

States pass anti-abortion laws — Support women's choice!



Molly Riley / Reuters

By HEATHER BRADFORD

On May 15, the most restrictive abortion law in the United States was signed into law in Alabama by Governor Kay Ivey. The Alabama Human Life Protection Act, which passed the state Senate 25-6, makes abortion illegal at all stages of pregnancy and makes no exception for rape or incest. The bill seeks to make abortion illegal in Alabama in all cases but health threat to the mother, fatal fetal anomalies, and ectopic pregnancies. Under the law, abortion providers could face up to 99 years in prison.

This draconian law follows a wave of anti-abortion legislation across the United States aimed at overturning *Roe v. Wade*. In 2019, Georgia, Ohio, Kentucky, Missouri, Mississippi, and Louisiana have passed “heartbeat bills,” which outlaw abortion at six to eight weeks. At the time of writing, six-week abortion bans are moving forward in the respective legislative bodies of South Carolina and West Virginia. Many abor-

tion seekers may not be aware that they are pregnant at six weeks and would have little time to make an appointment or raise the funds to obtain an abortion.

In this sense, heartbeat bills functionally outlaw abortion. “Heartbeat” itself is a misnomer, as at this stage of development, an embryo has not developed a cardiovascular system. Rather, a group of cells generates rhythmic electrical pulses, which is more technically known as fetal pole cardiac activity. Of course, a tactic of the anti-choice movement has long been to warp fetal development to infanticide embryos and fetuses. Thus far, about 30 anti-abortion laws have been passed in the United States this year.

Attacks on abortion access are nothing new, but the latest abortion restrictions are bolder and represent a concerted effort to use the court system to overturn or at least chip away at *Roe v. Wade*. Since 1973, over 1900 abortion restrictions have been passed. About 1/3 of these have been passed since 2011. These restrictions have included mandatory waiting periods,

restrictions on state funding, no requirement for insurance to cover abortion, state-mandated counseling, parental consent laws, gestational limits, and hospital requirements.

The barrage of laws against abortion access has been accompanied by the proliferation of crisis pregnancy centers that pose as health clinics and are designed to confuse and outright lie to abortion seekers by providing false information and “pro-life” propaganda. There are 2300-3500 crisis pregnancy centers spread across the United States but only 1800 abortion clinics. In 2018, the Supreme Court upheld the right of these fake clinics to provide false information and false advertising when it ruled that California’s Freedom, Accountability, Care and Transparency Act (FACT) violated the First Amendment.

At the same time, and since the 1970s, there has been an effort to defund Planned Parenthood by blocking Title X funds that have assisted low-income

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Stonewall 50: Reclaiming Pride

1st night of Stonewall Rebellion: Joseph Ambrosini / NY Daily News



By ANN MONTAGUE

Almost two years ago, LGBTQ activists in New York City decided that the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion was the time to start organizing to take Pride back from the corporations and return it to being the civil rights and liberation march it was in the past. For many in New York, the increasing attacks on our community are compounded by the increasing racism, sexism, and anti-Semitism throughout society.

Cities and towns across the country should all take note of what is happening in New York City and see it as a plan for all our Pride actions in the future. For the last 20 years, Pride in New York has been taken over by an organization called Heritage Of Pride (HOP). They have been criticized for the presence of corporate floats, campaigning politicians, uniformed police officers, and police restrictions like metal barricades on the route. No one can participate unless they are wearing an official wristband.

The Reclaim Pride Coalition (RPC) began meeting regularly and issued a press release: "Eschewing the corporate-saturated, highly policed nature of recent parades, the March is a truly grassroots action that mobilizes the community to address the many social and political battles that continue to be fought locally, nationally, and globally."

This year will be different with a corporate parade and also a civil rights march. It will be people in the streets, no uniformed cops in the march, no corporate floats and universal access for everyone to join. Over 100 LGBTQI organizations have endorsed the march including the SEIU Lavender Caucus.

While there will be no confrontation between the two events, this will add power to the demand that HOP hand over to the community the Pride celebration next year. As Ann Northrup, an Act Up alum and major lesbian organizer of the march this year says, "It should be a community event, a people's event, a pride event. This is the true spirit of what should be

happening for Pride every year."

In speaking with Northrup, she stated that while the march itself is being called "Queer Liberation March and Rally," it is acknowledged that not everyone identifies as Queer. Everyone is welcome and New York City's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender non-conforming communities have all been organizers of the march.

