the problem with that is they're gonna all vote yes.

But GM, their future is to not manufacture anything in this country. They're on their way to just take everything across the borders. And the only

thing that will be left for GM in the future is the parts division that I'm in. Because you need to be able to get the parts to warehouses and then distribute them. But do I see manufacturing sticking around at all? Not the way that GM is going. They just want to keep throwing things into every other country, Mexico especially. They want to pay their people \$3 an hour. They don't care. An American company should really be an American company. And when you're putting things everywhere else but America, then I don't look at you as an American company anymore.

Mindy Isser: You said that your plant would be safe in the United States. Why do you care about the other workers across the country? Is it just because you think an American company should be an American company and work in the United States, or is it something bigger, like you're concerned about the other members of your union?

Raina Shoemaker: I'm totally concerned about the other members of the union. They're families. GM is playing with their lives. They've broken down their bodies for 30-plus years, many people, for that company. And then GM turns around and doesn't care. GM just looks the other way. People need these jobs! This country is going in the wrong direction, it's not even funny. And it's not just GM, it's other big corporations. They're just leaving. They don't even care. The middle class is just getting smaller and smaller and smaller. And poverty is just getting worse.

Mindy Isser: Do you think this contract will be ratified?

Raina Shoemaker: I hope not. But I don't know the numbers. Anyone in a CCA I think will vote no. Any of the manufacturing plants that are closing, I think they're all going to vote no. I don't know if we got the numbers. I hope we do vote no. Because this is a lousy contract.

Mindy Isser: What were your hopes for this contract?

Raina Shoemaker: Considering I'm in the third tier, my hopes were to at least be brought up to the second tier. That was my hope: to bring people more equal. More as one, the whole union. And it's just not. They did a little bit better for the temps, I'm not gonna say that they didn't. But did I think they did enough? For everything that we've done, being out there for five weeks? No. They shouldn't even have brought this to the table, to be honest with you. I think it's an insult. I do.

Mindy Isser: What are the next steps for the union?

Raina Shoemaker: Local elected leadership is going to Buffalo to hear everything, to be told why this is such a great deal. And then it'll be brought to us, the membership, and then I guess we're going to be told why this is such a great deal. I'm not drinking the Kool-Aid, sorry. And I hope none of us drink the Kool-Aid. We need this vote to be exactly the way we need to vote, and that's no.

Mindy Isser: Any big takeaways from this strike?

Raina Shoemaker: My big takeaway is what we feel amongst each other: the unity. But we don't feel the unity from the higher up union officials. I just feel like they're not fighting enough. I don't know what the other side is saying. I'm not in that room with General Motors. They've got multi-billions-of-dollars, so are they willing to lose another two billion? Probably, because it's like chump change to them, they can do it. They've got that much money. And do they care that they hurt us as we sit on that picket line? No, they really don't.

And obviously they don't care too much about their dealerships, because the dealers are really hurting at this point. And that's their customer. I don't get it.

It breaks my heart that big companies really don't care about anything

except the bottom line. They don't care about people.

Mindy Isser: Is this your first strike? What did you think about going out on strike for the first time? Did you have any fears about it?

Raina Shoemaker: I didn't have any fears about it. I thought it was definitely about time, because I know what we endure every day in that facility. I know how bad our bodies break down. I know that we deserve to be paid for. Especially the ones that are in the tier that I'm in. I know we needed to keep our healthcare good. A lot of us get hurt. We're constantly twisting, bending, turning, walking eight to ten miles a day on a floor that's stronger than concrete. It really breaks your body down. I really think that this was time. Because they don't see it.

Our supervisors in our facility, the ones that are now doing our jobs, have actually voiced to me that they want us to come back so bad. One of our supervisors said, "I hope you get everything you're asking for." That's huge, for someone like that—a supervisor who supervises us every day—to say, "I hope you get everything you're asking for." Because they've endured for five weeks, a small five weeks, what we do, and have been doing, for multiple years.

Mindy Isser: Back to the big takeaways from the strike, a lot has been written about community support. Do you think it's helped keep morale high?

Raina Shoemaker: We've gotten huge community support that we are so thankful for, especially from Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), which you know a lot about. Unbelievable. Our hearts are so warmed from the community and all the other unions and DSA. We can't say enough: thank you. I wish we could do other than just say thank you. It's just overwhelming. And everybody feels the same way, we all talk about it. That's one of our main things: We

can't believe the support we've gotten. Everyone is supporting us except GM.

Mindy Isser: Why do you think everyone is supporting you so much?

Raina Shoemaker: Because I think we have so many middle class, hard-working people that feel like they're being treated unfairly in their own jobs, whether it's union workers or non-union workers. They just feel that it's getting so hard out there, and the owners of these companies, and the greed—it's just so big in today's time. They don't care. People just don't care. All they care about is money.

Mindy Isser: Any final thoughts to share?

Raina Shoemaker: I'm going to give final thoughts to anyone who feels like they're being treated unfairly at work. They need to fight for themselves. Whatever it takes.

—*In These Times*, October 18, 2019

<https://inthesetimes.com/working/entry/22126/uaw-gm-tentative-agreement-labor-unions-third-tier-worker-strike>

Editor's Note: November 4, 2019—After five weeks on strike, a majority of UAW members voted for a contract that retains the tiered workforce they fought against—but that doesn't mean the struggle is over.

Our Trip to El Paso and Casa Del Refugiado

BY CAROLE SELIGMAN

October 5-13, 2019—My sister Wendy and I joined a group of 12 volunteers organized by social justice advocates at St. Agnes Catholic Church in San Francisco to travel to the border between El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. We volunteered at a shelter—Casa del Refugiado (CDR)—organized by Annunciation House, a social service program for immigrants fleeing countries where they and their children are endangered by the extreme violence of the drug cartels and the armed forces of these countries—also exploitation and extortion by gangs, and lack of work opportunities.

El Paso and Ciudad Juarez are actually one big city—a rich one and a poor one—in two separate countries divided by the Rio Grande, which under the bridges connecting the two cities, the river runs in narrow culverts and is brown. Walls enclosing the river are painted with huge murals, many expressing ideas of resistance to injustice.

The San Francisco volunteers worked at CDR for a week doing the tasks required to support the migrants—the guests—for the brief intervals between their incarceration in Federal detention centers and their travels to sponsors, mostly family members, all over the U.S. The detention centers are infamous for their mistreatment of the migrant families: not providing decent food, keeping the temperatures very cold, not providing for healthcare needs, not providing showers, soap, toothpaste, etc.

On the other hand, the shelter organized by Annunciation House, provided three meals a day, cots, blankets, clean clothing, showers, toilets, a well-equipped play room for the children, a clinic staffed with nurse practitioners and physician assistants, a center to prepare sandwiches and travel bags for

the travelers, and a chapel. The volunteers, many who spoke Spanish, organized all these things, most important, connecting the immigrant guests to their sponsors in the U.S. and transporting the immigrants to the bus stations or airports for their transportation to places all over the U.S. Our neighbor, Mike, a competent Spanish speaker, drove people to their transportation several times every day. While we were at CDR people headed off to Philadelphia, Chicago, Northern Minnesota, North Carolina, Tennessee, San Antonio, Dallas, Houston, and San Jose, San Francisco, Vallejo, Stockton, Los Angeles and other California cities. (This is not an all-inclusive list.)

Our group arrived in El Paso just after President Trump had announced new draconian measures to halt immigrants from Central America. The numbers of immigrants released from detention was much smaller than the numbers last spring when we signed up to go to El Paso. Not many were from Central America—El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras. Most were from Mexico and Brazil.

Spanish speakers in our group helped on intake—welcoming the guests, getting the information needed to connect with their sponsors, showing where all the facilities were located, and transporting them to bus stations and airports.

Note from Michael:

“I counted that I had contact—*via* intake interview, longer interviews, and trips to bus stations and airport—with 25 families...five of them were from Central America (Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador)—one from Cuba.

“Trump made an agreement with the president of Mexico (AMLO)—in exchange for trade and tariff concessions—called the Migrant Protection Protocols

(MPP), a program commonly known as 'Remain in Mexico.' Under MPP, some of the migrants crossing the border to request asylum in the U.S. are sent back to Mexico to wait for their day in U.S. immigration court. Most are from Central America. The majority of Mexicans passing through the CDR came from Michoacan and Zacatecas—cartel strongholds.”

I and other non-Spanish speakers did mountains of laundry, cleaning tasks (my sister and I washed all the Legos and other toys in the playroom,) served meals, made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, packed travel bags, organized boxes of different sizes of diapers, packed infant formula and baby wipes, distributed clothing in a well organized clothing room with men’s, women’s, children’s, teens’, and baby clothing organized by type and size (where families could select sets of clothing and pick up warm jackets especially for those traveling North.) Some in our group had the difficult cleaning job of washing many, many cots and carrying them to dry.

At meal times we got to visit with the guests and learn about their experiences if they wanted to tell us. This was often sad and outrageous. One Brazilian family explained that the food they were provided in detention was cookies and chips. More than one family released to the shelter had been separated from an 18-year-old daughter who was kept in detention, considered an adult. One woman in her 80s was alone; her daughter was still in detention. One very elderly man was in a wheelchair. Grandchildren were caring for him. Many, many incidents were heart breaking. This is probably what made many of us more tired than the strenuous physical work. But, it felt good to be of use to people in such desperate straits.

Eight of our San Francisco delegation had the amazing experience of visiting Casa Tabor in Ciudad Juarez on our day off from CDR. There we met with Father

Peter Hinde, 96-years-old! and Sr. Betty Campbell, 85-years-old. These wonderful friends asked us about ourselves and told us about their mission in Juarez. As Father Peter explains in an excellent interview on YouTube (to see it look up Casa Tabor) their role is as “reverse missionaries”—bringing the truth about Latin America, and how U.S. imperialism is largely responsible for the calamities there, to the people of North America—us. They told us about the *maquilas* in Northern Mexico and the huge differential in wages paid by U.S. companies to Mexican workers and U.S. workers. Sr. Betty told us about organizing women to take on the huge explosion of violence against women in Juarez and about the self-organization of women in their neighborhood and beyond. Father Peter and Sr. Betty have the beautiful idea of not presenting themselves as leaders of the struggles of migrants, but as people who accompany those who struggle for justice. That seems to me to be a most worthy way to be. They consciously try to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ in this respect.

While we were in Juarez, we caught a glimpse of the families waiting in the street, some with tents, children sitting on the curb, waiting for their turn to cross the bridge into El Paso to apply for

asylum. (What an outrage for people to have to wait for weeks in the street to ask for asylum. Requesting asylum is an international human right!)

As an atheist and a Jew, I must say that I was very happy to learn about the many Catholics who were devoted to the cause of the migrants. I have nothing but respect for people who try to put the ideals of their faith in action. Many, I think most, of the volunteers at Annunciation House and its projects and shelters, are Catholics, although we met Christians of other denominations, Jews, and non-religious people like my sister and I. Most of the people we met had, like us, been horrified by the words and actions of the U.S. government, led by President Trump, against immigrants, and wanted to actively oppose the xenophobia. All religions that we know of have the principle of welcoming the stranger, and this teaching is so actively violated by the government. We met really wonderful people—both guests, volunteers, volunteer leaders who organized us for the necessary tasks.

Meeting the wonderful people we met helps to restore my faith in humanity, although that faith is surely challenged by the people in the government and their cruel racist actions.



LGBTQ Rights and the Supreme Court

BY JAMES ESSEKS

October 8, 2019—Today, the Supreme Court will hear arguments in three cases in which the Trump administration is urging the court to rule that it's legal to fire workers for being LGBTQ.

For the LGBTQ civil rights movement, this is a big moment. These cases will affect more people than the Supreme Court's decision about the freedom to marry, and they potentially implicate a broader range of contexts in which LGBTQ people may face harm, if the Court green-lights discrimination. Worse still, a bad ruling would strip away protections against discrimination that LGBTQ people have been able to use to protect themselves for two decades—and all this in a context where nearly-one-in three transgender people has experienced discrimination in the workplace.

In short, the stakes are very high.

One of the cases is about the rights of transgender people and involves Aimee Stephens, who worked for nearly six years as a funeral director

at a funeral home near Detroit. Earlier in her life, Aimee had considered going into the ministry, but then found her calling in funeral services, where she could help comfort people in a time of great need. Her employer knew her as a man, but Aimee knew from five years old that she was female. After decades of hiding who she really was, Aimee could bear it no more, realizing that the only way to live was as her true self. She gathered the strength to come out to her family, friends, and co-workers as a woman. When she introduced herself as Aimee to her boss, he fired her. He made no pretense about any performance reason; he openly admitted that it was because she is transgender, saying, "this isn't going to work out."

The other two cases both involve men who were fired because they are gay. In one case, Gerald Bostock was fired from his job as a social worker for at-risk youth after his employer found out he was gay. The third case involves Don Zarda, who worked as an instructor for a skydiving outfit on Long Island,

New York. Don had become hooked on skydiving years earlier, and it evolved from being his passion to being his profession as well. He loved introducing others to the sport. Don often took customers on tandem jumps, where they are strapped to him shoulder-to-shoulder and hip-to-hip before they jump from the plane. One day, Don told a female customer that he was gay in an effort to make her less uncomfortable with how close they were physically. He thought nothing of the remark, but his boss later fired him for sharing "inappropriate information" with a customer.

When Don called his sister Melissa to tell her he'd been fired, her first reaction was surprise and disbelief. "It's not legal to fire you because you're gay," she told him. And she's right. Lower courts in both Don's and Aimee's cases ruled that their firings violate federal civil rights law, because the employers treated them differently because of their sex. After all, the courts reasoned, if Aimee had been assigned a female sex at birth, her employer would not have fired her for being and living as the woman she is. And if Don had been a woman attracted to men, as opposed to a man attracted to men, he would not have been fired for sharing that information with a customer.

Big picture: it's hard to see how firing someone for being LGBTQ doesn't involve the person's sex. You can't even describe being trans or gay without talking about the individuals' sex. At its core, the federal ban on sex discrimination is simple: workers are not supposed to be treated differently because of their sex.

There is an enormous amount at stake in these cases. LGBTQ people could lose protections against discrimination that they have relied on in many cases for two decades. Going



Women's March in Toronto January 21, 2017. Shutterstock

back to 2000, federal appeals courts have ruled that anti-trans discrimination is a form of sex discrimination that violates federal law, providing a remedy for trans workers fired for who they are. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, tasked with enforcing the federal workplace non-discrimination law, agrees that anti-LGBTQ discrimination is a form of sex discrimination, and has recovered millions of dollars for LGBTQ workers who sued over discrimination.

And a decision in these cases could affect LGBTQ people in contexts well beyond just the workplace. LGBTQ people have relied on federal protections against sex discrimination to redress housing discrimination, to combat discrimination in schools, and to remedy discrimination in healthcare. All of these protections could be swept away if the court deletes LGBTQ people from the existing scope of the federal civil rights laws.

A ruling in these cases could affect non-LGBTQ people as well. A crucial Supreme Court precedent for Aimee and Don's cases is that of Ann Hopkins. As an employee at accounting firm Price Waterhouse, Hopkins was passed over for partner and told she could increase her chances if she would "walk more femininely, talk more femininely, dress more femininely, wear make-up, have her hair styled, and wear jewelry." The Supreme Court ruled that requiring her to conform to stereotypes associated with being a woman demonstrated sex discrimination.

Many federal courts have concluded that firing LGBTQ people because we don't meet employers' stereotypes of how women and men should act, identify, and appear is just as much sex discrimination as passing over Ann Hopkins because she was considered "macho."

But if the Supreme Court says in Aimee's and Don's cases that this rea-

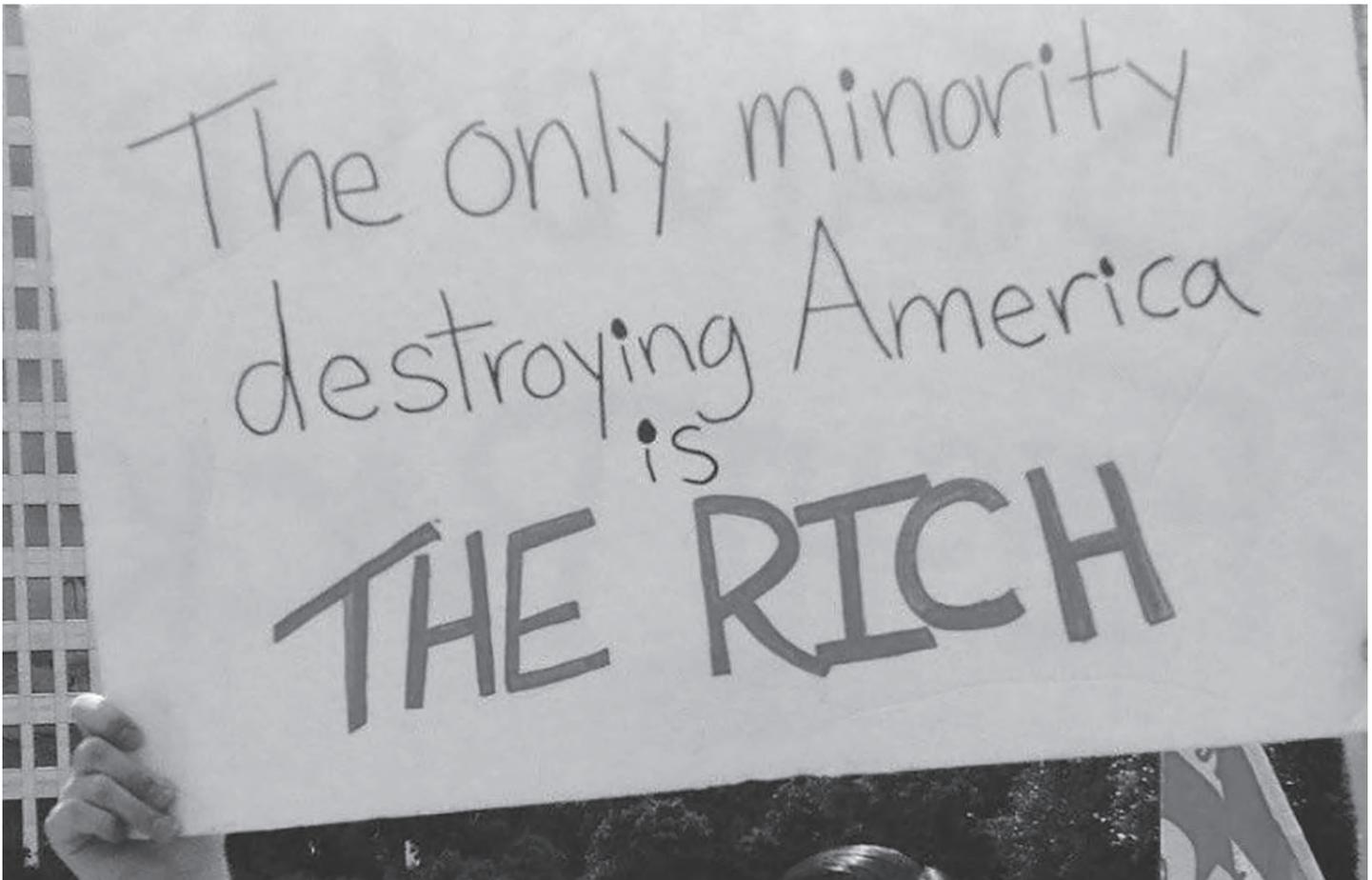
soning doesn't apply to LGBTQ people, that could spell trouble for everyone. We could return to a world where employers can fire anyone—straight or gay, transgender or not—for not being the "right kind" of woman or man. Scary stuff.

The ACLU is proud to represent Aimee and Don, and to fight alongside Gerald, as we urge the Supreme Court not to roll back the rights of LGBTQ people and not to eviscerate sex discrimination protections for everyone else in the process.

James D. Esseks is Director of the ACLU Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and AIDS Project.

—*Common Dreams*, October 8, 2019

<https://www.commondreams.org/views/2019/10/08/what-you-need-know-about-todays-lgbtq-rights-arguments-scotus?cd->



Freedom, Liberty and the Pursuit of Profits

From popcorn lung to vaping lung—the systemic criminal negligence of America Inc.

BY DR. NAYVIN GORDON

Imagine being trapped in an endless nightmare where corporations are free to sell you products known to be deadly. You buy a blood thinner your doctor ordered that can cause you to hemorrhage to death because there is no antidote. The breast implant you just received has been known to cause cancer. Finally you are encouraged to buy e-cigarettes that are laced with known toxins that can destroy your lungs. Welcome to America Inc.

In 2002—A deadly lung condition was reported in microwave popcorn plant workers in Missouri who had been inhaling the butter flavoring vapors while working. The potential toxicity of the vapors had been known since 1986.¹ E-cigarettes not only contain addicting nicotine but a cloud of toxins. Thirty-nine of 51 e-cigarettes tested contained some of the same chemical that caused popcorn lung.²

In 2004—NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and

Health), issued an alert to workers who use or make flavorings, which stated, “Breathing certain flavoring chemicals in the workplace may lead to severe lung damage.”³ They add that the safety of these chemicals has not been established for inhaling them.

The U.S. has toothless agencies that give the appearance of protecting the public health but their essence is to protect corporate profits.

In 2007—Sold to millions of people, E-cigarettes, which contained multiple known toxins in their vapor, were freely and legally allowed to come to the U.S. market. They were not regulated by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) or any other agency.

In 2012—The CDC (Center for Disease Control) again warns that breathing in flavoring chemicals may cause severe lung damage.

In 2014—The first scientific paper to study human exposure to flavorings in e-cigarettes was published.

By 2016—The e-cigarettes companies had made over \$11 Billion in profits, while freely selling known lung toxins to millions of people.

In 2016—The Surgeon General warns about the dangers to the lungs of flavorings and other toxins in e-cigarette smoke. Yet e-cigarettes continued to be freely and legally sold. Over 7,000 e-cigarette flavors are currently on the market and less than one percent have established recommended safety exposure limit.