The march will begin at 9:30 a.m. and replicate the first New York march in 1970, which covered 51 blocks from Christopher Street to Central Park. The rally will be on Central Park's Great Lawn.

At the press conference to announce the march route, Ellen Shumsky, an original member of the Gay Liberation Front and founder of Radicalesbians, talked about how the march this year will let her relive the pride and sense of community of the first march in 1970. "When I see the parades now—the Mardi Gras—and there are commercial floats and advertisements, it is upsetting and sickening. We've lost that feeling of the first march."

This year will let everyone relive the pride and sense of community experienced in 1970 in the aftermath of the Stonewall Rebellion. ■

**Ann Montague: 'Stonewall Rebellion
— Myths & Realities'**

**Thurs., June 20, 7 p.m.
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In the process we hope to bring activists together from different backgrounds into a revolutionary workers' party that can successfully challenge the wealthy elite—whose profit-driven system is driving down living standards and threatens all life on this planet.

We are active partisans of the working class and believe in the need for independent working-class politics—not alliances with the bosses' parties. That is why we call for workers in the U.S. to break from the Democratic and Republican parties to build a Labor Party based on the trade unions.

We support the struggles of those who are specially oppressed under capitalism—women, LGBT people, national minorities, etc. We support the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities, including Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans. We are internationalists, and hold that workers of one country have more in common with workers of another than with their own nation's capitalist class. We seek to link struggles across national boundaries, and to build an international revolutionary movement that will facilitate the sharing of experiences and political lessons. We maintain fraternal relations with the Fourth International.

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General strike shakes Sudan

By STEVE XAVIER

"The strike is our revolutionary duty!"

Sudan's government responded with violence after a two-day general strike, demanding a transition to civilian rule, rocked the country. As we go to press on June 3, reports state that at least 30 were killed as army troops broke up a weeks-long sit-in in Khartoum.

Newspaper workers and bank employees observed the May 28-29 strike with 100 percent participation, despite threats to fire striking workers and military raids on press agencies on the first day of the action. In the second day, bus drivers struck. Red Sea ports were shut down as dockers refused to work. Professionals, government ministry, factory, telecommunications, and medical workers observed the strike. Power-plant employees also joined in. Domestic flights from Khartoum airport were cancelled after airline workers and the meteorological staff of the airport walked out.

Strike organizers deemed the strike an "unprecedented success," with 80-100 percent taking part throughout all sectors of the economy. Participation was not limited to the capital city of Khartoum, with workers in Darfur, Blue Nile state, Red Sea ports, El Gezira, Sennar, North and South Kordofan, and Kas-sala walking out. According to a statement issued by the Sudanese Communist Party, four leaders of the dock workers strike were arrested.

Two demonstrators were killed by gunfire on the second day of the general strike, as paramilitary and official military forces tried to disperse crowds outside of the army headquarters and the defense ministry. The paramilitary organization, called the Rapid Support Force and headed by the vice president of the junta, is linked to genocide in Darfur.

According to sources, marches headed to the main sit-in in Khartoum at the end of the second day of the strike were fired on by security forces, wounding eight and with one killed. Transitional Military Council representatives promised a crackdown on "unruly elements" in response to demonstrations.

As *Socialist Action* reported in last month's issue, the mass mobilization of Sudanese workers, youth, and women brought down two presidents in a short period of time. On April 11, the dictator, Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, was removed from office by the military after months of unrest. Al-Bashir had presided over a reactionary Islamist regime for 30 years. Al-Bashir's military-appointed replacement, General Awad Ibn Auf, lasted less than 48 hours as mass protests intensified. The military intends to preserve the



state machinery that maintained al-Bashir in power for decades, while making cosmetic changes.

On May 21, talks between military and civilian opposition forces broke down over the nature of a previously agreed-upon three-year transition to civilian rule. The opposition insists on a civilian-led transition to democracy, while the military wants to maintain control over the state. At issue is whether civilians or the military will have majority control over a transitional "sovereign council."

The opposition Sudanese Professional Association (SPA) issued a call for a general political strike, without initially setting date for such a strike. One opposition party, the Umma Party, opposed strike preparations. Islamist parties are backing a military-controlled transition, fearing a relaxation of sharia law.