In 2017—The FDA allowed e-cigarettes to remain unregulated on the market until at least 2022.⁴

In 2019—After hundreds of people had suffered lung damage and some died as a result of vaping, the FDA starts working on a plan to regulate e-cigarettes.⁵

September 28, 2019—“Deputy Director of the C.D.C. says that consumers had no way of knowing just what is in the liquids they are vaping.”⁶

As with the tobacco industry, corporations have no economic incentive to make the health risks of their products public. Corporations are driven by short term profits not health and safety. Federal and State regulations did not protect popcorn workers or those who use e-cigarettes.

The U.S. has toothless agencies that give the appearance of protecting the public health but their essence is to protect corporate profits. We will con-

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Healthcare for All

BY DR. NAYVIN GORDON

Would you be able to trust your Doctors to always make the best decisions regarding your healthcare needs if the Doctors gain money by providing less care or lose money by providing too much care? This is the essence of Medicare's Shared Savings Program—Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs). In other words: “encouraging insurers and providers to put their own financial interests’ above the medical needs of patients.”¹ The Doctor is becoming both the deliverer and denier of healthcare. “These policies are designed to increase savings for the (Medicare) Trust Fund...”²

ACOs have been steadily growing since 2012, and now cover over ten million Medicare patients. They have spread across the nation, and are also being implemented by Private/Commercial health plans as a means to increase their

profits. Over 23 million patients nationwide are part of the ACOs and the numbers are steadily growing.

Yes we need universal healthcare for all, but the profit system must be eliminated.

American medicine is abandoning ancient oaths and trust. For thousands of years physicians took oaths to always act in their patients’ best interest. The World Medical Association in 2006 specified: “A physician shall not allow his/her judgment to be influenced by personal profit.”³ The profit motive has corrupted the relationship between patient and doctor. This long-standing trust is being shattered by the ACOs medical delivery system. The need for profits is driving these changes. The rich one percent demand higher profits from Congress and have received tax cuts for their corporations and banks. Tax cuts mean the Government has less money to spend on social programs. The squeeze on profits due to worldwide competition and economic stagnation builds pressure to cut social programs and use the funds to pay back bankers, fund the military/war machine and subsidize corporations. ACOs are tools to help achieve this goal by pitting doctor and patient against each other as they fight over decreasing funds for healthcare. Yes we need universal healthcare for all, but the profit system must be eliminated. A public health system driven by patients needs, can preserve trust between patient and healthcare workers and best serve the health needs of the population.

Most of today’s major diseases have large social determinants. Social determi-

nants of health are an underlying cause of today’s major societal health dilemmas including obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and depression.⁴ The World Health Organization (WHO) offers this definition of social determinants of health: “The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age.”

Doctors and hospitals have little potential to affect social determinants of disease, but a movement for an egalitarian society of social, economic and political equality, does have the potential to change these conditions. Eliminating racism, poverty, unemployment, inequality, hunger, *etc.*, will do the most to improve people’s health and is a goal that patients and health care workers can find worth fighting for.

Dr. Gordon is a California Family Physician.

1 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sallypipes/2014/09/22/the-bungling-of-bundled-payments/#49defd9c1c60>

2 <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/sharedsavingsprogram/program-statutes-and-regulations.html>

3 <https://countercurrents.org/2018/01/exsanguination-medical-ethics>

4 <https://catalyst.nejm.org/social-determinants-of-health/>

Eliminating racism, poverty, unemployment, inequality, hunger, etc., will do the most to improve people’s health and is a goal that patients and health care workers can find worth fighting for.

Continued from page 22

tinue to live this public nightmare until we, the people, act to end it.

Dr. Gordon is a Family Physician who has written many articles about health and politics.

1 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/51391442_Popcorn-worker_Lung_Caused_by_Corporate_and_Regulatory_Negligence_An_Avoidable_Tragedy

2 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4892929/>

3 <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2004-110/pdfs/2004-110.pdf>

4 <https://newsroom.heart.org/news/federal-judge-rules-fda-acted-illegally-in-delaying-required-review-of-e-cigarettes-cigars>

5 <https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/463027-fda-chief-agency-should-have-acted-sooner-to-curb-teen-vaping>

6 <https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/463027-fda-chief-agency-should-have-acted-sooner-to-curb-teen-vaping>

Zimbabwe—Another Revolution Betrayed

BY JOHN BLACKBURN

The failure of the world communist movement to adopt the theory of permanent revolution and act on it, has been a tragedy for all of humanity.

Forty years ago the National Stadium in Harare, was full to capacity with an exuberant crowd of thousands there to see freedom fighter, who became the prime minister of newly independent Zimbabwe (formally Rhodesia), Robert Mugabe. Enthusiastic supporters of Zimbabwean independence and Black majority rule had gathered from the whole country and around the world. Bob Marley had asked specifically to play. It was a celebration. Free Zimbabwe was to be a beacon for all Africa. In September this year, his fake funeral service was held in the same stadium with three-quarters of the seats empty, the usual backdrop of military officers and a few overseas representatives it was a sorrowful affair but little of interest from most ordinary Zimbabweans who are struggling to get enough to eat.

The death of Robert Mugabe just weeks before the 40th anniversary of Zimbabwe's independence has focused attention on yet another African tragedy. The election of Mugabe as the first Black prime minister of independent Zimbabwe by universal suffrage in the former colony of Rhodesia was inspirational. With a social program of a minimum wage, school building, women's rights and many other reforms expectations for Zimbabwe's future were high.

Since the 1950s post colonial countries throughout Africa have histories of civil strife, famines, *coups*, military take overs and tyrannical "for life" presidents. Expectations were high that Mugabe and his government were going to do it differently and in doing so also help pave the way for the liberation of the Black people of South

Africa. The borders of African counties were created by the colonial powers with the official languages, state structures, civil service and legislation remaining virtually unaltered after independence. Black faces begin to replace white ones but the institutions continue to function as before while most of the wealth remains with the colonists and multinational corporations. The optimism of initial independence fades as the living conditions of the mass of people does not improve while the politicians and military in particular enrich themselves.

The proletariat on achieving power, Trotsky argued, should not then stop there and hand power to the capitalist class but should wield power itself and start to implement measures that are in its class and the peasantry's interests—policies that "...will be clearing the path and paving the way..." for the socialist construction of society.

Some radical political leaders such as Patrice Lumumba (Congo), Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Thomas Sankara (Burkina Faso) were overthrown with the connivance of the UK, U.S. and other imperialist powers while others—Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), turned from freedom fighters to dictators over time.

Mugabe has become another in that ilk. The new despots were often well educated and articulate. All had risked death and imprisonment by their passion for national liberation and to end the exploitation and oppression of their peoples. They were also Pan-Africanists, viewing the particular problems in their own countries as being common to all European colonies and the solutions as international. In fact the Pan-African movement originated with African students and exiles together with Trinidadian Marxist C.L.R. James in London. Variations on these scenarios have been seen throughout the history of post-colonial Africa with a few exceptions—Ethiopia, Botswana, Morocco—and were used as propaganda by the South African apartheid regime to justify preventing Black majority rule. "Look what happens when the Blacks get independence—suppression of democracy, corruption and economic decay," their apologists at home and abroad would argue.

A different outcome in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe offered the hope of a different outcome. The country that Mugabe's government inherited was economically second only to South Africa in the region. There was a large manufacturing sector; a number of large mines meaning that there was a relatively large urban working class. Good roads, railways and a telephone network connected the whole country. Agriculture, which was domestic and industrial, could feed the population and produce large quantities of beef, fruit, tobacco and other cash crops for export. The land is fertile and there are plentiful water sources for irrigation schemes and domestic use. Well-managed, Zimbabwean agriculture could feed the nation and its neighbors

in the region. There are rich mineral deposits including gold, copper, nickel, diamonds and emeralds making it a potentially very rich country. There was a high level of literacy among the Black population with two universities and a medical school of international standing. Health provision for whites and Blacks were relatively good.

Of course the best lands had been appropriated by the white settlers and were the principle source of the commercial agricultural wealth. The country's industries, particularly the mines, were owned by multinational corporations. There were many similarities with Russia in 1917. But by not following the Bolshevik example, the capitalists and imperialists retained control of the economy and the crumbs they conceded were not sufficient for the social programs promised. Stagnation, corruption and reaction set in. The ruling elite, their circle of politicians, military and police shared the morsels and bribes with Mugabe and his governments taking Zimbabwe on a path many have gone before. As always the masses who suffered most under the colonial system, who sacrificed most in the struggle to obtain the country's independence having put their leaders in power they are now the least rewarded and harshly punished for complaining. Former liberation leaders become tyrants and the executioners of their own people.

Mugabe claimed to be a Christian Marxist and like many other African national liberation leaders was university educated and articulate. His inspirational radio broadcasts from Mozambique were listened to all over Rhodesia and were instrumental in the liberation struggles giving Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU)'s program mass support in the cities, towns and countryside but mainly among the Shona peoples. Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) another wing of the liberation movement had its base among the less numerous Ndebele peoples who lived mainly in Matabeleland

around Bulawayo in the South of the country. Mugabe's course of action was restricted to some extent by the conditions of the Lancaster House agreement, which gave Zimbabwean Blacks the vote but left most of the state structures of Rhodesia—the military, the civil service and the legal system intact—most significantly, the land in the hands of the white farmers. Having made these agreements in tri-partite talks with the British and Rhodesian governments and with the powerful military regime of apartheid South Africa on its border, Mugabe's government stagnated, lost its revolutionary zeal, and soon became corrupt.

The achievements of the bourgeois democratic revolution is incorporated into the socialist revolution and thus the concept of permanent revolution.

Rather than building a mass revolutionary party based in the industrial working class and agricultural labor that would challenge the *status quo* ZANU was turned into a police force. By 1982 and unable to meet its promises Mugabe turned on his erstwhile allies of ZAPU and the Ndebele people in general. They would be the first scapegoats for the economic failures. Over the next three decades as many as 80,000 Zimbabweans would be murdered by Mugabe's military, police and ZANU police force militias. The once highly developed economy in African terms has collapsed with massive debts, 90 percent unemployment, famine and infrastructure disintegration. The removal of Mugabe in 2017 has done nothing to improve the lives of most Zimbabweans who still struggle just to survive. One dictator and his entourage have replaced Mugabe and his.

Why?

"Why?" the liberals and social democrats bewail. "Not again!" Most on the left have no answer for this either. Some look for psychological answers seeing history as the product of good and bad individuals rather than the individuals being products of their historical circumstances. The Chinese Communist Party, Putin, the Cuban leadership (to its shame) and some other African dictators continue to hail Mugabe as a liberation fighter while others have chosen to ignore the tragedy unfolding in Zimbabwe for the past 40 years. Mugabe's transformation is a common story not just in Africa—former freedom fighters, socialists, even "Marxists" within a short time can abandon their principles and their supporters becoming dictators and tyrants concerned only with preserving their position, privileges and enriching themselves.

A guide to understanding why this has happened repeatedly and what alternative there was first outlined by Leon Trotsky in his pamphlet "Results and Prospect" written in the wake of the failed Russian revolution of 1905. Trotsky as leader of the Petrograd Soviet had close first hand and daily contact with all the events as they unfolded. Russia was still a feudal aristocracy headed by the Tsar and kept power by a vast military and civil bureaucracy the cost of which was borne by the Russian peasantry. Russian industry was developing rapidly with large factories with modern techniques arising near all the major cities. These enterprises were not owned by native Russian capitalists but mainly by foreign banks and entrepreneurs. The vast profits being made would be extracted by the Western European bourgeoisie with no interest in the conditions of the lives of the Russian people.

The responsibility of liberating the peasantry from its feudal bondage, removing the monarchy and the aris-

tocracy, establishing free trade and many significant changes in how present day society is run has historically been the achieved by the triumph of the bourgeois democratic revolutions. Trotsky realized in 1905 that the Russian bourgeoisie were unable to carry this out. Late arrivals on the scene, the Russian capitalists were too weak in numbers and influence to lead the anti-feudal revolution. The peasantry was too amorphous to unify sufficiently to take on the aristocracy and the only social force capable of this was the industrial working class (the proletariat) provided it had a program to draw the mass of the peasantry into that struggle on its side.

Although not the most numerous class the working class could control the major industries, the ports and transport, particularly the railways, so was politically strong. The proletariat on achieving power, Trotsky argued, should not then stop there and hand power to the capitalist class but should wield power itself and start to implement measures that are in its class and the peasantry's interests—policies that "...will be clearing the path and paving the way..." for the socialist construction of society. The achievements of the bourgeois democratic revolution is incorporated into the socialist revolution and thus the concept of permanent revolution.

In the era of imperialism the bourgeoisie has abandoned its own democratic program at home and around the world and it has fallen to the international proletariat to defend and extend democracy now.

(It is worth noting that Trotsky developed the germ of the idea of the "law of uneven and combined development" at the time he wrote "Results and Prospects" in 1906. He developed the concept more fully in his *History of the Russian Revolution* where he gave the law its name.)

The evolution of society

The conventional Marxist analysis of the general evolution of society is that it has progressed through as series of social systems from primitive communism to slavery, feudalism, capitalism and then socialism. The system of production, the economic system that determined the relations between people, the structures of their society. In turn each social system developing the economic conditions that paved the way for its successor—the development of agricultural and industrial production of the necessities of life and luxuries under capitalism means that all that is needed for a high standard of living could be provided for every person on the planet.

Currently there is a world recession due to overproduction—a phase in the cycle of boom and bust, which Marx said will continue as long as capitalism. Overproduction does not make available life's necessities to the poorest so does not alleviate poverty and misery. Capitalism has created the material conditions for socialism but the idea is far from universal. Socialism has been tarnished by the miserable conditions of peoples' lives in the former so-called communist countries of Eastern Europe, the former USSR, and the totalitarian regimes of present-day China and North Korea.

Trotsky's idea of the working class leading the peasantry in the democratic revolution, which should then continue uninterrupted into the socialist revolution, would seem heresy to orthodox Marxism. The bourgeois government of April 1917 was too weak to overthrow the aristocratic class and by October the Provisional government was in the process of capitulating to their representative General Kornilov who was marching an army on Petersburg. The working class, military units and peasantry of the Petrograd Soviet led by the Bolsheviks overthrew

the provisional government, organized the defense of Petrograd in October 1917 initiating the world's first successful socialist revolution. Real life does not conform to the textbooks. For the Bolsheviks their revolution was only a trigger that should initiate revolution in the industrialized countries of Western Europe providing Russia with the material means to develop economically, culturally, and socially.

The concept of "Socialism in One Country" which was to become Stalin's strategy for the Soviet Union was alien to Marxist internationalism. Capitalism is a world system, which will be unrelentingly hostile to socialism until its eventual eradication. Capitalism's control of the world's economy means that it influences every country's economy no matter how it may try to isolate itself. (Cuba's economic development today is restricted by the effects of the U.S. blockade.) Responding to military hostility can drain enormous quantities of resources that could have social use. If revolution fails to spread, the result is the eventual restoration of capitalism as Trotsky predicted.

Permanent revolution— a mainstream theory

Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution was mainstream thought in the immediate post revolutionary period. The pamphlet "Results and Prospects" written in 1906, in which it was first proposed was reissued and circulated widely in Russia. Editions were printed in several foreign languages. It was Soviet orthodoxy until the death of Lenin in 1924 when it began to be used to insinuate a rift between Lenin and Trotsky.

By 1927 when Stalin's faction had secured control both inside the Soviet Union and in the Communist International, Permanent Revolution had become heresy. Debates over points of theory or historical incidents between socialists often seem obscure,

irrelevant or dated to many observers. Trotsky knew that this was not about personal vanity, an after dinner debate or tactical differences between comrades. At the heart of this dispute lay what strategy that the Communist International with its far-reaching influence on the world's working class would adopt for the future.

The first edition of the pamphlet "Permanent Revolution" written by Trotsky in 1927 has a number of facets. It is first and foremost a rebuttal of the campaign that was being waged by Stalin's faction claiming that there were fundamental differences between Lenin and Trotsky which was untrue.

Lenin had never specifically endorsed the theory of permanent revolution and by reviving past differences and manipulating the truth Stalin and his allies were trying to discredit Trotsky. Trotsky now had the experiences of a decade to draw on: The successful Russian revolution of 1917, the independence struggle in India, failed revolutions in several western European countries and the butchery of the Chinese communists by Chiang Kai-Shek who they had been supporting.

It outlines the alternative strategy for communist parties to take in the national liberation movements in colonial countries that he predicted would be a major feature of the world revolution in the 20th century. He warned that whenever the Stalinist stages-strategy is adopted, it will lead to disaster with massive casualties on our side. When the revolution is stopped at the democratic stage he predicted this would not last and before long the leader of the liberation movement will become a dictator or be replaced by one.

Above all, permanent revolution is a strategy for the success of the socialist revolution in the developing countries and the imperialist heartlands. The triumph of the Bolsheviks in Russia had been a confirmation in practice of the theory of permanent revolution.

Trotsky had a world-view and realized that the weakest links in the capitalist system were in the colonial countries. Capitalism had reached its highest stage, imperialism and had penetrated into every corner of the globe and brought the economies of the most remote countries into its sphere of influence. The discovery of the anti-malarial quinine allowed the colonization and carving up of Africa by the imperial powers of Europe particularly Britain and France in the 19th century.

...the development of agricultural and industrial production of the necessities of life and luxuries under capitalism means that all that is needed for a high standard of living could be provided for every person on the planet.

The forced removal and exploitation of native Africans went hand-in-hand with the seizure of the natural resources and fertile lands. From the beginning there was always resistance but most countries did not achieve their independence until the 1950s and '60s.

Neo-colonialism

We enter the period of neo-colonialism when, though the country is nominally independent, its main resources, industries and wealth remain predominantly the property of multinational corporations. The leaders of these newly independent countries now have a choice, complete the national independence struggle by taking control of the economy from the imperialists and colonists and redistributing the wealth and land to the mass of the population or decide to

accept the *status quo*. They can build their regime on a proletarian base and program, which will draw in the rural masses, or they can enjoy the trappings and privileges of their offices and betray those who put them in power.

Many of the leaders of African liberation movements were also drawn to the communist movement. Both the USSR and China proclaimed their solidarity with the liberation movements in Africa loudly and actively trained guerrilla fighters. Thus they came under the political influence of Communist Parties continuing the strategy of Stalin's "Stages" strategy coupled with the denouncement of Trotsky and permanent revolution as counter-revolutionary.

Stalin's theory proposes that communists in national liberation struggles subordinate themselves to the struggle for achievement of an independent bourgeois democracy. After a period of time and economic development they believe the conditions will then be ripe for struggle for socialism.

Leaders of many African and other national liberation movements were not only educated in this political theory but trained also in the political practices of Stalinism, which are synonymous with bureaucratic, undemocratic and authoritarian behavior.

Stalinism in common with capitalism cares nothing for the rights, welfare or lives the mass of people. In that outlook, for peoples lives to be valuable, means total submission to the party leadership and its policies. Any dissent whether internal or external to the party leadership is condemned as anti-working class and therefore counter-revolutionary. Millions have been manipulated, used like pawns and sacrificed to such leaders many times.

The transformation of Mugabe from freedom fighter to dictator flows directly from the application of his politics.

From the beginning the imperialists have tried to destroy every national



Robert Mugabe, second President of Zimbabwe

liberation movement but when this ultimately fails they will organize the overthrow of any political leader who threatens their interests. Alternatively once in office some decide that it is too

difficult a challenge, it means overcoming powerful forces so they give up, settle to the wealth and privileges that come with the position and betray the people who put them there.

It is no exaggeration to claim that the triumph of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and the stages strategy in liberation struggles together with the vilification of Trotsky and the theory of permanent revolution have been a tragedy not just for the communist movement but has been paid for in hundreds-of-millions of peoples lives. Trotsky himself understood this, he "...thought in terms of continents and epochs..."

It was not an issue of personalities or differences over tactics but at stake was nothing less than the future of all of humanity. Trotsky was a Marxist, a humanist and an internationalist who cared to the core of his being about the lives of the working people of the world.

Lenin held the same deep convictions and that is why he became a "Trotskyist" in 1917. Trotsky refused

to capitulate but chose to spend his life trying to convince the world communist movement to change its course. When Trotsky realized that that was not possible he, with his co-thinkers around the world, founded the Fourth International with the aim of building an international revolutionary party with permanent revolution at the heart of its political outlook. He would pay for his principles with his life at the hands of a Stalinist assassin.

Zimbabwe's catastrophe is another in a sequence that began with the betrayal of the Chinese revolution in the 1920s and spans the continents of Africa, Asia and Latin America to the present day. This is the Stalinist legacy that all of humanity has paid a heavy price for.

We have the key to avoiding these failures in the future and it begins with the rehabilitation of Trotsky by the international communist movement and the adoption of permanent revolution as our strategy.

Death, Bloodshed, and Misery in Yemen

"Strike with creativity!" proclaims Raytheon.

BY KATHY KELLY

Writing about his visit to the world's largest weapons bazaar, held in London in October, journalist Arron Merat describes reading the slogan emblazoned above Raytheon's stall: "Strike With Creativity." Raytheon manufactures Paveway laser-guided bombs—produced in factories in the United States and the United Kingdom—fragments of which have been found in the wreckage of schools, hospitals, and markets across Yemen.

How, I wonder, can a weapons manufacturer that causes such death, bloodshed, and misery lay claim to creativity?

Consider the Raytheon weapons now demolishing Yemen. Fragments of Raytheon and other U.S.-manufactured

weapons dot blast sites where Yemeni survivors collect body parts and scattered bits of clothing, which are needed to compile lists of the dead.

In September, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) hit a detention center in the Dhamar governorate in the northern highlands of Yemen with seven airstrikes that killed at least 100 people and "pulverized" the area, according to Bethan McKernan, reporting for *The Guardian*. "It took five days to remove all the bodies impaled on metalwork ripped from the walls in the blasts," she wrote.

After the attack, McKernan interviewed Mustafa al-Adel, a twenty-two-year-old security guard employed at

the site. His brother, Ahmed, also a guard, was among those killed. Adel pointed to a blanket, visible on the second floor of a building where the guards had slept. "You can see Ahmed's blue blanket up there," said Adel. "There were 200 people here but now it's just ghosts."

Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Saudi-led coalition bombarding and blockading Yemen have killed tens-of-thousands of people, wrecking the country's already enfeebled infrastructure and bringing Yemen to the brink of a famine that may kill millions. President Donald Trump signaled additional support for Saudi Arabia on October 11 when the U.S. mili-

tary announced it would send thousands more troops to the kingdom, bringing the number of U.S. troops there to 14,000.

For people in the United States to understand why Yemenis would join together to resist the Saudis requires a deepening awareness of how financial institutions, in attempting to gain control of valuable resources, have pushed farmers and villagers across Yemen into debt and desperation. Isa Blumi writes about this sordid history in his 2018 book, *Destroying Yemen: What Chaos in Arabia Tells Us about the World*.

Blumi details how Yemen's society, largely independent and agrarian, became a guinea pig for International Monetary Fund (IMF) "development projects" which, based on strikingly colonialist theories of modernization, crushed grassroots institutions, and amounted to "cost-effective ways of prying Yemen's wealth out of its peoples' hands."

Local development associations, for example, were formed during the 1970s to help people cooperatively determine what crops they would grow and how they would use the profits. But U.S. Agency for International Development "experts" pressured these groups to instead produce "cash crops strictly meant for export."

"After all," Blumi writes, "with the right kind of cash crop and the use of American labor-saving technology, pesticides and fertilizers included, Yemen's villagers were no longer needed in the fields. Alternatively, they could work in cities in sweatshops producing clothes for a global market...or the soon booming oil and gas projects."

Blumi's book documents the fiercely stubborn creativity with which, decade by decade, Yemenis kept surprising the West, exploring and pursuing countermeasures to resist its exploitative control, and risking the West's destructive anger.

When farmers desperate for cash went to work in Saudi Arabia, for instance, "they consistently sent remittances home to families that saved the cash and invested in local projects, using local bank transfers." Imams and village leaders encouraged people to resist imperialist "modernization" projects, knowing that the West's preferred "modern" role for them was as wage slaves with no hope of developing a better future.

The "Huthi" movement began when Husayn al-Huthi, an opponent of Yemen's dictatorial (and Western-allied) Saleh regime, tried to defend the water and land rights of locals in the Sa'adah province in northwestern Yemen. Sharing what was then a porous and informal border with the KSA, they often found themselves in disputes with Saudi border patrols. They also resisted "structural adjustment" demands by the International Monetary Fund to privatize some of Yemen's best farming and grazing land. When the dictator Saleh made criminal concessions to the KSA, al-Huthi and his followers persisted with protests. Each new confrontation won over thousands of people, eventually spreading beyond Sa'adah.

Blumi cites numerous instances in which Yemen's economic assets were pillaged, with Saleh's approval, by "well-heeled global financial interests."

In 2008, an extremely wealthy member of the bin Laden family aimed to build a bridge across the mouth of the Red Sea from Yemen to Djibouti. The project could generate hundreds-of-billions for investors, and quicken the process of exploitative modernization; but it would also require building railways and roads where there are only villages now. People living along the coastline of the Red Sea would be in the way.

Since 2015, fighting has been concentrated in this area, called the Tihama. Control of the coastline would

also allow financial takeover of potentially profitable Yemeni fisheries. Blumi says billions-of-dollars of annual income are at stake, noting with irony that a war causing starvation is being waged, in part, to gain control over food assets.

A recent United Nations report says that Yemen is now "on course to become the world's poorest country," with 79 percent of the population living beneath the poverty line and 65 percent deemed "extremely poor." The Yemen Data Project estimated in March that 600 civilian structures on average are damaged or destroyed monthly in Yemen, mostly by airstrikes.

"Staple food items are now on average 150 percent higher than before the crisis escalated," says a 2019 report by the Norwegian Refugee Council. "Teachers, health workers and civil servants in the northern parts of the country haven't been paid for years," according to the same report.

Here in the United States, news commentators discussing the Trump impeachment story liken the breaking developments to "bombshell after bombshell." In Yemen, real bombshells, made in the United States, kill and maim Yemeni civilians, including children, every day.

—Common Dreams, October 16, 2019

<https://www.commondreams.org/views/2019/10/16/death-bloodshed-and-misery-yemen?cd>



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Mass Rally by the Revolutionary Socialist Left in Argentina

BY NATHANIEL FLAKIN

The largest avenue in the world, the *9 de Julio* in the middle of Buenos Aires, was blocked off on Saturday afternoon, October 5, 2019. Thousands of socialists gathered in front of the Obelisk, Argentina's national monument, for a rally of the Workers Left Front—Unity (*Frente de Izquierda y los Trabajadores—Unidad*, or *FIT-Unidad*). The country's largest bourgeois newspaper, *Clarín*, estimated the crowd at 25,000 people. The rally was covered in all of the country's major media outlets.

Argentina's national elections will take place in three weeks. The current president, Mauricio Macri, suffered a landslide defeat in the primary elections on August 11. The center-left coalition of Alberto Fernández and former president Cristina Kirchner is preparing for a massive victory. Many working people, desperate for an end to the austerity measures imposed by Macri and the IMF, think that Kirchner's return will help recover their declining living conditions. However, Fernández and Kirchner have promised to comply with the IMF's dictates, agreeing to pay Argentina's massive foreign debt of around \$160 billion. As Myriam Bregman, a candidate for the congressional seat of Buenos Aires and a leader of the PTS (Party of Socialist Workers), explained during her speech at the rally: "Macri is leaving but austerity and the IMF are going to stay."

Meanwhile, the bureaucracies of the trade unions and the social movements call on working people to wait for Fernández and Kirchner to win the elections before demanding change. But unlike the ruling class, the working class cannot afford to wait. In opposition to these stalling tactics, Bregman countered: "Women continue to die as a result of secret abortions. But they tell

us we have to wait. We women always have to wait!" Kirchner and her late husband were in power for 12 years, and they blocked all attempts to legalize abortion. Now Kirchner's center-left coalition includes numerous candidates who oppose the right to choose. The FIT-U is the only slate that defends abortion rights unconditionally.

In contrast to the two bourgeois factions, who want the masses to pay for Argentina's current economic crisis, the FIT-U demands that the capitalists—who created the crisis in the first place—be the ones to pay.

In her speech, Bregman also referred to the striking teachers in the southern province of Chubut, most of them women, who are on strike to get unpaid wages. "They cannot wait," Bregman said. Tellingly, in Chubut they are fighting against a governor who is part of Kirchner's coalition—this shows what workers can expect from the new national government.

The rally lasted for two hours. Speakers came from the four organizations that make up the FIT-U but also from numerous rank-and-file opposition groups in the trade unions and workplaces, including the worker-occupied factory Madygraf. The rally was full of calls on the leaders of the trade unions to break their "social pact" with the incoming government and instead develop a plan of struggle to defend workers' rights.

Romina del Plá of the Workers Party (PO), the FIT-U's candidate for vice president, called on workers to "break from the bosses' parties and give their votes for political independence." This vote would help "prepare the struggles that are coming."

Internationalism at the center

Nicolás Del Caño, the FIT's presidential candidate and a member of the PTS, explained that the country was in a situation of "polarization, where they are trying to convince people that there are only two options." But this rally showed there is a third alternative. In contrast to the two bourgeois factions, who want the masses to pay for Argentina's current economic crisis, the FIT-U demands that the capitalists—who created the crisis in the first place—be the ones to pay. To that end, Del Caño's speech emphasized the importance of internationalism:

"There is a historic tendency around the world toward a scandalous concentration of wealth in the hands of billionaires, while the vast majority get a smaller and smaller piece of the pie. In the poorest countries, this leads to constant waves of immigration. Thousands of people drown in the Mediterranean or they risk losing their children at the southern border of the U.S. But capitalism also impoverishes the U.S., French, English, and German workers. The youth are searching for alternatives on the left, but reactionary politicians try to channel the rage toward right-wing solutions."

Del Caño expressed solidarity with the struggles of the Yellow Vests in France and the mass mobilizations in Ecuador, along with the protests in Sudan, Algeria, and now in Haiti. "These are our allies! The working people of the countries oppressed by the IMF and imperialism!" He also

connected these struggles to the hundreds-of-thousands of young people participating in Fridays For Future:

“The youth is mobilizing around the world against the irrationality of capitalism, which is leading the world to an environmental crisis. The youth is saying: ‘Our lives and our planet are worth more than their profits!’ This is why our struggle is to the end, to get rid of exploitation and oppression, for a workers’ government and socialism.”

He ended his speech with a rousing call: “Struggle and organization is the only realistic path to ensure that the majority does not have to pay for this crisis.” The rally ended with tens-of-thousands of voices on the central boulevard of Buenos Aires singing the *Internationale*.¹

There are three weeks left until the national elections. The militants of the FIT-U will continue their fierce campaign against the two bourgeois alternatives; but this campaign is really about preparing for the struggles to come, and envisioning a different “future for workers, women, and youth.”

Setting an international example

Hundreds of socialists from around the world have signed a declaration in support of the FIT-U. How is this example relevant for socialists in the U.S.? As in Argentina, we in the U.S. are also confronted with a two-party system—and as in the U.S., different left groups in Argentina have adapted to the bourgeois center left, forming the left flank of a capitalist government coalition. But as the FIT-U shows, when the revolutionary socialist left remains independent and builds up its own fractions in the schools and workplaces, its uncompromising, explicitly anti-capitalist and socialist politics can reach millions of people with a perspective for liberation from capitalism.

The FIT-U is not simply a new-left phenomena like Syriza in Greece or Podemos in the Spanish State. The FIT-U is fighting for a workers’ gov-

ernment, built on the ruins of the bourgeois state. Given a relatively low level of class struggle in Argentina at the moment, this anti-capitalist program of struggle will not win a majority of the votes, but it will prepare the vanguard of the working class for the struggles to come.

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*Note: Centre-left opposition candidate Alberto Fernández has been elected president of Argentina in a vote dominated by economic concerns.*²

—Left Voice, October 7, 2019



PrensaObrera.com

<https://www.leftvoice.org/a-massive-rally-by-the-revolutionary-socialist-left-in-argentina-was-a-message-to-the-powerful>

1 Arise ye prisoners of starvation.
Arise ye wretched of the earth.
For justice thunders condemnation.
A better world’s in birth
No more tradition’s chains shall bind us,
Arise ye slaves no more in thrall.
The earth shall rise on new foundations,
We have been naught, we shall be all.

Refrain:

T’is the final conflict.

Let each stand in their place.

The Internationale
shall be the human race.

2 We want no condescending saviours
to rule us from the judgement hall.
We workers ask not for their favours;
let us consult for all.
To make the thief disgorge his booty,
to free the spirit from its cell.
We must ourselves decide our duty,
we must decide and do it well.

3 Toilers from shops and fields united,
the union of all who work.
The earth belongs to us the workers,
no room for those who shirk.
How many on our flesh have fattened,
but if the bloody birds of prey
Shall vanish from the sky some morning,
a golden sunlight will stay.

<https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/uk-secondwave/internationale.htm>

2 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-50203727>

Mass Protest in Ecuador

BY KIMBERLEY BROWN

October 10, 2019—QUITO, Ecuador—Juan Oshcu traveled more than six hours from his rural farm, walking and hitching rides, to reach the Ecuadoran capital. For three nights, he’s slept on wooden benches in one of the city’s cultural centers, a temporary base for the thousands of indigenous protesters who have arrived here this week.

“We have risen to say, in one united voice, ‘Enough, Mr. President!’” said Oshcu, a small-scale farmer from the indigenous Kichwa community of Latacunga.

Labor unions, women’s rights groups and students are protesting the austerity package introduced this month by President Lenín Moreno. But Ecuador’s majority indigenous population is at the heart of the demonstrations that have paralyzed this South American country—a challenging development for Moreno, given the movement’s success at ousting previous presidents.

Demonstrators returned to the streets Thursday for an eighth day of protests in Quito and other cities, sparked last week when Moreno announced labor and tax changes and withdrew decades-old fuel subsidies—part of a belt-tightening program required under a \$4.2 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund.

“Our fight is in defense of our territories,” he said. He said measures to appease the IMF have led to increased oil and mining in indigenous lands, actions that “don’t respect the collective rights of the indigenous people.”

Protesters have blocked streets in the capital and highways in the countryside, have occupied government buildings, oil fields, water-treatment facilities and a hydroelectric plant, and have clashed with security forces. Moreno has called for dialogue but said he won’t reverse the austerity measures, which he said are needed after years of overspending by his predecessor, Rafael Correa.

“It’s necessary to correct grave economic errors,” he said last week.

Moreno declared a state of emergency and, as protesters descended on the capital this week, moved his administration 270 miles south to the port city of Guayaquil. Security forces have surrounded key facilities and fired tear gas and pepper spray. Five people have been killed, scores wounded and more than 680 arrested. Officials have put losses at more than \$1 billion.

Ecuadorans have a history of ousting presidents, driven mainly by the indigenous movement. Most recently in 2005, Lucio Gutiérrez’s attempt to introduce austerity measures under an IMF agreement prompted tens-of-thousands to protest, and lawmakers voted to remove him.

This time, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) is by far the largest organized group protesting. CONAIE President Jaime Vargas said that the community rejects the government’s new reforms and subsidy cuts but that its complaint goes further.

“Our fight is in defense of our territories,” he said. He said measures to appease the IMF have led to increased oil and mining in indigenous lands, actions that “don’t respect the collective rights of the indigenous people.”

Vargas said he won’t speak with the government unless it agrees to reverse



People demonstrate in Quito on October 9. The march is made up of a union of all ethnic groups originating in the Ecuadoran Andes. (Jonatan Rosas)

the austerity measures and stop selling their land to oil and mining companies.

Many here have noted parallels between 2005 and 2019. But Vargas has stressed that the indigenous movement is not trying to destabilize Moreno's government.

Political analyst Decio Machado said if the government falls, it won't be because of the indigenous movement but rather for mistakes he said it has been making since protests began: calling the state of emergency, cracking down on protests and refusing to negotiate.

Oshcu, in Quito, said cutting the fuel subsidies affects indigenous farmers in the countryside directly because it raises the costs of transporting their goods to collection centers. "When the price of gasoline rises, the income for the community decreases," he said. "That's why we came."

Violent clashes have been reported in cities including Quito, Guayaquil and Cuenca. Indigenous demonstrators are putting eucalyptus leaves in their noses to filter the tear gas and pepper spray.

"We are here for our rights," Oshcu said. "If you don't like that idea, then get out of the presidency."

—*The Washington Post*, October 10, 2019

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/ecuadors-indigenous-people-are-leading-the-nations-anti-government-protests-they-have-a-record-of-ousting-presidents/2019/10/10/ab9d7f1e-aaa2-11e9-a329-7378fbfa1b63_story.html

"We are here for our rights," Oshcu said. "If you don't like that idea, then get out of the presidency."

Hands Off Venezuela!

BY THE RED NATION

There is no positive role for the United States to play in the Global South. The expansion of the racist doctrine of Manifest Destiny through the policies of the Monroe Doctrine asserted the supremacy of the United States in the Western Hemisphere and greatly expanded the project and aims of settler colonialism. From the *coup* in Guatemala to oust democratically elected Jacobo Arbenz in 1954 to the creation of the School of the Americas (now Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation or WHINSEC) and the counterinsurgency and low intensity wars waged in Latin America throughout the 1960s to 1990s, U.S. imperialism has injured, exploited, and destabilized the lives and governance of our relatives in South and Central America.

More recently the United States has overthrown the government of Honduras in 2009. Indigenous activists such as Roberta "Berta" Caceres have been murdered and brutalized for standing up to multinational corporations seeking to open up their lands for resource extraction. And this is a pattern of U.S.-backed right wing governments—the death and destruction of the humble people of the earth. From Colombia where Indigenous and union activists are regularly targeted for assassination to the recent interference in the Brazilian elections, the systematic dissolution of human rights and democracy always follows U.S. intervention, "humanitarian" and otherwise.

In Brazil, a right wing administration headed by Jair Messias Bolsonaro has, by openly declaring activists with the Landless

...the systematic dissolution of human rights and democracy always follows U.S. intervention, "humanitarian" and otherwise...



Pro-Maduro/Pro-Chavez demonstration August 10, 2018, Venezuela. (Shutterstock)

Workers Movement (MST in Spanish) “terrorists,” and by taking away governmental protections and recognition of Indigenous peoples, declared war on the environment, the poor, and Indigenous peoples who stand in the way of resource extraction and capitalist development. It is no coincidence that his government has endorsed the recent *coup* attempts in Venezuela.

This current *coup* attempt by the United States to overthrow the democratically elected government of Venezuela comes from seventeen years of failure of trying to get rid of the socialist project initiated by Hugo Chavez. The administration of George W. Bush successfully ousted Chavez in 2002, but the people of Venezuela forced the return of Chavez to power by popular will. This groundswell of support for the Bolivarian Revolution is what causes us to reflect, study, and challenge the narratives imperialist nations put forward about the current Venezuelan government.

What we know for sure is that Venezuela, through the process of the Bolivarian Revolution, has seen increases in participation in social, economic, and political life from Indigenous peoples, Women, LGBTQ, Africans, and poor people. This has been a project from the left and from below. The Venezuelan people are working to create a future that is shaped by their participation and we must respect our relatives and their right to self-determination.

The current *coup* attempt is directly connected to immigration and refugees. From these countries, thousands have fled poverty and violence fueled by U.S. economic, political, or military intervention, with a significant amount of violence caused by the U.S.-led war on drugs. Humble people are left with no options but to flee with their families including children. They make the perilous trip through Mexico to the U.S. border seeking refuge. The United

States either beats them back with tear gas, violating its own federal laws on refugee and asylum status, or imprisons them in detention camps where families are separated and where many die.

The current *coup* attempt is directly connected to immigration and refugees. From these countries, thousands have fled poverty and violence fueled by U.S. economic, political, or military intervention, with a significant amount of violence caused by the U.S.-led war on drugs.

Continuing the policies enacted against Indigenous peoples inside the borders of the United States, immigrant children are being ripped from their families and being placed in camps, as well as being put up for adoption. Parents of children are being deported. LGBTQ immigrants and refugees are targets of gender and sexual violence and face the constant threat of outright murder.

We need a new anti-imperialist realignment. Defeating a border wall has to be tied to defeating U.S. military interventions that back corporate agendas in South and Central America. These interventions have to be seen in the context of what is currently unfolding in Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Bolivia, Brazil, and Guatemala. It must be about realignment.

We should seek to de-center the U.S. by trying to undermine its violent hegemony. We should see ourselves as connected with all the people of this earth,

with our relatives in the South, and not with the ruling class whether Democrat or Republican. And from this understanding we must take action.

Our work in The Red Nation has been to welcome our relatives from the South onto our lands and territories, in direct defiance to the claims of the United States over our lands and lives. We do not recognize the borders, boundaries, and authority of the United States to separate us from other human beings.

We are forging new relationships, rooted in the history of peoples from this hemisphere having relationships with our relatives in the south. We send revolutionary greetings to all of our comrades and relatives resisting imperialism, colonialism, and capitalism. In particular, we turn to our comrade Evo Morales, the Indigenous president of Bolivia, to offer up his words in this time of terrible danger:

“Our solidarity with the Venezuelan people and our brother Nicolas Maduro, in these decisive hours in which the claws of imperialism seek again to mortally wound the democracy and self-determination of the peoples of South America.”

—*The Red Nation*, January 24, 2019

<https://therednation.org/2019/01/24/hands-off-venezuela-the-red-nation-denounces-us-coup-attempts-in-venezuela/>

We need a new anti-imperialist realignment. Defeating a border wall has to be tied to defeating U.S. military interventions that back corporate agendas in South and Central America.

The Liberation of Palestine Represents an Alternative Path for Native Nations

ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 6, 2017 BY THE RED NATION

Palestine is the moral barometer of Indigenous North America. While there is widespread agreement among Native people that European colonialism and Indigenous genocide is criminal and immoral, there are a surprisingly high number of Native politicians, elites, and public figures who don't extend the same sympathies to Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims. They range from outright Zionists who support Palestinian ethnic cleansing to liberal centrists who don't support Palestinian rights of protest and resistance.

"Red washing" is a useful academic term used to describe how Zionists recruit Indigenous people to normalize the Israeli settler project. We use the term "anti-Palestinian opportunism" to describe how profitable and career-advancing it is for Indigenous people to align with the Zionist project.

Indigenous leaders frequently and falsely equate aspirations of Indigenous peoples with the Zionist settler project, which requires the displacement, removal, and continued banishment of Native Palestinians from their homelands.

First Nations Indigenous leaders, such as Wab Kinew, Phil Fontaine, and Ron Evans (all powerful men,) have taken pro-Zionist and anti-Palestinian positions by aligning with Israeli settler colonialism. In the United States, Ben Shelly, Myron Lizer, Tom Cole, and Deb Haaland have made anti-Palestinian statements as part of their political platforms.

Even self-described "progressive" Native leaders make pro-Zionist statements and positions for political gain.

Last year during her run for U.S. Congress, Haaland equated Native Americans getting the right to vote in New Mexico in 1948 to the creation of the state of Israel as "parallel" experiences. And when U.S. representative

Ilhan Omar, a Black Muslim woman and refugee, spoke out against AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee,) a pro-Zionist, anti-Muslim, and anti-Arab lobby group, Haaland criticized Omar's remarks as a "type of anti-Semitism" emphasizing that as Democrats, "we support Israel." To advance her own standing with Zionist liberals like Nancy Pelosi, Haaland aligned herself with the rightwing of the Democratic party that has frequently maligned and smeared progressive Muslim women like Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar. Haaland's opportunism demonstrates that she is anything but an ally to Palestine and more of an opportunist willing to throw Palestinians under the bus when it benefits her political career.

Pro-Zionism isn't confined to the world of politicians. Indigenous artists, athletes, and academics have also chosen to ignore Palestinian rights to advance their careers.

In 2012, poet Joy Harjo ignored Palestinian calls for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) of Israeli institutions when she toured Israel. This year, the Library of Congress made her the U.S. poet laureate. In 2017, international jurist and former UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, S. James Anaya crossed the BDS picket-line to give a lecture on Indigenous rights at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Last year, while unarmed Gazans were gunned down by Israeli snipers during the Great March of Return, the Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team refused Palestinian calls to boycott an international lacrosse tournament in Israel because they claimed Israel recognized "Iroquois sovereignty."