A statement by the SPA made the stakes clear: "In order to achieve a full victory, we are calling for a huge participation in a general political strike, ... the strike is our revolutionary duty and the participation in the sit-in ... is a crucial guarantee to achieve the goals of the revolution."

The Sudanese Doctors Associations in Ireland and the UK joined the strike call, stating that "Sudan people are united more than ever. We stand with the Sudanese Professionals Association call for all unions, civil societies and community leaders to sign 'the

attendance book' in preparation for a general strike and political disobedience.

The mass struggle against the dictatorship, including the general strike, represents a political opening for the Sudanese working class and its allies to challenge austerity and privatization, and to build their own independent political instrument. In semi-colonial countries, bourgeois political forces can't be relied upon to carry the struggle for democracy forward. Ties to foreign imperialist interests will push them to compromise the goals of the democratic revolution.

Of course, the imperialist powers fear the contagion of revolution above everything and will seek to find ways to resolve the situation in favor of capitalist rule. Western imperialism also fears the competition from Chinese and Russian imperialism for vital mineral and oil resources.

Only the working class, organized independently of bourgeois political forces, can be relied upon to complete the struggle for democracy. Such a struggle opens the possibility of overturning capitalism and fighting for the rule of workers and farmers in their own name. To accomplish this requires the building of a revolutionary party that can play the decisive role in resolving the mass explosion in favor of the oppressed and exploited. ■

Pakistan: Release Ali Wazir, withdraw false police cases!

By EUROPE SOLIDAIRES SANS FRONTIERES

On May 26, 2019, a peaceful procession in the Waziristan region led by Ali Wazir and Mohsin Dawar, both Members of National Assembly (MNAs), was fired upon by army men, leaving at least 13 dead and over 40 injured.

Ali Wazir and Mohsin Dawar were elected as Members of the National Assembly (MNA) in the general elections held in 2018. They are also leaders of the Pashtun Defence Movement/Pashtun Tahfuz Movement (PTM), a mass social movement that emerged two years ago.

The PTM demands an end to military operations in the region bordering Afghanistan. This region is inhabited by ethnic Pashtuns. Their demands have brought them in conflict with the country's powerful military. For the last two months, the military spokesperson has been passing threats to the PTM. Besides, the media were publicly advised by the military not to give any coverage to the PTM.

These threats and media black out translated into a tragic reality on May 26. On the one hand, the peaceful procession was fired upon. On the other, media unanimously reported that the PTM activists led by Ali Wazir and Mohsin Dawar attacked a military check post and ensuing violence claimed the lives of three protestors besides injuring three soldiers.

Ironically, video footages—filmed through mobile phones—have emerged. These videos clearly show that Ali Wazir and Mohsin Dawar were fired upon

from behind. While people were falling to bullets, Ali Wazir, instead of running to safety, went back to help an injured comrade. As he approached his comrade, near the checkpoint, he was arrested by the military.

The next day, he was produced before the Anti-Terrorism-Court and remanded for eight days. Meantime, the entire opposition in the Parliament has demanded his release. He suffers from diabetes and high blood pressure.

There have been unconfirmed allegations of torture as well. In the event, even if he is released for now, his life remains threatened. Like the rest of the PTM leadership, he has been subjected to a vicious hate propaganda. He is being portrayed by the mainstream media and the military as a foreign agent, a traitor, and a terrorist.

Fact of the matter is, the PTM staunchly believes in non-violence while 16 members of Ali Wazir's family, including his siblings and father, were assassinated by the Taliban owing to his family's opposition to the Taliban. He emerged as a symbol of anti-Taliban struggle before the rise of the PTM.

We urge you to sign this petition for these democratic demands:

- 1) The urgent release of Ali Wazir and his PTM comrades
- 2) An end to vilification campaign against the PTM leadership
- 3) Withdrawal of fake police cases under anti terrorist laws against Ali Wazir and the PTM members.

First signatures:

Gilbert Achcar, Prof., SOAS University of London, Britain
Olivier Besancenot, spokesperson NPA, France
Fathi Chamkhi, Popular Front Member of Parliament, Tunisia
Dr Lal Khan, editor *Asian Marxist Review*, Pakistan
Pierre Khalfa, Member of Copernic Foundation and Scientific Council of Attac, France
Stathis Kouvélakis, Reader in Political Theory, King's College, Britain
Michael Löwy, Emeritus Research Director at the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), Paris, France
Jeff Mackler, Socialist Action USA
Christian Mahieux, International Labour Network of Solidarity and Struggles
Gustave Massiah, Cedetim, France
Olivier Neveux, University Professor, École normale supérieure de Lyon (ENS de Lyon)
Dr Taimur Rehman, General Secretary Pakistan Mazdoor Kissan Party, Pakistan
Pierre Rousset, ESSF, France
Catherine Samary, économiste, France
Dr. Farooq Sulehria, Assistant Professor, Beaconhouse National University Lahore, Pakistan
Farooq Tariq, Spokesperson, Awami Workers Party, Pakistan
Josette Trat, sociologue, France
Eric Toussaint, CADTM International Spokesperson
Roseline Vachetta, former Member of the European Parliament, France
Achin Vanaik, Retired Professor of International Relations and Global Politics, former Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi.

To sign this call, please see: <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?page=contact>.

Black teacher's job is in limbo

By CAROLINE WINSLOW

America has long lauded its school system as a Great Equalizer—a tool that provides all students, regardless of social standing, with the tools necessary to succeed. Thus, goes the narrative, all differences in outcome can be attributed to individual choices, absolving capitalism and the structures tied to it of their responsibility.

Education has the power to be a tool of liberation, but the truth about America's schools is that they are typically used for social reproduction—that is, to acculturate young people into the norms of their particular class under capitalism. This reality manifests in a number of ways, including the tendency of schools to punish children of color more harshly than their white peers (feeding the highly profitable school-to-prison pipeline) and serving imperialist ends by teaching students that their cultures are “uncivilized” and their language “unsophisticated.” Even in our allegedly post-imperialist era, these tendencies shine through, albeit in more subtle ways.

One small manifestation of the reality of American schools can be found in the experiences of Alicia Thomas. As of this writing, Thomas is an Ethnic Studies teacher at Holyoke High School in Holyoke, Mass. That may or may not be the case for long—and not because of Thomas' skills as a teacher. She has two Master's degrees, and is more highly qualified than the large majority of her peers. Her students have nothing but glowing praise for her, and previous principals and observers have given her high ratings on observations. She relies on critical race theory as the framework of her pedagogy.

Further, Thomas fills an important role in her school community as a Black woman. Research has noted that students of color whose teachers are racially and ethnically diverse are more likely to graduate high school, have fewer absences, and are more likely to succeed in college, among other markers of success. Holyoke High School—like the city it's in—has an 80% Latinx population, and not many teachers of color. Given this, one would think that Thomas would become a star teacher.



Sadly, in the teaching profession, Thomas' career has followed a pattern. “Usually, there's a big welcome when I start at a school,” she says. “I'm highlighted as a teacher of color. Then, I start doing the work, and there's usually a moment when I get confronted.”

At Holyoke, that moment came when the school's principal pressured Thomas into enforcing a “no hat” policy. Such a policy has long been common in American public schools, but research has shown it to be consistently enforced in racist manners, and Thomas showed this research to her principal. She has further highlighted: “I see white kids wearing cowboy hats around school with no consequences,” and went on to note that the school policies make no official mention of durags (headwear mostly worn by people of color for haircare purposes), which students have been disciplined over.

When, in response to all of this, Thomas told the principal she was taking a stand, based on research, by refusing to enforce the policy, she received a verbal warning, followed by a written warning.

Thomas views empowering students as an essential element of her job. Marxist educator Paulo Freire wrote that empowered students know they are “transformers of the world,” but that schools teach students they are merely passive observers of the world, incapable of changing its face. That's not true in Thomas' classes, where she encourages students to question rules, examine the sources of power, and create change.

Her revolutionary curriculum includes having students create resistance art, write letters to the district superintendent on the importance of a social justice curriculum, and organize meetings with local politicians to discuss important issues on race. In short, she calls on her students to challenge the very institutions they are in, in direct opposition to the typical expectations of a teacher, whose job is primarily to reinforce the system.

The result? Her principal has told her—despite her certainty that he is being dishonest—that he is 99% sure her position will not exist in the coming school year. The school is protecting capitalism, and not its victims, which it allegedly exists to serve.

“I don't think he consciously knows what he's doing,” Thomas says of her principal. “He's just trying to avoid confrontation and make his life easier.” But, as she notes, making his life easier means playing right into the system of social reproduction in education. Thomas teaches students to buck the trends of social reproduction, and in response, the system attempts to silence her.