The refusal of the United States and Canada to recognize Indigenous sovereignty is not an excuse to trample the rights of Palestinians. And no artistic expression, sports tournament, or aca-



May 11, 2019. London, United Kingdom. Labour party supporters carrying out a protest march against Palestine occupation. (Shutterstock)

democratic talk trumps the right of Palestinians to live in peace in their own homeland.

These examples show that Indigenous artists, athletes, celebrities, and politicians are rewarded for pro-Zionism and anti-BDS positions. In other words, it's lucrative for Indigenous peoples in settler societies to be anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab, or anti-Muslim—because that's the *status quo* for U.S. imperialist interests. After all, to be anti-Palestinian is to be pro-United States, pro-Israel, and, therefore, pro-settler colonialism.

On settler colonialism

Settler colonialism presents itself as a shield, as a protector. What they don't tell you is that it shields occupation and protects occupiers. Palestinians have resisted Israeli settler colonialism since 1948 and European colonialism since 1917. Israel's violent occupation of historic Palestine is typically framed as a "conflict." This is a distortion of history that erases the actual truth: Israel's very existence depends upon the elimination of Palestinians. This is called settler colonialism. Israel is a violent settler nation that should be condemned for its crimes against humanity.

And like its patron, the United States, white historians in the United States have long framed the history of settler colonialism in this nation as a "conflict" between two equal sides: cowboys and Indians; settlers and savages. Dakota scholar Elizabeth Cook-Lynn reminds us there are no two sides to a story of colonial dispossession and genocide. In a settler nation, there is a clear perpetrator: the settler state. Like Palestinians, Native people continue to resist systematic colonialism by the U.S. We refuse to be uprooted. Refusal is the basis of all forms of anti-colonial resistance, and we, as the original peoples and nations of these lands, extend unwavering solidarity and support to our Palestinian relatives who struggle for liberation from the same violence

that threatens to erase our histories and our futures.

There is a prominent tendency within U.S.-based Palestine solidarity work to foster peace and reconciliation as a model of justice. We strongly object to this tendency. Israeli colonization perpetuates violence; regardless of the liberal niceties about "peace" and "respect" you place on it. Peacemaking is not a bilateral responsibility in a settler colonial state that perpetuates war crimes against the colonized. The notion of "mutual" peace implies that the colonized holds equal responsibility for justice. In a colonial context, colonialism is the original crime, and colonizers the aggressors. When did invasion become self-defense? The only form of justice that matches this crime is decolonization. The decolonization of Israel requires withdrawing the Zionist occupation from occupied Palestine, removing the blockade from Gaza, and honoring the Palestinian right of return (all tenets of BDS, which we detail below.) And those who advocate for justice in Palestine are also obligated to advocate for our liberation and decolonization from U.S. occupation.

Settler colonialism presents itself as a shield, as a protector. What they don't tell you is that it shields occupation and protects occupiers.

Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions

Israel is the largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid in the world. They offer their citizens complete healthcare coverage paid for by U.S. dollars, while Palestinians die on a daily basis because they are unable to access healthcare in the occupied territories, much less pay for it. Israel commits atrocities against

Palestinians with impunity because the U.S. allows it to happen. We are citizens of Native nations that endure despite violent colonial occupation by the United States. We have not achieved decolonization and the national liberation of our homelands because the U.S. has sought to thwart our freedom dreams at every turn. It is thus no surprise that it bankrolls Israel's efforts to do the same to Palestinians. U.S. occupation gains strength and legitimacy through Israeli occupation, and vice versa.

The best method of resisting—and ultimately undoing—the collusion between the U.S. and Israel is to enforce Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS). BDS is a Palestinian-led movement for freedom, justice and equality founded in 2005 that upholds the simple principle that Palestinians are entitled to the same rights as the rest of humanity. The BDS movement is a form of non-violent advocacy to demand the state of Israel 1) end its occupation of all Arab-Palestinian lands, 2) recognize the equal rights of Arab-Palestinians, and 3) respect the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes as stipulated in UN Resolution 194.

BDS is inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement that helped to put international pressure to end apartheid. The U.S. and Israel backed the racist South African apartheid regime when the rest of the world morally opposed it. Indigenous peoples were made a category in the UN Decade to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Apartheid, which began in 1974. Zionism as a form of racism was also part of the initial agenda (which was later removed after the 1993 Oslo accords) and gave a platform for Palestinian rights. U.S. presidents from Jimmy Carter to George W. Bush boycotted the UN programs on racism, most likely over the questions of apartheid in South Africa and Palestine. This boycott included the two UN decades to combat racism and apartheid from 1974-1993.

Nevertheless, the connections between the South African anti-apartheid movement, Palestinian rights, and Indigenous rights cannot be ignored or dismissed. Without this lateral solidarity, Indigenous peoples would not have made such historic gains, like the drafting of the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). It should come as no surprise that Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States (all settler colonial regimes) initially voted against UNDRIP, maintaining their decades-long position of hostility towards Indigenous people at the UN. Israel was absent from this vote.

Across the world, student groups and university faculty have called for the academic boycott of Israeli universities, which participate in the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and dispossession of Palestinian land. Dozens of U.S.-based Native scholars have pledged to honor the academic boycott of Israel by not collaborating with Israeli universities.

Another key part of the BDS movement is the economic boycott of, and divestment from, U.S., international, and Israeli companies that profit from Israel's occupation. Israel argues that boycotting Israeli companies hurts Palestinians whom they employ; however, Israel controls natural resources, has intentionally destroyed Palestinian businesses, and has restricted Palestinians' ability to steward their own lands and support their people. Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip—nearly two million people—are completely restricted from visiting family in the West Bank or in other countries or seeking crucial medical care. Israel profits from its blockade of the Gaza Strip by allowing its own exports into Gaza for sale on the market and simultaneously destroys Palestinian agricultural land and severely restricts Gaza's exports.

The BDS movement also calls for a cultural boycott in addition to aca-

demical and economic boycotts. Israel deliberately uses culture, entertainment and the arts to normalize and whitewash their occupation of Palestinian lands. BDS calls upon artists and entertainment performers to refrain from going to Israel.

With this history of solidarity in mind, we urge all Native people and Nations to respect the Palestinian call for BDS by pledging NOT to collaborate with universities, institutions, or organizations that promote and normalize the occupation. Don't allow yourselves to be redwashed by Israel and its apologists to justify ethnic cleansing. Don't cross the picket line!

Israel's very existence depends upon the elimination of Palestinians. This is called settler colonialism. Israel is a violent settler nation that should be condemned for its crimes against humanity.

Political boycotts

While BDS calls for a cultural, economic, and academic boycotts, Indigenous nations are typically drawn into supporting Israeli settler colonialism because Israel offers recognition of Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood, when settler colonial states like the United States and Canada refuse to do so. We urge Indigenous nations to not only culturally boycott Israel, but to also refuse its recognition of our Indigenous nationhood. Instead, we urge Palestinians and Indigenous nations in North America to create, foster, and strengthen political ties through mutual recognition, aid, and support. Allying with Palestinian

nationhood offers an alternative path for anti-colonial Indigenous nationhood that doesn't normalize settler colonial regimes—whether its Israel, the United States, or Canada.

BDS activists have successfully pressured U.S. politicians to not participate in AIPAC-sponsored Israel trips. We urge Native leaders and politicians to refuse participation in Israeli- and Zionist-sponsored delegations and instead participate in Palestinian-led and -sponsored delegations only.

Anti-Semitism

According to Jewish Voice for Peace, it is anti-Semitic to claim that all Jewish people are aligned with the aims and goals of Zionism and to equate support for Israel with the idea that Israel is a Jewish-only homeland. While anti-Semitism is a real issue and on the rise as a central tenet of rightwing authoritarianism and fascism, BDS and justice for Palestine are not anti-Semitic. To say otherwise is to minimize and obfuscate the crimes of Israel and the suffering of Palestinians. We condemn pervasive anti-Indigenous, anti-Arab, and anti-Muslim sentiments, beliefs, and practices in the U.S. and Israel with a rigor and veracity that equals our condemnation of anti-Jewishness worldwide.

Our commitment

We, The Red Nation, pledge to fulfill our commitment to Palestinian liberation by doing the following:

- Holding Native celebrities, politicians, athletes, and artists accountable when they choose to cross the BDS picket line.
- Supporting the Palestinian right of return without hesitation or apology.
- Supporting BDS at all turns.
- Offering full solidarity to Palestinians in the diaspora by giving them space for organizing and speaking about Palestinian liberation.

- Extending Indigenous hospitality and kinship to our Palestinian relatives whenever they are in, or traveling to, our homelands.
- Supporting Palestinian resistance in any and all forms; when people are occupied, resistance is justified.
- Educating our membership about Palestine through delegations, readings, and events.
- Educating Native Nations and other colonized people about Palestinian Liberation and Resistance efforts.

In solidarity with all colonized peoples of the world,

—*The Red Nation*, September 7, 2019

<https://therednation.org/2019/09/07/the-liberation-of-palestine-represents-an-alternative-path-for-native-nations/>

Peacemaking is not a bilateral responsibility in a settler colonial state that perpetuates war crimes against the colonized. The notion of “mutual” peace implies that the colonized holds equal responsibility for justice. In a colonial context, colonialism is the original crime, and colonizers the aggressors.

Paris Medal “Hypocritical” Says Captain Who Rescued Migrants At Sea

BY SASHA INGBER AND VANESSA ROMO

The captain of a controversial ship that saved migrants in the Mediterranean Sea has refused to accept a medal for her work.

Pia Klemp, who is German, gained attention for rescuing thousands of stranded migrants with her crew as part of the nongovernmental organization Sea Watch International. For her efforts, she reportedly faces up to 20 years in prison in Italy, where the hardline anti-immigrant government accused her of assisting illegal immigration.

In a *Facebook* message published Tuesday night, August 20, 2019, Klemp announced that she was rejecting the Grand Vermeil Medal, which the city of Paris awards for bravery. She told Mayor Anne Hidalgo that the city was brimming with hypocrisy.

“Your police [steal] blankets from people that you force to live on the streets, while you raid protests and criminalize people that are standing up for rights of migrants and asylum seekers. ... You want to give me a medal for actions that you fight in your own ramparts,” Klemp wrote in the scathing post.

“It is time we call out hypocrite honorings and fill the void with social justice,” she said.

She went on to say that people don’t need medals. “We do not need authorities deciding about who is a ‘hero’ and who is ‘illegal,’” she said. “In fact they are in no position to make this call, because we are all equal.”

Klemp and nine of her shipmates have been under investigation in Italy after authorities impounded her ship, the *Iuventa*, in August 2017.

For years, authorities there have railed against work by rescue organizations like Sea Watch that pick up stranded migrants fleeing the Libyan

coast for Europe. More recently, Italy’s populist interior minister, Matteo Salvini, introduced a controversial security decree banning NGO migrant ships from entering Italian ports. As a result, Klemp and her team have been accused of aiding human trafficking.

The *Iuventa*, formerly a fishing vessel, is estimated to have saved 14,000 people.

As *NPR*’s Sylvia Poggioli reported, migrants from Libya and other countries torn apart by violence had been risking their lives crossing the rough waters of the Mediterranean, arriving on European shores in huge numbers for several years. But as of 2019 there has been a dramatic reduction in asylum-seekers.

“There’s been a huge drop in the first six months of this year—2,100, compared with about 14,300 the year before. That’s an 85 percent drop,” Poggioli said.

The prestigious medal for bravery was awarded to Klemp and Captain Carola Rackete in July. Like Klemp, Rackete defied Italian authorities when she rescued more than 40 migrants off the coast of Libya and rammed her way into a port on the Italian island of

Continued on page 55



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Transcript: Greta Thunberg's Speech At The U.N. Climate Action Summit

Climate activist Greta Thunberg, 16, addressed the U.N.'s Climate Action Summit in New York City on Monday, September 23, 2019. Here's the full transcript of Thunberg's speech, beginning with her response to a question about the message she has for world leaders.

"My message is that we'll be watching you.

"This is all wrong. I shouldn't be up here. I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet you all come to us young people for hope. How dare you!

"You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I'm one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!

"For more than 30 years, the science has been crystal clear. How dare you continue to look away and come here saying that you're doing enough, when the politics and solutions needed are still nowhere in sight.

"You say you hear us and that you understand the urgency. But no matter how sad and angry I am, I do not want to believe that. Because if you really understood the situation and still kept on failing to act, then you would be evil. And that I refuse to believe.

"The popular idea of cutting our emissions in half in ten years only gives us a 50 percent chance of staying below 1.5 degrees [Celsius], and the risk of setting off irreversible chain reactions beyond human control.

"Fifty percent may be acceptable to you. But those numbers do not include

tipping points, most feedback loops, additional warming hidden by toxic air pollution or the aspects of equity and climate justice. They also rely on my generation sucking hundreds-of-billions-of-tons of your CO2 out of the air with technologies that barely exist.

"So a 50 percent risk is simply not acceptable to us—we who have to live with the consequences.

"To have a 67 percent chance of staying below a 1.5 degrees global temperature rise—the best odds given by the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change]—the world had 420 gigatons of CO2 left to emit back on January 1, 2018. Today that figure is already down to less than 350 gigatons.

"How dare you pretend that this can be solved with just 'business as usual' and some technical solutions? With today's emissions levels, that remaining CO2 budget will be entirely gone within less than eight-and-a-half years.

"There will not be any solutions or plans presented in line with these figures here today, because these numbers are too uncomfortable. And you are still not mature enough to tell it like it is.

"You are failing us. But the young people are starting to understand your betrayal. The eyes of all future generations are upon you. And if you choose to fail us, I say: We will never forgive you.

"We will not let you get away with this. Right here, right now is where we draw the line. The world is waking up. And change is coming, whether you like it or not.

"Thank you."

—NPR, September 23, 2019

<https://www.npr.org/2019/09/23/763452863/transcript-greta-thunbergs-speech-at-the-u-n-climate-action-summit>



Greta Thunberg (center) participated in a youth climate protest on the Southern Ellipse of the White House, Washington DC, September 13, 2019. (Shutterstock)

Socialism is the Only Realistic Solution to Climate Change

By JOHN MOLYNEUX

A lot has been written, including by myself, on why capitalism, by its very nature, cannot tackle or stop climate change. The purpose of this article is not to repeat those arguments but to make the positive case for socialism as necessary to deal with this existential crisis for humanity.

By socialism I mean simply the combination of two things: public ownership and democratic control of production and society.

By public ownership I mean not the elimination of personal private property or the nationalization of every small business and corner shop but of the main banks, corporations, industries, services and utilities. For example, public ownership of bus and transport networks, of the health service, of one main state bank and one main state insurance company, of social housing, of waste management, of water, electricity, gas, wind and solar power production, of Larry Goodman's ABF Food Group, of Denis O'Brien's Communicorp (Irish companies) and so on.

By democratic control I mean that each major workplace—each hospital, factory, train station, school, university, construction company *etc.*—should be run by the elected and re-callable representatives of its workforce, within the context of a democratic plan for the economy and society as a whole. That would need to be proposed by government based on and accountable to democratically elected popular assemblies.

Without large-scale public ownership, capitalism and the laws of the capitalist market will continue to dominate and this will have disastrous consequences for the environment as it has done already. Without democratic control you have not got socialism but state capitalism¹ with a new ruling class of state bureaucrats which, as has been

seen in Stalinist Russia and in China, also has terrible ecological consequences because it subordinates the needs of the people and nature to accumulation for accumulation's sake in competition with other states.



Only through socialism will it be possible to generate both the political will at the top and the genuine popular support and collaboration to achieve the immense coordinated transformation of the national and international economy necessary in the current emergency. Only public ownership and democratic planning can coordinate the establishment and expansion of free public transport, the urgent transition to renewal energy, the mass retrofitting of homes and a vast program of forestation and rewilding.

A just transition

Most of the climate and environmental movement support the idea of a just transition but only socialism with its commitment to ending class privilege and inequality can actually deliver this. In any society where there are billionaires alongside homeless people, and immense divisions between rich countries and poor countries as a result of imperialism and globalized capitalism, all attempts at transition to

ending carbon emissions, even where they are made, will inevitably be structured and blighted by this inequality. The rich will look to protect themselves and their life styles in gated communities in the uplands while trying to shift the burden of paying for the transition onto ordinary people.

Take the example of transport. If, as is absolutely essential, we get people out of the private car and onto free public transport, what will be the consequences of this? Under capitalism it will mean the bosses of the giant auto companies (Volkswagen, Toyota, General Motors, *etc.*) will see which way the wind is blowing, loot their own companies and put the proceeds in their Swiss bank accounts, while throwing their hundreds-of-thousands of workers on the scrap heap. Under socialism the auto industry CEOs and big shareholders could be relieved of their ill-gotten gains while the run-down of the industry is managed in a way that retrains and re-employs the workers in socially useful work, *e.g.*, building wind turbines or buses.

The same applies to flying. If air travel were to be reduced, as it must be to save the planet,² under capitalism this would most likely be done by a price mechanism so that executives would continue to jet round the world to their conferences while ordinary people had to give up their holidays to Spain and the Greek Islands. That in turn would mean redundancy for airline workers and crisis in the Spanish and Greek tourist industry. Again only socialist planning could solve this.

And it would be the same for the utterly deadly coal industry. When Margaret Thatcher destroyed the British coal industry in 1984-5 she did it for entirely capitalist "economic" reasons—there wasn't an ounce of

environmentalism in it—but the effect on mining communities and villages was devastating; many have still not recovered. Avoiding such communal destruction on a vastly greater scale requires socialist planning.

Thinking globally

Climate justice on a global scale is totally unthinkable without socialism. Five hundred years ago the different continents and regions of the world were roughly at the same level of economic development; for example China was every bit as economically advanced as Europe and India was seen as a rich country. Centuries of capitalism, slavery and imperialism, with the latter growing out of the former, created an immensely uneven world: industrial production, wealth and power became concentrated in the so-called advanced “West”—essentially Europe and North America—with poverty, starvation and lack of industrial development concentrated in Asia, Africa and Latin America, now usually called the Global South.

This pattern has changed somewhat in recent decades with massive capitalist development in China and other parts of South and East Asia but it is still a massive reality across much of the world. Historically and still today the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America have contributed least to climate change but will be hugely disproportionately affected by it. For example a 1.5-2 C global temperature increase will be a death sentence for much of Africa because it will destroy their agriculture; melting Himalayan glaciers and rising sea levels will utterly devastate the deeply impoverished Bangladesh.

This cannot be challenged or dealt with without socialist redistribution of wealth and socialist planning internationally. Only socialist internationalism based on the common interests of the world’s working people could achieve such international cooperation; any capitalist option, no matter

how “green” its intentions, would degenerate into national and international rivalries, which would destroy any coherent international planning.

Then there is the question of overall economic growth. There is a growing view in the environmental movement that the idea of continuous economic growth is completely unsustainable. Greta Thunberg, in her speech to the UN, spoke of “fairy tales of eternal economic growth.”

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But under capitalism stagnation or, even more so, de-growth is an immediate crisis, a recession when it is short and a “great depression” when it is extended, spelling mass unemployment, poverty and austerity (with the risk of fascism thrown in.) This is because capitalism has a drive to growth built into its very fabric. Achieving a non-growth economy (measured in terms of GDP) or, should it prove essential, a de-growth in certain areas would also only be possible on the basis of socialist planning combined with the popular consent that would come from mass involvement in the democratic planning process.

Escalating natural disasters

Then there is the fact that the proliferation of extreme weather events asso-

ciated with climate change has already begun, as is evident from the numerous disasters currently observable round the world. This is clearly going to intensify in the years ahead. Even in the event of a Damascene conversion by the world’s rulers—of which there is no sign—it is unavoidable, due to the climate change already built into the system, that we will see a dramatic escalation of “natural” catastrophes—storms, floods, droughts, fires, *etc.*—over the next five to ten years. But we know from abundant experience that the way capitalism responds to such events is through a combination of crocodile tears (for a very short while,) followed by callous indifference and abandonment.

This pattern has repeated itself through the Bush Administration’s response to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005, to Superstorm Sandy in 2012 under Obama and Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico in 2017. In all of these cases all sorts of pledges of aid and reconstruction were made in the immediate aftermath of disaster only for them to disappear into thin air when it came to delivery. Years later people who lost their homes and everything in them were still unable to return.

The case of Hurricane Maria was particularly atrocious. Initially the death toll was officially claimed to be 64. A year later it was admitted to be 2,975³ and many critics argue that it was really much higher. Bitterness at the appalling response to the Hurricane, by both the Trump administration and the local governor, was a significant factor in the great revolt of the Puerto Rican people earlier this year.

On a lesser scale similar scenarios were played out over the Grenfell Tower Fire⁴ and in relation to flood victims in Ireland. Moreover, class and racial privileges will continue to operate even within the extreme weather events as happened with Katrina in New Orleans and the more frequent and extensive these are the more this

will be the case. The rich and white will be saved, while the poor and Black will be sacrificed and demonized as “dangerous looters.”

When we grasp the fact that escalating climate change will make events like the California fires, Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas and flooding in Bangladesh a regular and ongoing occurrence—regardless of what is done to stop it now—it is clear that a socialist response at governmental and societal level is necessary to cope with them and minimize the death toll and human suffering. In other words we will need huge state intervention resting on popular participation and solidarity to rescue the victims, feed the hungry and house the homeless.

Speaking of housing the homeless it is worth noting that rich societies such as the US, Britain and Ireland, operating on a capitalist basis, cannot even do this in normal times: what will they be like in time of catastrophe?

Moreover, rising temperatures and extreme weather will inevitably increase the flow of refugees—probably massively so—because swathes of the planet will cease to be habitable, and in the next decade, not the end of the century. How will the better-placed countries respond? On the basis of a capitalist economy, an economy based on the profit motive, it’s hard to see how there will be any even moderately humane response.

Again, only a socialist economy and society—which harnesses the collective labor and talents of all and understands that with every new person comes a new and equal contributor to society regardless of nationality, color or ethnicity—will respond with dignity and humanity.

A third alternative?

Finally, some imagine that there might be a third alternative, neither capitalism nor socialism, but a return to some kind of pre-capitalist society

based on small scale ecologically sound self-sufficient villages or communes. Whatever one thinks of the moral value of such communities as experiments or pre-figurations of life in an imagined future, the fact is such a lifestyle is simply not an option for the vast majority of ordinary people in our society and will not and cannot gain any large scale popular take up any more than did the *phalansteres* of the early nineteenth century (communes inspired by French utopian socialist, Charles Fourier) or the hippy communes of the sixties.

And when we think of a world of seven billion people in a state of crisis, the idea that such a “third” or “deep green” alternative would be viable for the majority is completely untenable. Are we saying the 100-million-people in Guangdong (the hyper industrialized and urbanized region of South China) or the 24-million-people of Shanghai should go back to rural communes? This is literally not possible.

Only a solution in which the 100-million of Guangdong or the 20-million of Mumbai or the eight-million of Paris or the one-and-half-million of Dublin (together with all the millions in smaller towns and in the countryside) take collective ownership and control of the immense productive resources generated by workers’ labor under capitalism and move forward to a society based on production for human need offers a real way forward for humanity.

Unfortunately there is a possible “third alternative” to both socialism and capitalist business as usual in a society in extreme crisis. That alternative is fascism or some other form of ultra-right authoritarian dictatorship. This would not abolish either class inequality or capitalism but it might partially bring private capital under state control and it would certainly abolish democracy, even in its current very limited parliamentary form.

And in conditions of acute climate crisis it would mean, and would be premised on, racist barbarity that globally would exceed that of the holocaust and the Second World War. This has not happened yet but we see a whiff of it with Trump, Bolsonaro and Salvini. Parliamentary democracy and the limited democratic rights gained by working people should, of course, be defended against this fascist threat but in the immense crisis we are entering, capitalist business as usual will become less and less a viable option.

A socialist solution is an historic necessity.

John Molyneux is editor of Irish Marxist Review and a supporter of People Before Profit. This article was first published on the socialist website Rebel.

—*Climate and Capitalism*, October 1, 2019

<https://climateandcapitalism.com/2019/10/01/why-socialism-is-the-only-realistic-solution-to-climate-change/>

1 As James Connolly put it in *State Monopoly versus Socialism* back in 1899, “Socialism properly implies above all things the co-operative control by the workers of the machinery of production; without this co-operative control the public ownership by the State is not Socialism—it is only State capitalism.”

2 There are currently no signs of this happening—witness the expansion of Heathrow Airport and the fact that on the day of Global Climate Strike Leo Varadkar was opening a new runway at Knock.

3 Baldwin, Sarah Lynch; Begnaud, David. “Hurricane Maria caused an estimated 2,975 deaths in Puerto Rico, new study finds.” *CBS News*. Retrieved August 28, 2018.

4 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grenfell_Tower_fire

Capitalism Is Destroying the Planet—Let’s Destroy Capitalism!

AN INTERNATIONAL DECLARATION OF THE TROTSKYIST FRACTION,
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL ON THE GLOBAL CLIMATE STRIKE

September 20 to 27, 2019 was a week of action called by the Global Climate Strike. The call was supported by movements such as Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion, as well as hundreds of environmental groups and ecologists around the world. The organizers demanded that governments declare a climate emergency and adopt urgent measures to halt the environmental crisis. Faced with the urgency of the climate crisis, we need to develop a strategy that attacks the cause of the eco-social catastrophe that threatens us all: the capitalist system.

Capitalism and the global environmental crisis

Capitalism has prospered for centuries by exploiting nature, either as an “inexhaustible” supply of resources to

produce commodities, or as a waste dump. But the earth’s ability to “endure” the destructive processes of capital is reaching its limit.

Capital’s need for constant growth has led to the interruption of a complex natural cycle that took millions of years to develop. This has created a rift in the “metabolism” (to borrow Marx’s term) between society and nature.

Climate change and the crises of the biological cycles of carbon, water, phosphorus and nitrogen; the acidification of the oceans; the accelerated loss of biodiversity; the changes in the quality of soil and chemical pollution by industry—these are some of the terrible expressions of a completely unprecedented situation for humanity, namely the tendency toward the destruction of our natural conditions

for production and reproduction. This destructive tendency is directly related to the social and material deprivation of hundreds-of-millions of people who suffer misery, unemployment and precarious employment, which capitalism needs to ensure its profitability and reproduction.

The barbarism represented by the recent fires in the Amazon—which were the product of incentives for deforestation (and which were intensified by Brazil’s right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro,) the relaxation of environmental laws and the direct action of large landowners and ranchers who started the fires—is just another episode in the continual process of environmental degradation and destruction. The phenomenon of uncontrolled forest fires is growing more frequent,



Graphic: Sébastien Thibault

as shown by the fires ravaging Siberia and sub-Saharan Africa (which are more numerous, though less destructive than those in the Amazon,) as well as the fires in California last autumn and in many regions of Europe. Climate change and the thirst for profit are intensifying them.

Climate change, an undeniable reality

There is a broad scientific consensus that climate change is related to the dizzying increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere as a result of human activity. But the problem is not human activity in general. The problem is the activities carried out within a capitalist mode of production. Since 1880, the average temperature on the earth's surface has risen by almost one degree Celsius, according to different investigative bodies. An increase in the global average temperature began during the Industrial Revolution and has accelerated in the neoliberal era.

Projections by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicate that the average global surface temperature could increase by two to five degrees Celsius (3.6 and nine degrees Fahrenheit) in the coming decades. Ocean levels could rise by 18 to 59 centimeters (seven to 23 inches). The IPCC warns that past and future emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) will continue to contribute to warming for more than a millennium. At the same time, CO₂ particles in the atmosphere recently exceeded 400-parts-per-million (ppm), and may even reach 500 ppm in the coming decades, levels never seen in human history.

According to the latest report by this UN agency (whose estimates are usually very conservative compared to other studies,) emissions of greenhouse gases would have to be reduced by 45 percent by the year 2030—in less than 11 years—in order to avoid hitting the critical threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming. Above this level, there will

be a generalized increase in ocean levels, extreme weather events and food shortages. The need for drastic measures against climate change is undeniable.

Faced with the urgency of the climate crisis, we need to develop a strategy that attacks the cause of the eco-social catastrophe that threatens us all: the capitalist system.

For many people, these estimates may seem abstract. But they become concrete when their real consequences are felt, in the form of the stronger climate-related catastrophic phenomena, with increased duration and frequency—uncontrollable fires sweeping through entire cities around the globe (which is also associated with the spread of invasive species and forest management practices devoted to monoculture for profit,) extreme heat waves, massive floods or catastrophic droughts. According to the UN, there are currently more than 20 million climate refugees. If the global temperature rises to more than two degrees, it is estimated that this number will grow to 280 million. Air pollution caused by vehicles (gases and particles) and industrial production in large cities kills nine million people a year—800,000 in Europe alone.

Global warming is one of the most devastating expressions of the destructive nature of the capitalist system toward the environment. But it is not the only one. Capitalism also leads to the pollution of our air and water, soil degradation, deforestation, and the destruction of biodiversity. According to one study, the size of vertebrate populations has decreased by an average of 60 percent between 1970 and 2014. This trend will accelerate if the

ecological crisis is not halted, and could produce a mass extinction of the planet's biodiversity. The entire planet has been transformed into a giant garbage dump for the household, industrial and agricultural waste generated by capitalist production, distribution and consumption patterns.

Climate denialism and “green capitalism:” two sides of the same coin

Faced with the catastrophic scenario that global warming entails, the powers of international capitalism waver between two strategies: On the one hand, there is a campaign to deny scientific evidence as a supposed “ideology;” on the other, there is a strategy to promote “green” or “sustainable” capitalism. Green capitalism defends farcical international agreements and proposes partial and limited changes to productive systems, while strengthening the model of capitalist accumulation and exploitation.

Among the climate denialists are Trump, the Republican Party and the Tea Party in the United States, Bolsonaro in Brazil, and a small minority of scientists. But its driving force is the multinational corporations that bear the greatest responsibility for emitting greenhouse gases that cause climate change. Yet while they are sponsoring climate denial campaigns, these large capitalist corporations are completely aware of the consequences of climate change and its socio-political effects, and they are preparing to respond to its implications in the fields of security and foreign policy. The most concentrated sectors of capital are proposing militarization as an instrument to adapt to climate change: more private armies and security forces that will eventually be able to defend the islands of prosperity in oceans of misery and decay.

On the other side is green capitalism, promoted by the U.S. Democratic Party, political leaders of the main European countries including Angela

Merkel, Emmanuel Macron and Pedro Sánchez, and various green parties. This list includes many booming capitalist corporations, international organizations and even environmental NGOs. This is an exercise in synergy between neoliberalism and the “green economy.” They speak out against global warming and agree, in expensive climate summits, on environmental measures and big targets for emission reduction. In all cases, these have been nothing more than diplomatic documents without practical implications.

At the same time, they talk about fixing the environment. This would include limiting the production of toxic substances and the destruction of natural resources, while simultaneously developing new “gentle” technologies. They argue that this would be a new source of economic growth, since the capitalist corporations would extract hefty profits.

The Green Party in Germany, for example, proposes “saving the German economy” with measures for an ecological transition, while supporting the militarization of German imperialism (they called for intervention in the conflict with Iran under European leadership.) This is a policy of “green imperialism” to solve the crisis of German capitalism.

One of the most recent measures of this kind, pushed forward by the Merkel government and the Green Party in Germany, but increasingly adopted by other governments and environmental groups, seeks to implement a tax on CO2 emissions. This would tax consumption of meat, gasoline and flights to finance the ecological transition of industry. This kind of tax would lead to a rise in prices and weaken the purchasing power of the working class, but it would not have a serious effect on emissions. In short, the neoliberal strategy of green capitalism ends up being a sort of light denialism.

Capitalism’s very essence is the expansion of profit and accumulation

at any cost, even if this includes the material destruction of the planet. As China and the United States, together with the European Union, are producing most of the greenhouse gases that are annihilating the troposphere, and the capitalists waver between denial and powerless summits to manage the environmental crisis, the rest of the world continues to suffer the effects of climate change.

That is why green capitalism is a pipe dream. It claims to effectively eliminate the causes of the global environmental catastrophe that threatens us and promote a sustainable development of humanity and the species that populate the planet. But it can do no such thing. The solution to the global climate crisis cannot emerge from the system that created it.

This destructive tendency is directly related to the social and material deprivation of hundreds-of-millions of people who suffer misery, unemployment and precarious employment, which capitalism needs to ensure its profitability and reproduction.

There are a large number of environmental groups and NGOs in this field, including the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), WWF (World Wildlife Fund), and even Greenpeace, that work together with the evangelists of capitalist ecological efficiency: oil companies like Shell and Exxon, mining corporations like Barrick Gold and huge behemoths like Walmart, Cargill and Monsanto. In this way, they provide a “green”

cover for the plunder of natural resources all over the planet.

Green reformism and the Green New Deal

On the spectrum of the defenders of green capitalism, there is a reformist variant that has gained a lot of attention recently: the Green New Deal, which calls for a program with hints of neo-Keynesianism in order to face the crisis. In the United States, this policy is supported by some candidates in the primaries of the Democratic Party, including Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, and also by the self-styled “democratic socialist” Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. The GND is also appearing in speeches and programs by European social-liberal parties like the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Workers Party) or neoreformist tendencies like Podemos (Spanish Political Party).

According to Ocasio-Cortez, the GND would allow the U.S. to transition to 100 percent renewable energy within ten years, while creating millions of jobs linked to the construction of an efficient electrical grid throughout the country based on renewable technology, among other measures. How? By subsidizing billion-dollar corporations, the ones responsible for the current ecological crisis, so they can develop infrastructure to get us out of it. For this, they are to receive massive subsidies from the state.

The idea behind this perspective is that if the governments of the central industrialized countries in the world and the big multinational corporations become aware of the situation, they will be able to adopt measures to preserve the environment. Both the Green New Deal and similar proposals (like the UN Agenda 2020), which are reference points for many “progressive” forces around the planet, are based on the idea that “sustainable capitalism” is possible and that the corporations that created the crisis can become the saviors of the planet. But the illusion that

the contradictions between capitalist interests and environmental preservation—affecting the lives of hundreds-of-millions of people—can be resolved is utopian and reactionary.

The capitalist mode of production is in total contradiction with nature and its processes of development. For capital, the determining factor in this process is merely quantitative. Fierce competition forces each capitalist to constantly seek ways to replace workers with machines that increase the productivity of labor and the mass of goods thrown onto the market. This increases the amount of natural resources needed to produce them. The constant repetition of production and reproduction of capital ruthlessly eats up all resources, without taking into account the time required for their natural production and regeneration.

The cause of this type of environmentally destructive development, rather than capitalist irrationality, is its inherent logic. It is the logical result of an economic system whose engine is the capitalists' thirst for profit.

The youth climate rebellion: its potential and its limits

On August 20, 2018, the young Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg stood in front of the Swedish parliament with a banner that read: "School Strike for Climate." This action inspired the movement "Fridays for Future" in European cities. Students skip classes and demonstrate against the global environmental crisis under the slogan "There Is No Planet B." This has gained more and more supporters, mobilizing hundreds-of-thousands in hundreds of cities across the continent.

Other ecological movements have also developed, including "Ende Gelände" in Germany and "Extinction Rebellion" in the United Kingdom. They have similar demands but different methods of struggle.

The first global climate strike was called for March 15. Hundreds-of-

thousands of young people took to the streets in different cities around the world as part of a student strike against climate change. In Madrid, Berlin, Paris, Vienna, Rome and other cities in Europe and the world, the demonstrations were massive. On May 24, there was a new global call for a student strike, which mobilized millions. A new Global Climate Strike took place September 20 and 27, with calls for the citizenry and other social organizations to join.

The organizers demanded that governments declare a climate emergency and adopt urgent measures to stop an environmental crisis that "is the result of a model of production and consumption that has proven to be inadequate for satisfying the needs of many people, that puts our survival at risk, and unfairly impacts the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world."

These measures include reducing net greenhouse emissions to zero and preventing global temperatures from rising above 1.5 degrees Celsius. To this end, they propose actions aimed at abandoning fossil fuels and substituting them with renewable energies, actions such as blocking the construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure, implementing a nonnuclear energy model and the reorganizing the production system.

These movements also point out the relationship between growing social inequality and the degradation of the environment. They propose that the transition to an "eco-sustainable model" has to take into account the inequalities produced according to social class, sex, national origin, *etc.* In the framework of this transition, they call for different areas of production, including energy, transport and food, to be democratized and put under the control of citizen bodies.

The fact that young people are mobilizing against the barbarity of environmental destruction is enor-

mously promising. In addition, the use of strikes to make their demands heard, and the call on all organizations of civil society to join, is an innovation that has not been done before. This gives more strength to the movement.

Faced with the "infernal powers" that capitalism has created, and whose consequences now seem inevitable, the young activists of Fridays for Future and similar movements are increasingly aware of this reality. Although often in an abstract or indirect way, they name the capitalist system as the cause of the current crisis.

They still lack, however, a defined program and strategy to overcome it. Their perspective is limited to denunciation. They demand that capitalist politicians take urgent measures, or they have embraced the proposals of the so-called green parties, but without proposals to move against the interests (and property) of those who bear the greatest responsibility for the current situation: the big multinational corporations.

Nor do they position themselves against "green" measures that threaten the majority of the working class and the poor masses, such as consumption taxes. On the contrary, in many countries the movement is demanding the implementation of even higher taxes on CO2 emissions than the capitalist parties are proposing. This would raise the prices of consumer goods for the majority of the population. In order for the youth to win the working class for the fight against climate change, they need a program that clearly states that it is the capitalists, and not the working masses, who must pay for the crisis.

In broad sectors of the movement, the dominant logic is that the key to solving the ecological crisis is changes in individual consumption, focusing their attention on "irresponsible consumption." Obviously, capitalist production, which generates consumption cycles that span the globe, molds "consumers." In this way, individual human

behavior contributes to the ecological crisis, and it is desirable to encourage new forms of consumption by creating environmental consciousness.

Yet changing individual behavior often has only a negligible effect on capitalism's environmental consequences. Its effect is, moreover, highly unequal. An Oxfam report from 2015 showed that the richest ten percent of the planet causes half of CO2 emissions, while the poorest 50 percent (3.5 billion people) is responsible for only ten percent.

The logic of focusing the environmental movement on changes in individual behavior implies two strategic problems. First, it encourages an individualist conception, blurring or directly obscuring the "center of gravity" that needs to be attacked, namely imperialist capitalism, the big corporations and the capitalist states. Second, it strengthens the reactionary argument that "the people are responsible for the crisis," which leads to measures that force the working class and the poorest sectors of society to pay for the environmental crisis. This argument preserves the system and benefits the capitalists, and it prevents the one social force that could confront capitalism from joining the struggle.

One of the lessons provided by the Yellow Vest movement in France—an immense social movement triggered by an increase in the gasoline tax—is that the "ecological transition" cannot fall on the shoulders of the working class and poor masses. In the context of the ecological crisis, the central problem is not the "division" between those who pollute and those who do not, but rather between the social majority that is already paying the costs of the crisis and the capitalists that caused it.

The only way to confront the global environmental crisis caused by capitalism is for the majority of the population to join the struggle, with the working class at the forefront. This is because the contradiction between capital and

labor is not just one of capitalism's many contradictions; it is the contradiction that structures capitalism itself. If the relationship between society and nature is mediated by production, it is only by revolutionizing production that the metabolism with nature can be rationally regulated. That is why the working class, which is the only authentically productive class in society, can knit together a social alliance that can pull the "emergency break" on the coming disaster.

There are important examples of unity between the environmental movement and sectors of the working class. That was the case with the Harland and Wolff shipyard in Ireland, where the Titanic was built. That shipyard was declared bankrupt, but the workers took over the plant demanding its nationalization in order to produce clean energy. There have also been calls by workers for the unions to call a climate strike, for example, in Portugal, Germany and Spain.

These initiatives are extremely important. In an intuitive yet correct way, they point to the "social subject" that can lead the struggle for an alternative to environmental destruction: the working class.

The need for the working class to join this movement with its own demands and its own methods of struggle (strikes, blockades and pickets) is vital for developing the movement. It is necessary to help break down the prejudices that exist in wide sectors of the working class about the environmental movement—prejudices often justified by policies supposedly in "defense of the environment" that attack the working class, equating it with the polluting bosses and worsening its living conditions.

Above all, it is necessary to confront the reactionary role played by the majority of the bureaucratized trade unions. Especially in the sectors of heavy industry and energy, the union

bureaucracies act as the capitalists' best partners. Many times they oppose any measures for ecological transition, however superficial they may be, under the slogan of "saving jobs." What they are really saving is the capitalists' profits, tying the destiny of the working class to the success of the bosses.

Facing the Climate Strike, the unions in Europe and the United States mostly oppose it—or in some cases, such as in Germany, they support it demagogically while refusing to organize any actions that would supposedly be "illegal." That is why, alongside the broadest self-organization of the youth, it is necessary to denounce the reactionary positions of the bureaucratic unions, which for decades have ignored or played down ecological problems. We must demand that they call a strike and put their organizations in the service of the struggle against the capitalists responsible for the looming catastrophe that threatens us all.

The declaration in Germany by a group of rank-and-file trade union activists called *ver.di aktiv* (which is supported by RIO, the Revolutionary Internationalist Organization) has received more than 500 signatures from trade unionists across the country and from different sectors. It demands that the large trade unions call for a strike. This is a small but significant expression of that policy.

An anti-capitalist transitional program to prevent a catastrophe

Faced with capitalism's absolutely irrational perspective, the need for drastic and urgent measures is evident. But these cannot depend on the good will of the governments of the imperialist powers that are principally responsible for the current disaster. Nor can they depend on the new agendas promoted by big corporations and bourgeois parties in the name of "green capitalism."

The only solution to the catastrophe that threatens us is to take the present

and the future into our hands by subjecting the world economy to a rational plan. Or, as Marx said, through “the introduction of reason into the sphere of economic relations.” This will only be possible if the economy is in the hands of the only class that, as a result of its objective situation and material interests, has an interest in preventing a catastrophe: the working class.

We, the organizations that make up the Trotskyist Fraction—Fourth International, fight for this perspective within the workers’ movement, among the youth and inside the environmental movement. Faced with the farce of climate summits and the promises of green capitalism, we must fight for a transitional program aimed at establishing a completely rational and ecological reorganization of production, distribution and consumption, with measures including the following:

- The expropriation of the entire energy industry, under the democratic control of the workers, supervised by committees of consumers. In this way, the energy sector can advance toward a sustainable and diversified energy mix, prohibiting fracking (of gas and oil) and other extractive technologies, which would drastically reduce CO2 emissions by developing renewable energies with low environmental impact, in consultation with local communities. At the same time, abusive prices for electricity would be reduced.
- The nationalization without compensation of all transport companies, under workers’ control and with a perspective of technological reconversion. This should also include big automotive companies to achieve a massive reduction in automobile production and private transport, while developing public transport at all levels.

- The struggle for safe working conditions at all factories and companies, free of toxins and pollutants, alongside the reduction of working hours and the distribution of all necessary hours among all available workers, without a reduction in pay. This should be part of a general plan for a rational and unified reorganization of production and distribution in the hands of the working class and its organizations.

An increase in the global average temperature began during the Industrial Revolution and has accelerated in the neoliberal era.

- The expropriation of big landowners and agrarian reform for small farmers and indigenous people. The expulsion of imperialist companies and the confiscation of their goods. The expropriation under workers’ control of the entire (exporting) agribusiness complex. Monopoly of foreign trade and nationalization of the banks to finance the conversion and diversification of agricultural production along sustainable and democratic lines. Prohibition of glyphosate, progressive elimination of all pesticides and prohibition of marketing them, and investment in research in alternative methods, such as ecological agriculture, among others.
- The establishment of well-financed funds for the conservation of biodiversity, including both species and the planet’s great variety of ecosystems, with special emphasis on those most

at risk. Regeneration of polluted areas (seas, rivers, lakes, forests and meadows) by imposing progressive taxes on big business.