Thomas is not alone in her experience. Despite education policy experts' calling for more teachers of color, the profession is still 80 percent white, and has hovered around that number for years. Numerous narratives similar to Thomas' exist.

The education needs more Alicia Thomases, but first, it needs the first Alicia Thomas back. Thomas has reached out to local organizers, media, and politicians, but she also encourages anybody reading this to contact the Holyoke Public Schools on her behalf (contact information is on their website) to call for her reinstatement by pointing out the importance of teachers of color. ■

Israel lines up with the far right

By ROLAND RANCE

Israelis living in a self-imposed cultural bubble, in which they see themselves as living somewhere in the mid-Atlantic remote from the Middle East, saw their composure very slightly dented by displays of the Palestinian flag by boycott-breakers Madonna and Icelandic band Hatari at the Eurovision song contest in Tel Aviv in mid-May. These minor acts of defiance have caused much more anger than the shooting of scores of Palestinians in Gaza, or the repeated bans on Palestinians praying at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque during Ramadan.

The Israeli authorities expressed their anger by harassing Madonna's dancers at the airport when they left the country, and by deliberately assigning the Icelandic band “the worst seats” on their El Al return flight.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Trump has been signaling support for the so-called “peace plan” drawn up by his son-in-law Jared Kushner. This would allow the Israeli annexation of all of the illegal settlements, and the entire Jordan Valley. A “New Palestine” would be recognized, consisting of a patchwork of disconnected Bantustans, on just 12% of pre-1948 Palestine, separated by a strengthened network of Israeli checkpoints and military oversight.

To add further insult to injury, Palestine would be expected to pay Israel for this “security.” Having withdrawn all financial support for Palestine, Trump and Kushner are now pressing Arab states to provide the necessary financial support for this, and for economic development designed to incorporate this New Palestine into a global capital economy. Even the compromised leadership of the collaborationist Palestine Authority has rejected this abject surrender.

These developments have come following the recent Israeli elections, in which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confronted, and defeated, several



(Above) Trump embraces Netanyahu during a trip to Israel.

parties even further right than his own racist Likud. One former government Knesset member, running for a minor far-right party, produced a video showing a mocked-up film of himself shooting dead a leading Arab Knesset member, while Minister of Justice Ayelet Shaked, running for a right-wing split from a right-wing coalition partner, produced a video in the style of an advert, in which she sprayed herself with perfume from a bottle labelled “Fascism.”

Although neither of these charmers was re-elected to the Knesset, Shaked continues to serve as Minister of Justice. Netanyahu outflanked them by making an electoral pact with a formerly banned party even further to the right, the Jewish Power party, successor to the banned Kach.

Netanyahu's main rival in the election, described by *Haaretz* as the “great white hope” of the Israeli left, former Chief of Staff Benny Gantz, based his own

campaign on his military record, boasting that he had “bombed Gaza back to the Stone Age.” His campaign video had to be withdrawn after a complaint that it was based on stolen footage from a Palestinian media company.

The once hegemonic Labor Party, which had ruled Israel and the preceding Zionist bodies in Palestine for over 50 years until the 1970s, slumped to just six seats in the 120-seat Knesset, gaining fewer votes than the Communist Party.

The election marks the continued shift of Israeli politics to the right, and only 14 Knesset members now support a two-state solution to the conflict. All of the rest favour Israeli annexation of at least part of the 1967-occupied territories, continuing the creation of further illegal settlements, and the denial of any real Palestinian autonomy. And even of these 14, only a handful support the return of Palestinians dispossessed and exiled since the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948.

The election also confirms Israel's role in the new world alliance of far-right parties and governments. The first world leader to congratulate Netanyahu on his electoral victory was India's Narendra Modi. Netanyahu responded with warm congratulations after Modi's landslide win in the Lok Sabha election. Netanyahu has also established close links with Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro, Philippines Rodrigo Duterte, Hungary's antisemitic Viktor Orban, and other reactionary leaders, and has been leading attempts to create a coalition of the European nationalist far-right.

It was in this spirit that Netanyahu's son Yair tweeted support for Orban, Nigel Farage, Matteo Salvini, and Geert Wilders on the eve of the EU elections. And this also accounts for the growing presence of Brazilian flags alongside the cross of St George at recent anti-Palestinian mobilizations by Zionists in London.