- The prohibition of polluting mountaintop removal mining, and the nationalization of traditional mining under workers’ control. The development of an industry to recover minerals from electronic garbage and the implementation of “urban mining” by recycling scarce minerals from electronic devices. Expulsion of the imperialist mining companies and confiscation of their assets to repair the damages caused to local communities. Prohibition of the private appropriation of public goods, such as water.
- Debt cancellation for all dependent and semi-colonial countries, debt being a form of coercion to make these countries adopt (anti-environmental) neoliberal restructuring. The expropriation of all polluting companies in peripheral countries. Resolving the ecological crisis in those countries is unthinkable without completely breaking with imperialism.
- Opening borders and closing migrant detention centers in the context of the migration crisis, which is a product of poverty and imperialist plunder, but also in many cases also of the climate crisis.
- A radical policy that aims to avoid waste and recycle it. The existing facilities for filtering, purification, *etc.*, are not enough. A fundamental shift in industry is needed to avoid pollution a priori and at the source. This also means ending planned obsolescence.
- The lifting of business secrets (which allows, for example, the concealment of toxic emissions) and the obligation to keep public registers

specifying the raw materials and products used in production.

This program, along with other measures of immediate necessity, is obviously impossible to achieve within the framework of capitalism. To implement it, we need a revolutionary strategy to decisively confront those responsible for the disaster. The youth who today take to the streets all over the world to fight for “climate justice” face the challenge radicalizing their program, of raising the only realistic perspective to stop the catastrophe: pushing the class struggle forward to end the capitalist system and to put the world economy into the hands of the working class.

Socialism or barbarism: for a revolutionary and internationalist strategy

Many scientists, environmentalists, international organizations and even large media outlets characterize the current moment as one of “civilizational crisis.” According to this idea, we are past the point of no return and can hope only to adapt to the disaster. In the face of this catastrophe foretold, capitalist ideology sows fear, which underpins both security policies and supposed individual solutions under the leadership of capitalist governments and big business. It also denies a liberating perspective. From cinema and television we get a constant stream of dystopias: it is easier to imagine post-nuclear worlds, alien invasions and even zombies than a society that rationally guarantees the survival of the planet and all its species.

Faced with the prospect of a catastrophe, the fundamental problem is whether the adaptation to climate change will be in the hands of capital or in the hands of the dispossessed majority of society. For this reason, the ecological crisis makes it necessary to fight for communism as the only perspective for the salvation of humanity and the planet. Communism means a society

of free and associated producers in harmony with nature. In this struggle, the working class must position itself as the hegemonic subject, taking environmental demands not only as part of the struggle to improve their living conditions, but also to offer a progressive solution to the ecocide that capitalism is preparing.

This is the indispensable precondition for establishing a system based on solidarity, which rationally reestablishes the natural metabolism between humanity and nature, and which reorganizes production in a way that respects natural cycles without exhausting our resources. This would simultaneously end poverty and social inequality.

In the face of the environmental catastrophe that threatens us, the dilemma posed by Rosa Luxemburg—“socialism or barbarism”—acquires a renewed significance. On the eve of the imperialist carnage that began in 1914, the great Polish revolutionary warned that “if the proletariat fails to fulfill its tasks as a class, if it fails to realize socialism, we will all crash together into a catastrophe.” For Luxemburg, socialism is not a destiny predetermined by history. The only “inevitable” thing was the collapse that capitalism was leading to, and the calamities that would accompany this process if the working class failed to prevent it.

In our century, the era of crises, wars and revolutions has reemerged, threatening the working class and the peoples of the world not only with war and misery, but also with environmental catastrophe and the potential destruction of the planet itself. A truly ecological project that confronts the environmental crisis to which capitalism is leading us can only be communist. The working class, allied with the poor masses, must be subjectively prepared to fight for this program as the vanguard of revolutionary struggle, breaking the resistance of the capitalists.

The Trotskyist Fraction—Fourth International (FT-CI) is an international revolutionary organization which publishes the La Izquierda Diario / Left Voice network of online newspapers in 12 countries and eight languages.

—Left Voice, September 15, 2019

<https://www.leftvoice.org/capitalism-is-destroying-the-planet-lets-destroy-capitalism>

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Massive Climate Strike

Largest protest since the start of the Iraq War with over six million people worldwide

By Eoin Higgins

September 27, 2019—Climate strikes over the last seven days drew over 6.6 million people into the streets around the world, putting the week-long action on par with the 2003 global protest against the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

Friday's 600,000 strong demonstration in Montreal made the total number of people who took part in the seven days of action "almost certainly the largest demonstration our planet has yet seen about climate change," said *350.org* founder Bill McKibben.

In a statement, *350* gave the numbers:

From 20th to 27th of September, 1.4 million people took to the streets in Germany, over one million in Italy, over 600,000 in Canada, over 500,000 in the United States, 350,000 in Australia and another 350,000 in the United Kingdom, 195,000 in France, 170,000 in New Zealand, 150,000 in Austria, 50,000 in Ireland, 70,000 in

Sweden, 42,000 in the Netherlands, 20,000 in Brazil, 21,000 in Finland, 15,000 in Peru, 13,000 in Mexico, 13,000 in India, 10,000 in Denmark, 10,000 in Turkey, 10,000 in Pakistan, 6,000 in Hungary, 5,000 in South Korea, 5,000 in Japan, 5,000 in South Africa, more than 3,500 in Chile, 3,000 in the Pacific, 2,000 in Singapore and much more, since many locations are still striking and the final count is not yet confirmed.

People power is more powerful than the people in power.

"The week of Global Climate Strikes is on par with the 2003 anti-Iraq war protest as one of the largest coordinated global protests in history," *350* said.

"We strike because we believe there is no Planet B and that we should do

everything in our power to stop this crisis," Fridays for Future Turkey organizer Atlas Sarrafo lu said. "Otherwise my dreams of having a happy future will be taken away from me as well as all the other kids all over the world."

Organizers of the global movement said that they were pleased with the turnout and that the movement wasn't going anywhere.

"This week was a demonstration of the power of our movement," said Fridays For Future International. "It was inspiring and historic. People power is more powerful than the people in power."

"It was the biggest ever climate mobilization, and it's only the beginning," the group said. "The momentum is on our side and we are not going anywhere."

350 executive director May Boeve said that the climate actions would continue until policies improve.

"We will keep fighting until the politicians stop ignoring the science, and the fossil fuel companies are held responsible for their crimes against our future, as they should have been decades ago," said Boeve.

—Common Dreams, September 27, 2019

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/2019/09/27/over-6-million-people-worldwide-climate-strikes-largest-coordinated-global-uprising?cd->



Earth Stopped Getting Greener 20 Years Ago

BY CHELSEA HARVEY

August 15, 2019—The world is gradually becoming less green, scientists have found. Plant growth is declining all over the planet, and new research links the phenomenon to decreasing moisture in the air—a consequence of climate change.

The study published yesterday in *Science Advances* points to satellite observations that revealed expanding vegetation worldwide during much of the 1980s and 1990s. But then, about 20 years ago, the trend stopped.

Since then, more than half of the world's vegetated landscapes have been experiencing a “browning” trend, or decrease in plant growth, according to the authors.

Climate records suggest the declines are associated with a metric known as vapor pressure deficit—that's the difference between the amount of moisture the air actually holds versus the maximum amount of moisture it could be holding. A high deficit is sometimes referred to as an atmospheric drought.

Since the late 1990s, more than half of the world's vegetated landscapes have experienced a growing deficit, or drying pattern.

Climate models indicate that vapor pressure deficit is likely to continue increasing as the world warms—a pattern that “might have a substantially negative impact on vegetation,” the authors write.

It's not the first study to document the global decline in vegetation. A 2010 study in *Science* was among the first to demonstrate that the greening increases of the 1990s had stalled or reversed. That study also suggested that the declines were probably water-related.

That's not to say every last corner of Earth is losing its vegetation. Some recent studies have revealed that parts

of the Arctic are “greening” as the chilly landscape warms. And there's increasing plant growth still happening in other regions of the world, as well.

But on a global scale, averaged across the entire planet, the trend is pointing downward.

The declines challenge an argument often presented by skeptics of mainstream climate science to downplay the consequences of global warming: the idea that plants will grow faster with larger amounts of carbon dioxide. The argument hinges on the idea that food supplies will increase.

It's largely a red herring, as climate scientists have patiently explained for years. Rising CO₂ does benefit plants, at least up to a point, but it's just one factor. Plants are also affected by many other symptoms of climate change, including rising temperatures, changing weather patterns, shifts in water availability and so on.

Many researchers have suggested that climate change, on the whole, is likely to be a net negative for much of the world's vegetation, including agricultural crops. The new study would

seem to suggest that those consequences are already in motion.

And as climate change affects plant growth, declining plant growth may also affect the pace of climate change.

Just last week, an anticipated report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change emphasized the importance of land and vegetation as climate mitigation tools (*Climatewire*, August 8, 2019). Forests and other vegetated landscapes tend to be significant carbon sinks, sucking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and storing it away. Less growth, on the other hand, means less carbon storage.

Atmospheric moisture, like carbon dioxide, is just one factor among many that may affect the world's vegetation in the coming years. But since the drying trends seem to have had a particularly significant impact over the last two decades, the authors suggest that it “must be examined carefully when evaluating future carbon cycle responses.”

—*Scientific American*, August 15, 2019

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/earth-stopped-getting-greener-20-years-ago/>



pixhere.com

Dakota Access Pipeline Activists Face 110 Years in Prison

BY AILEEN BROWN

Two women who vandalized the Dakota Access pipeline in an effort to halt construction have been indicted on charges that carry up to 110 years in prison and hundreds-of-thousands-of-dollars in fines. They are among the harshest penalties environmental activists have faced in the last decade.

Civil liberties lawyers say the charges are in line with industry-inspired scare tactics meant to deter citizens from participating in direct-action protests or acts of sabotage against oil and gas companies. As the deadly impacts of carbon emissions grow ever clearer, the fossil fuel industry has increased pressure on lawmakers and government officials to penalize those who would inhibit their projects' operations.

At the same time, a growing number of activists have demonstrated willingness to break laws in order to highlight the urgency of the climate emergency and other ecological crises. Ruby Montoya and Jessica Reznicek, who stand accused of damaging pipeline valve sites using a welding torch, "tires

ignited by fire, and gasoline-soaked rags," are part of that trend.

The arrests come more than two years after Montoya, 29, and Reznicek, 38, publicly took responsibility for a series of acts of sabotage that they said was necessary to protect the rivers and waterways under which the Dakota Access pipeline passes. Both women had been involved in the Indigenous-led struggle to stop the pipeline, which attracted thousands of people to opposition camps in North Dakota and Iowa in 2016 and 2017.

"We are speaking publicly to empower others to act boldly, with purity of heart, to dismantle the infrastructures which deny us our rights to water, land, and liberty," Montoya and Reznicek stated at a press conference in July 2017.

They told *The Intercept* at the time that they planned to use a necessity defense to argue that they had no choice but to act. Civil liberties attorneys said they are not aware of such a defense being accepted in a federal case related to climate change or environmental issues.

It has, however, begun to gain traction in lower courts, where a handful of pipeline protesters have successfully argued that they acted out of necessity.

Lauren Regan, executive director of the Civil Liberties Defense Center, who is representing Montoya, said it's too early to say whether the activists will follow through with their plan to mount a necessity defense. "It was a couple years ago when those conversations were happening, and now they're facing ten-year mandatory minimums," she said. The charges include one count of conspiracy to damage an energy facility, four counts of use of fire in the commission of a felony, and four counts of malicious use of fire.

"I wish the government would use the same resources to go after the oil companies and pipeline companies, but clearly they're not interested in that," said Bill Quigley, an attorney who previously represented Montoya and Reznicek. "They shouldn't be prosecuted; they should be praised. They're trying to stop the destruction of the human race."

At all personal cost

Three years ago, attempts to stand in the way of the Dakota Access pipeline in North Dakota were met with water cannons, tear gas, and rubber bullets in a massive police response carried out in collaboration with the pipeline company Energy Transfer Partners. Pipeline opponents, led by members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, were concerned about the project's potential to contaminate the drinking water of the nearby reservation, while exacerbating the impacts of climate change.

A smaller resistance was established in Iowa. Reznicek, who had long been an active member of the Des Moines chapter of the Catholic Worker, co-founded



Shutterstock Photo

an organization called Mississippi Stand along with Montoya. The group carried out protests at construction sites along the Iowa leg of the pipeline.

By the spring of 2017, however, the pipeline company had overcome the water protectors; construction was all but complete and the camps mostly cleared. It was then that a series of above-ground valves along the pipeline route were pierced by welding tools.

In response, the mercenary security company TigerSwan launched a multi-state dragnet in search of the saboteurs, who they referred to as eco-terrorists. Montoya and Reznicek were their primary suspects, but internal reports TigerSwan filed to Energy Transfer Partners also described how security personnel cast suspicion on an array of other activists. They reached out to pipeline opponents' neighbors and local businesses for help in their search. They surveilled one Native couple's private home and photographed their property. A TigerSwan contractor posing as a water protector sought information about Montoya and Reznicek from pipeline opponents who believed him to be a friend. The documents show repeated instances of the company attempting to feed information to local and federal investigators.

That July, after *The Intercept* contacted them for comment about the TigerSwan documents, Montoya and Reznicek called members of the press to the Iowa Utilities Board office. They described traveling from county to county to burn holes in pipeline valves and in some cases set fire to equipment—acts that they claimed stalled completion of the pipeline. They said they turned to sabotage only after all other avenues had been exhausted and stopped when oil started flowing.

In front of press cameras, they used a crowbar to dismantle the Iowa Utilities sign and were arrested on site. They were charged with fourth-degree criminal mischief for damaging the sign.

“I guess this was one last opportunity for me to put my case forward in a system that I have no faith in. This created some sense of a platform at least to continue this conversation,” Reznicek said in an interview with *The Intercept* at the time. “This really is about getting this pipeline stopped. Apparently at all personal cost.”

“Incarceration does not matter if we do not have clean water,” Montoya added.

To their surprise, no charges were filed in connection with their confession, and life moved on. Montoya began teaching at a Waldorf School in Arizona, and Reznicek spent time at a monastery.

Remove them from the gene pool

At an energy industry conference in 2018, Kelcy Warren, CEO and board chair of Energy Transfer, mentioned Reznicek and Montoya's actions. “I think you're talking about somebody who needs to be removed from the gene pool,” he said.

The oil industry used the acts of sabotage to push for a crackdown on pipeline opponents. In 2017, the American Legislative Exchange Council introduced model legislation that would increase penalties for anyone who interfered with oil industry operations. Iowa and at least seven other states have passed related anti-protest laws. More recently, industry lobbyists, as well as members of the Trump administration, have proposed federal legislation to make it a felony to inhibit pipeline operations. Most of the legislative proposals are broad enough to net individuals who commit no acts of property destruction.

Meanwhile, since it started operating, the Dakota Access pipeline has had at least ten spills, and this past June, Energy Transfer announced plans to nearly double the pipeline's capacity. A recent study indicated that current fossil fuel infrastructure leaves humanity with less than a 50 percent chance of avoiding unmanageable climate crises.

Energy Transfer did not respond to a request for comment.

In parallel to industry lobbying, fossil fuel opponents have advanced their own efforts to set legal precedents that protect dissent. “The state of the necessity defense in climate cases is emerging, and it is gaining acceptance in state courts across the country,” said Quigley.

Pipeline protesters in Massachusetts have had the most significant success in mounting the climate necessity defense. In March 2018, a judge found 13 opponents of a Spectra gas pipeline not responsible for civil charges related to their attempts to block construction, because the environmental risk posed by the pipeline made their actions necessary.

The defense has not yet been deployed in a criminal case, but that will soon change. In Washington, Ken Ward was convicted of burglary for his participation in an attempt to turn off valves on five oil sands pipelines across the U.S. Ward appealed, arguing that his constitutional right to present a defense had been violated because the judge rejected evidence of the climate crisis he had submitted to prove the necessity of his action. An appeals court agreed, and in September, the Washington Supreme Court declined to review the decision. A new trial is expected this winter.

Meanwhile, the most severe penalties for participants in the movement against the Dakota Access pipeline have been borne by Indigenous opponents. Red Fawn Fallis, for example, faced a potential life sentence after a gun in her possession went off as she was tackled to the ground by police. The Oglala Lakota Sioux water protector is serving a five-year sentence.

Gifts to the fossil fuel industry

Montoya's lawyers requested that the U.S. Attorney's Office allow her to turn herself in if charges were filed. Instead, she was arrested at her home in Arizona on September 27. Reznicek

was able to negotiate a surrender *via* a public defender after learning of Montoya's arrest.

It's unclear why the investigation took more than two years, but a possible historical parallel can be found in a string of arrests in the mid-2000s, during a period known as the Green Scare. Law enforcement officers arrested environmental activists accused of involvement in arsons, years after they committed the alleged crimes. The FBI had used that time to build cases against an array of actors. "Based on past experience and based on some of the other clues that I'm seeing, I certainly have a concern that there may be more than two defendants, but that is

real speculation," said Regan, who represented many Green Scare defendants.

The indictment against Reznicek and Montoya claims that the acts were carried out "with other persons known and unknown by the Grand Jury." In an interview shortly after their confession, Reznicek told *The Intercept*, "At no point was anyone else involved in these activities. Not even in consultation. Not in anything."

A spokesperson for the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Southern District of Iowa declined to comment.

Regan called the charges against Reznicek and Montoya evidence that the industry's legislative initiatives are a

public relations stunt. "What these charges indicate to me is that the state does not need any of these gifts to the fossil fuel industry. The existing crimes are more than adequate, because obviously 'malicious use of fire' is not a crime that was drafted by ALEC," Regan said.

Montoya remains in jail in Arizona, awaiting a hearing, while Reznicek was released on bail Tuesday, October 3, 2019, on house arrest with an ankle monitor. Her trial is scheduled for December 2.

—*The Intercept*, October 4, 2019

<https://theintercept.com/2019/10/04/dakota-access-pipeline-sabotage/>

INCARCERATION NATION

Pennsylvania Parole Board's Political Crucifixion of Shakaboona

BY KERRY "SHAKABOONA" MARSHALL

It has been nearly a year since I, Shakaboona, was resentenced at the Criminal Justice Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania before the Honorable Judge Jeffrey P. Minehart on May 17, 2018. Who would've thought that since my resentencing as a Child Offender serving a Death By Incarceration (DBI) sentence (*aka* Life Without Parole—LWOP) the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole (PBPP) would be the political entity dead set on having me serve a DBI sentence by perpetually denying me parole release to society?

After all of my extraordinary steps to positively transform my mentality and my life, to save our youth, and to actively uplift our communities to make them better places to live, I find myself trapped in the clutches of the merciless PBPP, lost in a never-never land of parole pirates, between a definite numbered minimum prison sentence and life maximum sentence, with seemingly no way out. The public needs to know that "crucifixion ain't

fiction," it's real, and as Jesus knew, it's political hatred.

My travesty of justice began at my first parole hearing in September 2018, when I was reviewed by parole board members Everett A. Gillison, Esq. and Leslie M. Grey, Esq. Though my parole hearing went exceedingly well, on October 16, 2018, I was given a Notice of Board Decision that I was denied parole and given a nine-month parole hit until the next time I'm reviewed again.

People across the state and country were livid about the PBPP's decision to deny me parole release and proceeded to contact the then PBPP Chairperson Leo Dunn, voicing their disagreement with the decision. I too voiced my disagreement by submitting a Request for Reconsideration to the Chairperson on November 26, 2018, that was summarily rejected.

In June 2019, nine months later, I received what would be my second parole hearing by PBPP members Grey and Anthony Moscato.

And although I believed my parole hearing was average, Grey gave me the impression that she already had decided to deny me parole before actually interviewing me. During the parole hearing, Moscato and Grey asked me a very odd question from out of the clear blue sky, "Are you called Shakaboona?" I replied that, indeed, my name is Shakaboona. They also asked a couple catch-22 questions to try and illicit damning responses. I left the parole hearing feeling as if they had made me go through the motions of a perfunctory hearing, just so they could say they gave me the constitutionally required due process of a parole hearing, so that they could again "lawfully" deny me parole release.

My perception proved correct. On July 1, 2019, the PBPP denied me parole release for the second time. On July 15, 2019, my attorneys from Amistad Law Project and Abolitionist Law Center submitted a "Notice of Reconsideration and Grant of Parole" to the new PBPP

Chairperson Theodore W. Johnson, outlining the reasons why my parole review and decision did not comport with the PBPP standard and violated my constitutional rights. Two weeks later, after implicitly acknowledging I was denied parole based on false reasons, the PBPP dismissed its July 1st parole denial decision and ordered for me to receive a new parole hearing.

On August 19, 2019, I was given a new parole hearing—my third within a year—conducted by Moscato and former PBPP Chairperson Leo Dunn. The parole hearing looked to have gone very well. But looks can be deceiving. On August 29, 2019, just ten days later, I was denied parole a third time. Normally, after an incarcerated person gets a parole denial and 9-month parole review hit, at their next hearing the person is usually granted parole release. Well, that being the case, then my three consecutive parole denials and increased parole hit is both abnormal and unusual. There's something terribly wrong with this picture.

Lets interrogate the matter. How is it that a positive incarcerated brother and activist role model in the community like myself, can attend parole hearings on three separate occasions within a year, yet be denied each time for no valid reasons? Why did the PBPP double down on its sham parole hearings and parole denials at my second and third parole hearings? And why did board members Moscato and Grey ask me "Are you called Shakaboona?" during my parole hearing?

Am I being politically targeted, retaliated against, and discriminated against for being a human rights leader, organizer, and activist for the past 30 years in the belly of the beast? Is it because the PBPP view me as a high political threat to their establishment? Or is it because the PBPP are angry about the many grassroots people from across the country that expressed their disapproval of the PBPP's decision to

deny me parole and demanded my parole release?

We can't speak to the intentions or motivations of what the PBPP are doing exactly, but we can look at the results. The results show that I am being singled out by the PBPP for special mistreatment of perpetual sham parole hearings and parole denials until I die in prison. After all, I still have a DBI sentence with my new indefinite Life With Parole imprisonment sentence.

...my three consecutive parole denials and increased parole hit is both abnormal and unusual. There's something terribly wrong with this picture...

My legal team and I see no benefit in appealing my parole denial to the same PBPP members that denied my parole on three separate occasions. Therefore, instead of a parole appeal, my attorneys will be taking the matter to Court. I ask for everyone's support by:

1. Giving a money donation for my legal defense and for my survival in prison for the purchase of phone, email, and food and hygiene items:

Donate at the Abolitionist Law Center website at <https://abolitionist-lawcenter.org/>.

Click on the DONATE button. Enter the amount you would like to donate. Once you choose PayPal or Debit Card you will see "Is this for a specific case or project?" This is where you will enter "FOR SHAKABOONA."

2. Make my travesty with the PBPP known on social media and at public events.

Let us fight the good fight y'all, because freedom ain't free for anybody.

Write to Shakaboona:
Smart Communications/PA DOC
Kerry Shakaboona Marshall #BE7826
SCI Rockview
P.O. Box 33028
St. Petersburg, FL 33733

Continued from page 38

Lampedusa. She was subsequently arrested and charged with human smuggling, but the charges were dropped.

Klemp's refusal to accept the medal comes on the heels of a 19-day standoff between a Spanish rescue ship called Open Arms and the Italian government. On Tuesday an Italian court ordered the seizure of the ship and the evacuation of everyone onboard on Lampedusa. Five countries belonging to the European Union have agreed to accept the migrants.

Both the German and French governments have criticized Italy over the treatment of migrants, Klemp and Rackete. Salvini's retort is that the EU's other 27 member countries should open their borders to welcome the influx.

"The City of Paris is fully mobilized to support the refugees, to shelter them and ensure a dignified respect for their humanity," Hidalgo's office told *Reuters*.

—NPR, August 21, 2019

https://www.npr.org/2019/08/21/753107888/captain-who-rescued-migrants-at-sea-refuses-paris-medal-calling-it-hypocritical?&t=1566467495061&fbclid=IwAR1TePBT_NdzkxIyqSGuLP h - j - x t 6 E 5 j 4 1 W 4 V g b H o a G _ LXG81SxmtVIqqJ8

Roots of Modern Day History Concerning the Death Penalty

BY KEVIN COOPER

Human Rights activist and attorney Mr. Bryan Stevenson stated these words in January 2019. These words must be thought about after being read because they, in my humble opinion, are so very important in truly understanding the truth of the Death Penalty in America.

Mr. Stevenson said: “The great evil of American slavery wasn’t involuntary servitude: it was the ideology of white supremacy, in which people persuaded themselves that Black people aren’t fully human.”

It was then, and still is now this white supremacist ideology that made it so very easy not only to enslave Black people, but to torture and lynch them in all the many different ways that they were. These lynchings are the forefather of this countries modern day Death Penalty system.

Whenever one group of people sees and treats another group of people as not fully human, it gives that group of people the mindset that they can do whatever they want, whenever they

want, to that person or group of people who they see as non-human. Even today in 2019 this mindset, this ideology is still in effect in the way that police treat and shoot and murder unarmed Black and Brown people, especially men, for any reason or no reason at all.

“The great evil of American slavery wasn’t involuntary servitude: it was the ideology of white supremacy, in which people persuaded themselves that Black people aren’t fully human.”

Those cops, mostly white, don’t see we Black and Brown people as fully human, nor do they see our humanity. Not just them, but Judges, prosecutors and juries who sentence Black, Brown

and all poor people to the sentence of death in disproportional numbers; speaking of Black men, especially when they are convicted, rightly or wrongly, of murdering white people.

Today, in a country where African Americans make up more than 40 percent of the Death Row population, but only 13.3 percent of the U.S. population; and in the state of California the numbers are even worse. Black men are only 6.2 percent of the U.S. population and still make up around 40 percent of the death row population. Understanding this is important to understanding that racism still reigns today as it did yesterday, in these years as it did in yesteryears.

For the penalty of death in this country to be brought to a end, there needs to be a truthful discussion on the merits of what the system of Capital Punishment really is, and it’s my hope that each person who reads this will start this most needed discussion with someone else. Including any talk about reparations.

Key Reparation to Descendants of Slaves Wouldn’t Cost a Dime

BY KEVIN COOPER

On October 10—World Day Against the Death Penalty—opponents around the globe gathered to call attention to the conditions of men and women living under death sentences and to call for the abolition of capital punishment. I am both an abolitionist and a man living on death row in California’s San Quentin State Prison.

The death penalty is the state-sanctioned killing of people who have been convicted of killing people. If killing people is a crime, how is it different for the state to kill people? The whole

world should be opposed to this. In fact, most of the world’s countries—106—ban capital punishment, as do 20 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. The United States belongs in the company of China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam and Iraq in executing people.

Contemplating the death penalty brings me back to four months ago, when, on June 19—known as Juneteenth by African Americans—there was a hearing in Congress attended by many influential people. They included jour-

nalist-activist Ta-Nehisi Coates, actor-activist Danny Glover, Democratic presidential candidate and New Jersey Senator Cory Booker. Each person spoke on whether reparations should be given to the descendants of slaves.

There was powerful talk about what many people describe as America’s original sin and all the negative things that have been done and are still being done to the descendants of slaves because of the institutional racism that remains embedded in every part of our modern-day society.

To understand what reparations are, I looked the word up in my poor man's dictionary. Here is what I found:

1. The act of making amends for a wrong; and
2. Amends for a wrong: especially money paid by a defeated nation in compensation for damages caused during hostilities. (Synonyms: Redress, restitution, indemnity.)

Some people say that reparations from one people to another are given to try to make the damaged people whole, as an act of acknowledgement of the wrong done to them.

No matter what the definitions of reparations are, in my opinion there should be no talk of reparations in the United States unless it includes the ending of the historic and horrific crime against humanity: the death penalty.

The death penalty in all its heinous forms was used not only to force people

to submit to being slaves but also to keep them enslaved, from the shores of Africa to the shores of the United States.

From 1619, when the first African slaves set foot on this land, the death penalty and torture that preceded it kept an entire population of African and African American people in fear and enslaved. Even white abolitionists who tried to end slavery were tortured and executed.

This took place from 1619 to 1865, and from 1865 to 1965, the freed slaves and their descendants went from chattel slavery to slavery by another name—by way of the prison leasing system. That system, just like the system it replaced, relied on the death penalty and torture to force Black people to work and live against their will in inhumane conditions. For many, that was a fate worse than death.

In the tortured history of this country, the death penalty has reigned

supreme over the lives of the descendants of slaves. For decades, studies have shown that often, all-white or mostly white juries have disproportionately imposed the death sentence on Blacks.

When Jim Crow segregation was used to keep Black people in the separate and unequal world, the death penalty was right there as a reminder of what would happen to them if they got out of line, or out of their place, or became too “uppity.”

It is neither right nor fair to talk about reparations and not include ending the main tool that has been implemented to terrorize a people forced to live, work and raise a family while contributing to a country hell-bent on denying them their humanity. The system that exists gives lip service to the historical suffering, torture and cold-blooded murder of the people who have had the death penalty imposed on their Black bodies.

Reparations is more than about money, restitution, or compensation, especially given that life is priceless. No amount of money can justly be paid to people who have been humiliated and terrorized in life and in death in the name of the law, god, manifest destiny, white supremacy or anything else.

It won't cost a dime to end what has to be one of the worst crimes against humanity—the death penalty. In fact, it would save money that could go toward life, rather than toward death.

—Truthdig, October 23, 2019

<https://www.truthdig.com/articles/a-key-reparation-to-descendants-of-slaves-wouldnt-cost-a-dime/>

Kevin Cooper is an innocent man on San Quentin's Death Row in California. He continues to struggle for exoneration and to abolish the death penalty in the whole U.S. Learn more about his case at: www.kevincooper.org.

Write to:

Kevin Cooper #C-65304 4-EB-82

San Quentin State Prison

San Quentin, CA 94974

www.freekevincooper.org



Artwork by Kevin "Rashid" Johnson

Revolutionizing Jesus

BY PETER KAMAU MUKURIA

For those who were raised in a Christian household like me, the story of Jesus is indoctrinated in our minds from a young age. We are taught to believe that Jesus was a humble and righteous man, the Son of God born of a virgin who lived and died for the people. During his time He healed the sick, performed many miracles, and always served the people. His life was dedicated solely to the people while preaching in the name of God. This is where I'll spare you time, as I'm sure you're familiar with how the story goes.

To understand the story of Jesus is to understand that he lived in a time where there was class warfare between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots, the oppressor and the oppressed, much like it is today. His preaching resonated among many people, but it eventually was viewed as a form of agitation by the ruling class. With all the rhetoric of the importance of distributing the wealth and giving to the poor, it challenged what they perceived to be their privilege and wealth.

The ruling class, which was composed mainly of Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees, feared that his motive was to agitate the poor just enough to cause them to organize and take what was rightfully theirs from the wealthy elite and distribute the wealth among themselves. Though some of the wealthy elites themselves were inspired by his words, relinquishing their wealth and privileged status was something they weren't willing to do. An example of this can be found in Matthew 19:20-23, in which a wealthy young man professed to Jesus that he obeyed all the commandments, but then Jesus commanded him to sell all his possessions and give his money to the poor. Upon hearing this, the wealthy young man simply walked away.

According to the Bible, Jesus didn't merely live his life solely by preaching but his teachings were a mirror reflection of his life. That is, he practiced what he preached. Besides preaching, he healed the sick, somehow raised the dead, visited prisoners, and, in one instance, fed more than 5,000 people. He saw great value in those who were overlooked and looked down upon. The wealthy elite had no quarrels with Jesus as he did these things, but they commenced to swiftly despise him when his message galvanized the poor for a common cause. This presented a clear threat to their status and social norms; therefore what they once tolerated from him now became detested.



nredpix.com

This part reminded me of Malcolm X. A few months prior to his assassination he criticized his earlier views on separatist Black nationalism, finding that, "I was alienating people who were the true revolutionaries dedicated to overturning the system of the exploitation that exists on this earth by any means necessary." He had identified capitalism as the ultimate enemy and begun to unify people of all races, who then, regardless of their skin color, found a common enemy—capitalism.

Even Martin Luther King, Jr., who was initially pro-integration and pro-capitalist came to identify capitalist-

imperialism as the cause of evil. In November 1967 he stated: "Something is wrong with capitalism as it stands here in the United States. We are not interested in being integrated into this value structure." The ruling class wasn't bothered by Malcolm's rage on Black Nationalism for they knew it was an empty idea. They supported Martin when he preached on the need to respond to oppression by peaceful and non-violent methods. At the moment their messages radically transformed and directly challenged a system that benefited and served in favor of the wealthy elites, shortly thereafter both of them were assassinated. Their deaths were by no means a coincidence.

Sided with the poor

Jesus was aware that he was in the midst of a class struggle between the two antagonistic classes, the rich and the poor. He denounced the power of the ruling class over him (John 14:30), firmly establishing his position on the side of the poor. Those in power wanted him out of the way in order to continue enjoying their wealth and privilege without the constant fear of an uprising. In response to the ever-present threat, they decided it was best to counterattack what he was spreading and, more importantly, that it would be in their best interest if Jesus were dead. But they lacked a reason to justify crucifying him without triggering a violent response from the people, so they conjured up some false accusations in hopes of having him jailed and subsequently crucified.

In order to execute this diabolic endeavor, they needed to infiltrate Jesus's inner circle by finding the weakest link among his disciples who would be easily bribed. And this happened to be a man named Judas. This was the same strategy the F.B.I. under the lead-

Resisting the Grand Jury

By JEREMY HAMMOND

ership of J. Edgar Hoover employed to infiltrate and undermine the Black Panther Party by creating the counter intelligence program (*aka* Cointelpro). But even before Jesus was framed, he had predicted that betrayal by one of his disciples was imminent (John 13:21). When Jesus was presented before Pontius Pilate, who was the equivalent of a governor today, Pilate found Jesus innocent. However, much like today, those in power serve the interests of the wealthy elite and justice is reserved for some. With mounting calls for Jesus to be expeditiously crucified despite the lack of evidence, Pontius Pilate caved in and handed him over to be crucified knowing he was innocent. Jesus then died on the cross; rose the third day...and you know the rest.

By dedicating his life to serve the poor, the needy, the prisoners, the sick, the vulnerable, and those who were discarded by society, Jesus was challenging the social structure and those in power and denouncing their authority over Him. Dare I say that Jesus was indeed a revolutionary who sought to transform into social norms and establish an equilibrium of wealth and equality by any means necessary.

Panther Love!

New Afrikan Black Panther Party/
United Panther Movement
Minister of Education, Comrade Pitt.

Write to:

Peter Kamau Mukuria #1197165

Red Onion State Prison

P.O. Box 1900

Pound, VA 24279

Instagram: PittPanther_art

Alexandria, VA—Imprisoned information activist Jeremy Hammond was found in contempt October 10, 2019, for refusing to cooperate with a Federal Grand Jury in the Eastern District of Virginia (EDVA). Chelsea Manning was similarly remanded into custody for failure to provide testimony before the same Grand Jury. Hammond, who was already serving his seventh year of a ten-year Federal Prison sentence after pleading guilty for releasing information about the Private Intelligence Firm Strategic Forecasting (Stratfor), has issued the following statement detailing his reasons for resisting the EDVA's grand jury.
—The Sparrow Project

“As many of you know, I was just a few months from my scheduled release from federal prison when I was unexpectedly dragged in chains and planes to this raggedy detention center in Alexandria, Virginia. I am outraged that the government is threatening additional jail time if I do not cooperate with their grand jury investigation. Their draconian intimidation tactics could never coerce me into betraying my comrades or my principles. In the spirit of resistance and with great contempt for their system, I am choosing silence over freedom.

Long ago when I realized that government and capitalism were too hopelessly corrupt and unjust to be reformed through legal or electoral means, I chose to engage in civil disobedience and direct action.

“I am fully prepared for the consequences of my decision just as I had



Jeremy Hammond

been each and every time I was faced with similar choices before. Long ago when I realized that government and capitalism were too hopelessly corrupt and unjust to be reformed through legal or electoral means, I chose to engage in civil disobedience and direct action. I knew then that my actions could land me behind bars, yet I fought on anyway; after a dozen arrests and even a prior federal prison sentence for hacking, I chose once again to use my computer skills to attack the systems of the rich and powerful as part of the Anonymous federal case I am doing time for today.

“When I pled guilty, I took responsibility for my actions and my actions alone. I never agreed to be debriefed or testify in any way, unlike the government’s informant Hector Monsegur, aka Sabu, whose reward was one year of probation while I received the maximum sentence allowable by law. It was a painful choice, but ten years in their dungeons was the price I was willing to pay so I could maintain my integrity. I have never regretted my choices the entire time I have been incarcerated, and having seen and experienced first-hand the abuses and inherent injustice of the prison industrial complex, my commitment to revolution and abolition has only become more deeply entrenched.

“Now, after seven-and-a-half years of ‘paying my debt to society,’ the government seeks to punish me further with this vindictive, politically-motivated legal maneuver to delay my release, knowing full well that I would never cooperate with their witch hunt. I am opposed to all grand juries, but I am opposed to this one in particular because it is part of the government’s ongoing war on free speech, journalists, and whistleblowers. I am insulted that those in power claim that I have an ‘obligation that every citizen owes his government’ to testify. As an anarchist, I am not part of their social contract, and do not recognize the legitimacy of their laws and courts. Instead, I believe in a Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. quote I had taped to the wall of my prison cell for years: ‘One has an obligation to disobey unjust laws.’

“It is difficult to view any of this government’s laws as just when they are so selectively enforced, and when the government turns a blind eye to its own misconduct, misconduct that is on display every day that Trump is in the White House. In my case, the government, through its informant, Sabu, instigated numerous hacks, asking me to break into governments and compa-

nies all over the world. Nearly a decade later, this misconduct remains ignored. The NSA continues to surveil everyone and launch cyber attacks. Trump and his corrupt cronies continue to hold the world hostage to their megalomaniacal imperialist pig whims while simultaneously refusing to comply with subpoenas and inquiries into their vicious abuses of power. Meanwhile, Chelsea Manning and I are doing hard time in this dump for the ‘crime’ of refusing to allow our spirits to break, after ‘serving’ our sentences for exposing government and corporate corruption.

“This absurd hypocrisy and desperate ruthlessness reveals a crumbling legal system, a system that has robbed me of the majority of my adult life but could never take my humanity. I will continue to do the right thing, no matter how long it takes. I know how to do time, and I will never be intimidated by their threats. Ever!! I refuse!!”

“Our integrity sells for so little, but it is all we really have. It is the very last inch of us, but within that inch, we are free.” —Alan Moore, V for Vendetta

Jeremy is being represented by attorneys Susan Kellman, Sarah Kunstler, and local counsel Jeffrey D. Zimmerman. His legal team also includes Elisa Y. Lee and Beena Ahmad. For information on how you can support Jeremy, and for updates on his case please visit freejeremy.net or follow the Jeremy Hammond Defense Committee on twitter @freejeremynet

—The Sparrow Project, October 11, 2019

<https://www.sparrowmedia.net/2019/10/jeremy-hammond-issues-statement-explaining-why-he-is-resisting-the-edvas-grand-jury/>

Write to Jeremy at:

(Rules for writing him are at: freejeremy.net)

Jeremy Hammond #A0182888

William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center
2001 Mill Road

Alexandria, VA 22314



Tropical Storm Imelda Hits USP Beaumont

By KEITH “MALIK” WASHINGTON



As a nationally known prison abolitionist and human rights activist, I am very passionate and dedicated to the causes and the people my comrades and I support.

However, as a journalist I am duty-bound to put aside my subjective feelings and report the objective facts about the things I personally experience and witness.

On September 19, 2019 tropical storm Imelda bombarded the city of Beaumont, Texas and the surrounding areas with a deluge of torrential rain.

Here at USP Beaumont, the federal prison where I am currently housed, we had no electricity whatsoever. That meant—no lights, no air-conditioning. Our toilets could not be flushed. It was really bad.

At the time that the storm reached its height we had been locked in our cells since the evening of September 18th. The federal correctional officer working our housing unit was a bald-headed white man with a thick goatee who we call “Big Heath.” Mr. Heath is a big guy and kind of looks like a biker dude.

Like many officers working that night shift Mr. Heath was trapped like all of us. The non-stop rain had flooded all the highways and local roads leading to and away from USP Beaumont. The federal prison is built on a natural flood plane and not only

was the compound flooded but our emergency generator of Building #1 was submerged in water.

“Big Heath” may not win any congeniality contests but he didn’t abandon us! He stayed the course of the Storm. Mr. Heath worked about 30 hours straight and made sure we had food as well as bottled drinking water. Other than that, we were on our own.

The concrete cells at USP Beaumont were not made to sustain human life without the aid of the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) System. As the sun set on September 19, 2019 we lacked adequate oxygen and fresh air in our cell. My cellmate who we call “D” has asthma and the lack of proper ventilation in our cell brought on a vicious asthma attack!

“D” first started coughing profusely. His breathing became labored. As he wheezed and gasped for breath, he staggered to his locker and grabbed his inhalers. It was very dark by then—no lights, no air and the asthma attack persisted. I began to worry and think of how to help my cellmate.

As if on cue, and just in the nick of time, we heard voices and saw flashlight beams. It was two Lieutenants from the day shift, a Lieutenant Franks and Lieutenant Feazicus. They were yelling loudly to all of us who were trapped in these cells saying: “Hey Fellas! We are going to pop open your food tray slots so you can get some fresh air!” Both “D” and I smiled and let out a sigh of relief. Regardless of any of the situations that I have found myself in I always acknowledge that God is always in control!

Lt. Feazicus, Lt. Franks as well as Mr. Heath and other Federal Officers provided us with red plastic HAZMAT bags to defecate in. Yes, you heard me correctly—this was our reality here. Believe it.

These officers also brought large barrels of water so we could manually flush our toilets by pouring water on top of the large amounts of human waste, which had accumulated in our toilets.

This is a short essay, which tells a story of people helping people during a natural disaster. Many people in Amerikan society are brainwashed in such a manner that many despise incarcerated human beings.

Please remember that eighty five percent of all current prisoners in the United States will eventually be released. Are not all human beings deserving to be treated with dignity, respected, and housed in humane settings?

One observation that I must highlight is this: Two years after Hurricane Harvey and the Federal Bureau of Prisons still has not crafted a realistic emergency evacuation plan for USP Beaumont.

Locking human beings down in concrete cages and then sitting on your hands until the natural disaster takes its course, is not an effective plan! As I said before, USP Beaumont is built on top of a flood plane. Tropical storms and hurricanes in this geographical location are only going to get more severe and intense.

—*End Prison Slavery in Texas Movement*, September 23, 2019

<https://endprisonslaveryintexas.wordpress.com/2019/09/23/tropical-storm-imelda-hits-usp-beaumont/>

Write to Malik at:

Keith H. Washington #34481037

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Aramark: Multibillion-Dollar Food Vendor Starves and Exploits Prisoners

BY KEVIN “RASHID” JOHNSON

Aramark, an Indiana-based food vendor that made the *Forbes* list and was named by *Fortune 500* as the 27th largest employer, is a textbook case of capitalist corporate profiteering.

At the profit end, with contracts in venues ranging from sports franchises to prisons across the country, Aramark brought in a reported \$14 billion in revenues in 2018, with its CEO Eric J. Foss making \$16 million.

Consistent with the exploitative illogic of capitalism, the huge profits were acquired by Aramark keeping expenditures as cheap as possible while devising schemes to sell low quality goods at exorbitant prices, particularly in relation to its most powerless recipients—in this case prisoners.

A history of prison scandal

Prison systems all over the country contract with Aramark for food services, under a growing trend of prisons moving to cut costs by privatizing many of their custodial functions, including food service. In turn the private food vendors, also aiming to cut costs so as to reap the greatest possible profits, serve prisoners low quality food under filthy conditions.