Support for Palestinian rights and opposition to Zionism is now, even more than in the past, an essential element in the resistance to the new global right alliance, which is likely to be strengthened with the probable appointment of a supporter of this alliance as the next British prime minister. ■

Reprinted from the British Fourth International journal, Socialist Resistance.

Nationalize GM for jobs and vehicles we require!

By BRUCE ALLEN

The harsh reality of the Unifor-General Motors agreement to “save” the jobs of Oshawa GM workers is undeniable. Altogether, GM workers, plus about 2500 low-paid workers employed by the supplier companies located in and around GM Oshawa, 40 minutes east of Toronto, will be hit hard. As a result, a workforce of over 5000 will shrink to about 300.

Furthermore, the long-term employment of the 300 GM workers who will survive the assembly plant’s closure is quite uncertain. No one is guaranteeing that these remaining jobs, which are to be located in a small metal-stamping operation, will survive past the 2020 Unifor-GM contract negotiations. GM’s promises that there could eventually be up to 500 jobs are as worthless as its unkept job security promises to Oshawa workers in the past.

The overlooked, poorly-paid workers in the supplier operations are the most victimized by this agreement. They get nothing. By contrast, senior Oshawa GM workers eligible to retire, or nearly eligible to retire, can either get lucrative retirement incentives with pensions or the opportunity to fill a small number of job openings the agreement will create in what’s left of the St. Catharines GM plant 169 kilometers southwest of Oshawa.

Oshawa will be devastated. To grasp the severity of the situation, one only needs to recall how union leaders often said that every auto industry job generates six or more jobs in surrounding communities. Do the math in order to grasp the magnitude of the economic hit Oshawa faces. Just recall what happened to Flint, Mich., after GM gutted its operations there, slashing the workforce to a fraction of what it once was, leaving behind a desperate population now living with a water supply poisoned by lead.

This sorry outcome is all there is to show for an ineffective Unifor fightback to save GM Oshawa. Hampered by a glaring lack of support from the rest of a labour movement (Unifor withdrew from the Canadian Labour Congress in 2018), weakened by feeble backing from Unifor leadership where GM has other operations, and an impotent boycott that pandered to xenophobia by targeting GM vehicles made by Mexican autoworkers, this “fightback” was little more than a minor nuisance to GM.

Indeed, GM relished the lack of support for the resistance outside of Oshawa. GM had to be especially



pleased by the American UAW’s lack of interest in supporting a Unifor fightback.

Things did not have to go so badly. GM retirees in Oshawa and St. Catharines, who are the backbone of remaining activism in the auto sector, demonstrated this. They showed more willingness to fight back than the active members, with the notable exception of the Oshawa GM workers who staged brief sit-down strikes immediately after the closure announcement. The retirees also showed a degree of radicalism absent from auto since the Oshawa Fabrication Plant was occupied during the successful twenty-day strike against GM in 1996.

Oshawa retirees are calling for the nationalization of GM Oshawa and retooling the plants to produce future-oriented, green vehicle technology. Likewise, St. Catharines retirees wrote to Unifor President Jerry Dias calling for the plant to be handed over to the workforce and the community, so that operations can continue, much like happened in idled factories in Argentina which have been successfully occupied and run by their own workers.

Unifor’s national leadership disregarded these pro-

posals. The agreement that claims to save 300 jobs is all they came up with instead.

In effect, the Oshawa and St. Catharines retirees saw the closure announcement as an opportunity to save far more jobs, to protect the community of Oshawa and produce non-carbon-emitting vehicles—an excellent response to the accelerating climate change crisis.

Top Unifor leadership and leading federal and provincial politicians inexcusably failed to see the opportunity. They weren’t interested. Just as they aren’t prepared to do what’s necessary to tackle the threat to the environment and civilization. Consequently, most of the affected workers face a fate of trying to survive in an increasingly low-wage economy that involves more and more precarious work.

Every challenge presents an opportunity. GM’s Oshawa closure announcement presented an opportunity to address the crisis facing these workers and the ecological crisis threatening the planet. That opportunity was squandered. It was squandered by leaders lacking vision who demonstrated their subservience to capital by bending to the will of GM. ■

By WYATT MUND

Though it is still the first half of 2019, already rallying cries are being heard for the presidential election of 2020. It would appear that every week there is a new candidate emerging to chase the Democratic Party nomination, from Beto O’Rourke to Pete Buttigieg, Kamala Harris to Tulsi Gabbard, Joe Biden to Andrew Yang, Elizabeth Warren to Bernie Sanders. One would hardly suspect election day was nearly two years away by looking at the press.