Over the years Aramark has remained embroiled in scandals behind the horrible quality and conditions of its prison food services.

In 2015 the *Detroit Free Press* reported Aramark serving rat- and maggot-infested foods in Michigan prisons, and attempting to serve prisoners food taken out of the trash. As a result of this exposure Michigan’s prisons terminated their Aramark contract. In March 2016 a study by the Institute of Research on Labor, Employment and the Economy at the University of Michigan found that Michigan guards admittedly refused to eat Aramark

food because of its unsanitary handling and conditions.

Similarly, in Ohio prisons, maggots were also found in Aramark’s foods.

Aramark in Indiana’s prisons

Aramark contracts food services in prisons in its home state of Indiana, where I’ve been confined since November 2018. Although I had read about Aramark’s notoriously foul food services while confined in other states, my first direct experience came upon my 2018 transfer into the Indiana Department of Corrections, or, more accurately “Corruption” (IDOC).

In the IDOC I suffered my worst food experience in nearly 30 years of confinement in five different states.

Upon my transfer to Indiana I was initially confined at the IDOC’s Reception and Diagnostic Center (RDC) where food could not be purchased from the commissary and where I was literally starved on the standard Aramark diet.

Five days per week we received two “hot” meals and a cold bag lunch. Only on weekends and holidays did we receive three daily “hot” meals. I say “hot” only to indicate they were cooked meals served on trays, but the temperatures were always below room temperature—often refrigerator cold.

Only one vegetable was ever served per day on weekdays. No fruits were ever served except once per day on weekends (always an apple.)

The standard breakfast meal was near or totally bread. A typical breakfast consisted of something like two slices of bread, a tiny piece of coffee cake, a small serving of grits, a packet of generic cool aid, and a small cup of half-dissolved powdered milk.

The sack lunches always consisted of four slices of bread, a spoonful of

peanut butter and jelly cut with oil, a sliver of processed lunchmeat, a cool aid packet and a small cookie.

The typical dinner was noodles with processed meat the size of a meatball crumbled in with it, about two to three ounces of some overcooked canned vegetable (usually chopped up carrots or string beans,) two slices of bread and a tiny piece of plain cake.

These meals fell far below the daily minimum 2500 calorie diet the courts have constitutionally required prisoners receive and totally failed the FDA’s recommended daily serving allowance from the basic food groups: namely fruits/vegetables (four servings), milk/dairy (two servings), meat (two servings), bread/cereal (four servings).

Although I literally ate everything I received at each meal I still lost over ten pounds in the brief time at RDC, which was medically documented. I was weighed upon my arrival at and departure from RDC.

On November 29, 2018 I was transferred to Pendleton Correctional Facility (PCF) where I remain, and where Aramark serves the same meals as at RDC. The only difference being we receive an apple with the weekday sack meals. To regain and maintain my weight here at PCF I have basically had to eat from the commissary, an option not available to most prisoners who have little to no financial resources or support.

It is rather apparent the starvation diet is at least in part to induce prisoners who can to buy food from the prison commissary, to the profit of the private commissary vendor from whom the IDOC receives kickbacks.

Aramark starvation hustle

And here is where Aramark’s exploitation game really comes into play. Not

only does it serve ridiculously small and unpalatable meals on the prison menu but it serves us no “real” meal meat products.

All cooked “meat” items are cheap processed patties that are both disgusting to the taste and made of fillers or soy. They have textures and taste nothing like the meats they purport to imitate. We never receive real chicken (except on some holiday meals,) beef, fish, *etc.*

However, Aramark sells fast food style hot foods through commissary purchases called Fresh Favorites, which are made of real meats, and are appetizing. Such as various types of cheeseburgers including bacon double cheeseburgers, Philly cheesesteak subs, chicken wings, grilled chicken, pizzas, boiled eggs (no real eggs are served on the prison menu,) beef, hot dogs *etc.*

And every few weeks Aramark advertises a special Fresh Favorites meal on the prison’s closed circuit television station, like a pizza with sides, dessert and large soda—all at a special price.

Aramark bucks medical diets

Not only does Aramark pocket huge sums of the taxpayer dollars it receives to provide prisoners nutritionally adequate and palatable meals, while selling them the foods they’re supposed to receive on the prison menus, the corporation also refuses to provide prisoners medically ordered diets that require Aramark to serve foods it doesn’t want but is supposed to serve on the prison menu.

I’ve witnessed this in a number of cases, one involving one man who was my neighbor here at PCF.

In this case, Earlie Berry Jr. has life threatening peanut and soy allergies. He has documented physician orders to receive a diet free of these substances. Most of the fake meats Aramark serves have soy content and the lunches contain peanut butter five days per week. Therefore Earlie’s diet requires real meats at each meal, meats that Aramark refuses to serve on the prison menus.

I’ve witnessed since being at PCF to present, Aramark outright refused Earlie the required diet and served him meals he’s allergic to. He is presently suing Aramark over this.¹

Conclusion

As is the case under this exploitative capitalist system, Aramark’s main drive is to exploit every opportunity to turn a profit, despite the obvious and known dangers to others’ lives and health.

Even sewer rats show a higher morality than this.

Dare to Struggle Dare to Win!

All Power to the People!

—Kevin “Rashid” Johnson,
September 16, 2019

<http://rashidmod.com/?p=2686>

1 See. *Earlie B. A. Berry, Jr. v. Aramark Food Company, et al.*, Case No 1:18—cv—03651—JRS—MPB, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana (Indianapolis Division)

Write to Kevin “Rashid” Johnson:
Kevin Johnson #264847
G-20-2C Pendleton Correctional Facility
4490 W. Reformatory Rd.
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www.rashidmod.com



New Evidence of Innocence for Mumia Abu-Jamal

BY MOBILIZATION4MUMIA

The struggle to free unfairly-convicted Mumia Abu-Jamal took a significant step forward on September 3, 2019, when his attorneys submitted two documents to the Pennsylvania Superior Court.

Judith L. Ritter, Widener University-Delaware Law School, and Samuel Spital, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., released this statement:

“This week, Mumia Abu-Jamal filed a brief in Pennsylvania Superior Court to support his claim that his 1982 trial was fundamentally unfair in violation of the Constitution. For example, he argues that the prosecution failed to disclose evidence as required and discriminated against African Americans when selecting the jury. And, his lawyer did not adequately challenge the State’s witnesses.

“Mr. Abu-Jamal also filed a motion containing new evidence of constitutional violations, such as promises by the prosecutor to pay or give leniency to two witnesses. There is also new evidence of racial discrimination in jury selection.”

Abu-Jamal has always said he is innocent and the new documents go a long way in supporting his case, undermining police and prosecution claims of how Philadelphia police officer Danny Faulkner was killed.

The filings are in response to the December 27, 2018, decision by Court of Common Pleas Judge Leon Tucker reinstating Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) petitions for the defendant. Tucker ruled Justice Ronald Castille unconstitutionally participated in deciding the appeals in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court after denying Mr. Abu-Jamal’s motions asking for his recusal, creating an appearance of judicial bias.

The “Brief for Appellant” in support of his struggle to gain his freedom after

37 years in Pennsylvania prisons re-opens the PCRA petitions as ordered by Tucker.

The “Appellant’s Motion for Remand to the Court of Common Pleas to Consider Newly Discovered Evidence” asks the Superior Court that the case be sent back to the Court of Common Pleas “so that he may present newly discovered evidence.”

Among the arguments resubmitted in the “Brief for Appellant:”

- Ineffective Assistance of Counsel—Failure to make right argument because counsel did not know the law;
- Brady Violation—DA withheld evidence, namely that prosecutor said that he would look into reinstating the driver’s license of key witness, Robert Chobert;
- Rights Violation of Fifth, Sixth and 14th Amendments—DA manipulated key witness to falsely identify Abu-Jamal as the shooter;
- Ineffective Assistance of Counsel—Failure to retain ballistics expert when the trial counsel knew Officer Faulkner was killed by a .44 caliber bullet even though it was known Abu-Jamal’s firearm was not a .44 weapon.
- Batson—Discrimination in jury selection that kept Black jurors from being sworn in.
- Juror Misconduct—Several jurors violated court rules by conducting premature discussions, creating potential for pre-judgment of evidence.

Basym Hassan, Philadelphia political activist, said:

“The district attorney clearly violated Mumia’s constitutional rights

by withholding clear evidence that should have been exposed from the beginning. Throughout the entire process of Mumia’s approaching the scene up until today’s current developments, the law has not been applied as it was created—to get to the truth of a matter. Hopefully, Mumia will get a re-trial and the truth will finally get told. We await his release from hell.”

Cindy Miller, Food Not Bombs—Solidarity and Mobilization for Mumia, reminds us:

“Does everybody remember on December 28, 2018, when current Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner and his staff happened to find six boxes of evidence that had not beforehand been shown? That evidence is partly the reason for this new motion.”

The “Appellant’s Motion for Remand to the Court of Common Pleas to Consider Newly Discovered Evidence” Miller refers to includes the suppression of evidence of improper prosecutorial interactions with the state’s main two witnesses who were instrumental in ensuring Abu-Jamal’s conviction. The motion charges that:

“Abu-Jamal’s capital trial was fundamentally unfair and tainted by serious constitutional violations. Mr. Abu-Jamal respectfully requests that this Court remand the case to the Court of Common Pleas so that Mr. Abu-Jamal may litigate the claims arising from this new evidence.”

Pam Africa:

“Here’s another example of why Mumia shoulda been home—an example of police and prosecutorial misconduct. That evidence has been there for years. It shoulda been in trial records but it was hidden. What else is hidden besides the few things that we have right here?”

MOVE 9 member Eddie Africa said:

“If they deal with this issue honestly, they’ll have to release him because they know what they did was wrong.”

Mumia, 65 years old, remains in SCI Mahanoy in poor health, suffering from severe itching and cirrhosis of the liver. He recently had cataract surgery in his left eye and is awaiting surgery in his right eye. He also has glaucoma.

Janine Africa, from the MOVE 9, said:

“I just got released from prison after 41 years in May. I want to say everyone work hard to bring Mumia home so he can be taken care of and get proper medical care, and he don’t deserve to be in jail from the beginning.”

Mike Africa Jr. added:

“The pressure of the people, and of the power of the people, is squeezing the evidence of Mumia’s innocence out. We shall win.”

—*San Francisco Bay View*,
September 11, 2019

<https://sfbayview.com/2019/09/new-evidence-of-innocence-spurs-two-court-filings-for-mumia-abu-jamal/>

Big Pharma + Big Money = No Blame

BY MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

In recent days, we’ve heard of proposed settlements in civil suits involving big pharmaceutical companies, the very sources of opioid products (like Oxycontin, for example,) that have left tens-of-thousands of people gripped in the hold of addiction.

Similarly, these products have led to tens-of-thousands of deaths, some 70,000 annually, according to some reports.

No man or woman on Death Row has come close to such a tally, and no corporate exec, no matter his legal liability, has come even close to such a fate.

This is especially vexing when we consider the ravages of the Drug War, which has fueled mass incarceration for decades.

Young men, wearing hoodies and baseball caps turned backwards, engaged in retail sales of untaxed drugs in the ghetto and tenement streets of America. For this they have been attacked by police and federal agents with all the ferocity of war. In fact, it was a war, and people were treated like enemies of the state, and cast into prison for at least decades—some for Life.

Enter Big Pharma, which launched drugs upon America on an industrial scale, and made billions to boot!

Consider this simple fact: in one year, more Americans have died from corporate opioid products, than the number of Americans who died in Vietnam, after ten years of war!

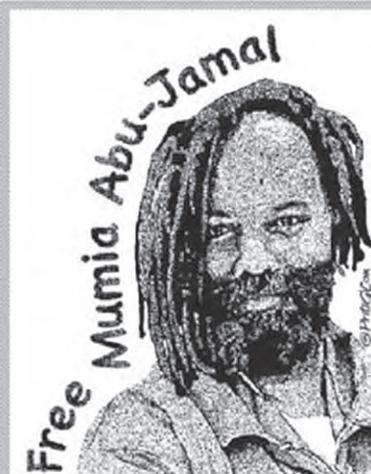
For retail sellers of drugs, decades in prison await; for wholesale drug merchants, civil suits are the state’s responses.

Since when is the killing of thousand of people a civil tort?

When we witness the parameters of the Drug War, we see it had nothing to do with drugs—and everything to do with state repression of the People, those from the ghettos and barrios of America.

Write to Mumia at:
Smart Communications/PA DOC
Mumia Abu-Jamal #AM-8335
SCI Mahanoy
P.O. Box 33028
St. Petersburg, FL 33733

RELEASE MUMIA NOW!



- Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man imprisoned for 37 years.
- In Dec. 2018 a Judge ruled Mumia can re-open his appeals. After first challenging that ruling, Philly DA Larry Krasner then bowed to people power and announced he will not oppose the judge’s decision.
- As a 65 year old with health problems, Mumia should be allowed bail & be freed from prison.
- In fact, due to gross police, judicial, and prosecutorial misconduct, Krasner should vacate the conviction and release Mumia.

SOCIALIST VIEWPOINT

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The Socialist Viewpoint Publishing Association publishes *Socialist Viewpoint* in the interests of the working class.

The editors take positions consistent with revolutionary Marxism. Within this context the editors will consider for publication articles, reviews or comments. The editors may publish comments to accompany these articles. Photographs and cartoons will be appreciated.

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Socialist Viewpoint is printed by members of Local 583, Allied Printing Trades Council, San Francisco, California.

Note to Readers:

Socialist Viewpoint magazine has been edited and distributed by revolutionaries who share a common political outlook stemming from the old Socialist Workers Party of James P. Cannon, and Socialist Action from 1984 through 1999.

After being expelled from Socialist Action in 1999, we formed Socialist Workers Organization in an attempt to carry on the project of building a nucleus of a revolutionary party true to the historic teachings and program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

What we have found is that our numbers are insufficient for this crucial project of party building. This problem is not ours alone; it is a problem flowing from the division and fragmentation that has plagued the revolutionary movement in capitalist America and the world since the 1980s.

What we intend to do is to continue to promote the idea of building a revolutionary Marxist working class political party through the pages of *Socialist Viewpoint* magazine. We continue to have an optimistic outlook about the revolutionary potential of the world working class to rule society in its own name—socialism. We are optimistic that the working class, united across borders, and acting in its own class interests can solve the devastating crises of war, poverty, oppression, and environmental destruction that capitalism is responsible for.

We expect that revolutionaries from many different organizations, traditions, and backgrounds will respond to the opportunities that will arise, as workers resist the attacks of the capitalist system and government, to build a new revolutionary political party. Just as we join with others to build every response to war and oppression, we look forward to joining with others in the most important work of building a new mass revolutionary socialist workers' party as it becomes possible to do so.

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Free Julian Assange! Jail the War Criminals!

Assange lawyer decries “legally unprecedented” assault on journalism as judge denies request to delay U.S. extradition hearing

By JAKE JOHNSON

Lawyers for *WikiLeaks* founder Julian Assange on October 21, 2019, warned of potentially devastating consequences for journalism around the world after a British judge denied Assange’s request to delay his U.S. extradition hearing in February.

Assange struggled to say his own name and date of birth during the hearing at Westminster Magistrates’ Court in London.

“I can’t think properly,” Assange told Judge Vanessa Baraitser.

The *WikiLeaks* publisher has been behind bars since he was dragged out of the Ecuadorian Embassy by U.K. police. Supporters say Assange’s waning physical and mental condition is a consequence of his prolonged isolation, which the United Nations condemned as torture.

Assange’s legal team requested a three-month delay to submit new evidence in the U.S. extradition case, including reports that a Spanish security firm spied on Assange on behalf of U.S. intelligence agencies. The allegation is the subject of an ongoing investigation by the Spanish National Court.

If Assange is sent back to the U.S., he could face a sentence of up to 175 years in prison on more than a dozen charges related to *WikiLeaks*’ publication of classified documents that exposed American war crimes and other state secrets.

“I don’t understand how this is equitable,” Assange said Monday. “This superpower had ten years to prepare for this case and I can’t access my writings. It’s very difficult where I am to do anything but these people have unlimited resources.”

“They are saying journalists and whistleblowers are enemies of the people,” Assange said of the Trump administration. “They have unfair advantages dealing with documents. They [know] the interior of my life with my psychologist. They steal my children’s DNA. This is not equitable what is happening here.”

Mark Summers, one of Assange’s lawyers, called the U.S. extradition effort “a political attempt to signal to journalists the consequences of publishing information.”

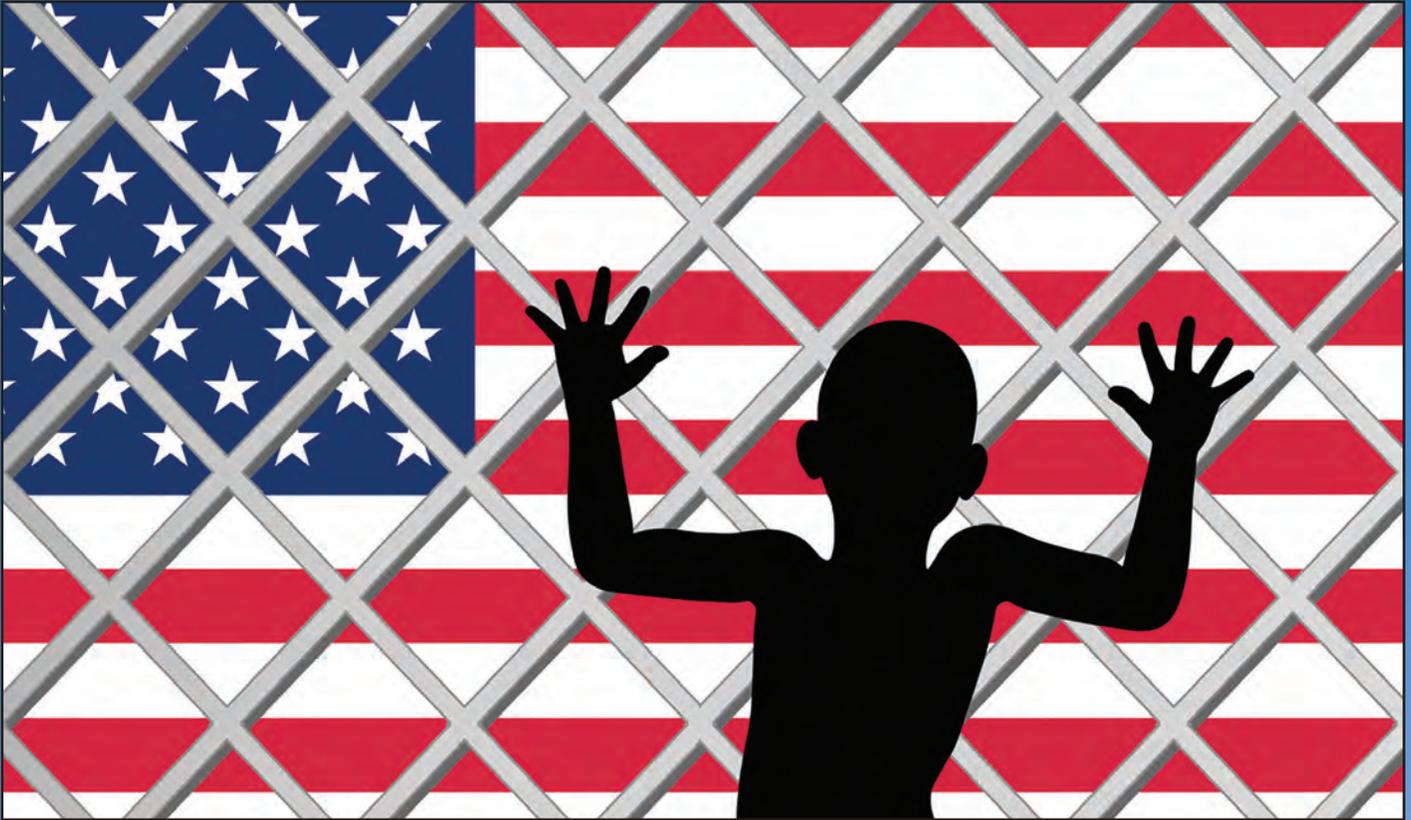
“It’s legally unprecedented,” said Summers. “This is part of an avowed war on whistleblowers to include investigative journalists and publishers.”

—*Common Dreams*, October 21, 2019

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/2019/10/21/assange-lawyer-decries-legally-unprecedented-assault-journalism-judge-denies-request?cd->



London/UK 0—April 3 2019: The Big Wikileaks truck passing through the streets of London spreading awareness of the price of free speech. A gagged whistleblower Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange. (Shutterstock)



Shutterstock. Read *Our Trip to El Paso and Casa Del Refugiado* on page 18.

On the Front Cover: This incredible photo is attributed to Susana Hildago and taken in Santiago de Chile during the recent mass mobilizations of the people. The flag at the very top is the indigenous Mapuche flag. Read *World in Revolt* on page 4.



Protesters rally against mass surveillance during an event organized by the group Stop Watching Us in Washington, DC on October 26, 2013. (Shutterstock) Read *Encryption and Privacy* on page 14.



Raina Shoemaker, a General Motors employee and a UAW member, speaks to the press from the picket line. (Photo by Mindy Isser) Read *Why I'm Voting No on UAW's Deal With GM* on page 16.



Attention Prison Mail Room:



Prisoners retain their free speech rights under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. That means you cannot legally suppress the expression and consideration of ideas. Prison walls do not form a barrier separating prisoners from the protection of the Constitution, according to the *Turner v. Safley* ruling. [482 U.S. 78, 107 Sct 2245 (1987)] If you exclude printed matter on an improper basis, or give a false pretext or rationale for its exclusion, because of the ideas expressed in it, you are breaking the law. The prisoner denied access to material he wants to read can bring a civil rights lawsuit against you with cause for seeking punitive damages. In the case of *Police Department Chicago v. Mosley*, 408 U.S. 92, 95, 92 Sct 2286, 2290 (1972) the court found that “[A]bove all else, the First Amendment means that government has no power to restrict expression because of its message, subject matter or content.”