This clutter of would-be presidential candidates and the miles of discussion surrounding them has obfuscated real political developments, and confused workers and students about what a candidate who actually represents them would look like. No matter their posturing, the reality of the matter is that the Democratic and Republican parties represent two sides of the same ruling-class coin. While they clearly have their differences and squabbles, they are united in firmly backing the interests of U.S. capital through austerity at home and imperialism abroad.

Even the “radical left” darling of the capitalist Democratic Party, Bernie Sanders, has been clear in his support for border enforcement, imperialist war, and interventions. It is undeniable that both these two parties represent the bosses—big finance, big landowners and big business. They are the parties of Wall Street and war.

For too long the working class in the United States has been politically subordinated to the parties of the bosses. Even our unions, creations of fierce workers’ struggles across the decades, have been

pressured into becoming obedient servants of the Democratic Party. Speaking generally, the union leadership’s politics have been made to support the Democrats’ interests. The unions are left unable to strike their own class independent political line. What could be the solution to such a political deadlock? The answer has been given in many countries and times before—the creation of a labor party!

What is a labor party? Put simply, it’s a party based upon the working class and labor movement. A party for all those who toil for a wage, the party of the majority, the 99%, the workers. A party based out of the unions and workers’ organizations as they appear and develop.

Many decry all attempts to push a “third party” in this country, but the reality is that the United States has never seen the creation of a truly mass workers party of its own.* A labor party has come close to emerging in the U.S. several times, but the task of crystalizing it was always diverted.

Perhaps the creation of a labor party sounds fantastic or disconnected to reality today, but on the contrary, the conditions for the emergence of a labor party are already present. Consider that since the beginning of 2018, the highest number of workers have been on strike in this country since 1986. There is rising union militancy and consciousness in America, a wave that hasn’t been seen in a generation, according to the *Washington Post*. The teachers’ strikes ignited the current flame, and further growth and develop-

ments in the tide have come from the hotel strikes, the Stop and Shop strike, and continued mobilizations from nurses.

Young people are increasingly seeing the need for workers to stand together and fight for their rights and needs. We are also seeing how the bosses will take all they can of the value we produce. Students, workers, and oppressed people need to defend our livelihoods with organizations that are really our own.

Despite decades of austerity and anti-union propaganda, despite the bureaucratic union leadership’s complacency with the two-party system and stifling of independent organizing, workers in this country are once again realizing that together, as labor united, they can fight and win against the bosses. Rather than pay heed to this or that Democrat flavor of the week, the real political struggle emerging in this country is of a labor revival just around the corner.

Workers are going on strike and unionizing who have never done so before but who see, more and more, their class interests laid in front of them. As labor militancy spreads, the conditions for a wholly different kind of party in opposition to the Republicans and Democrats ripen!

A labor party born out of militant struggle would have no interest in continuing the pro-corporate destruction of the planet, have no reason to continue the brutal wars that murder countless workers overseas by using American workers as cannon fodder, have no desire to continue the racist mass incarceration of millions of Black and Brown workers who

are denied due process, have no wish to carry out the xenophobic policing of borders and violence against immigrants. A labor party could strike against this society based on the needs of profit, and fight for the establishment of one based on actual human needs.

It must be stated, of course, that for socialists, a labor party would not in and of itself guarantee victory. Indeed, a labor party would be liable toward bureaucratization, stagnation, and degeneration—as we have seen countless times in the historical record when working-class parties have been formed in other countries. Workers and socialists would have to struggle to maintain a labor party that is fully democratic and responsive to the ranks, fighting for the interests of the working class not just in the voting booth but on the picket line and in the streets.

The tasks to keep rank-and-file consciousness constant and to have the party function as a conscious, living weapon of political action will need to be firmly held every step of the way. The struggle for a labor party and its creation are a step in the larger class struggle, and we must be firm in understanding this. Still, the huge venues opened by a labor party cannot be understated.

The bosses already have two parties, run by and for the ruling class. To do better, we need to stand on our own two legs as an independent working class body. We need a labor party! ■

* A possible exception, for a short time, was the Socialist Party, with over 100,000 members in 1919.

Workers need their own party

The worldwide crisis of capitalism and the relevance of socialism



By JEFF MACKLER

We reprint here the introduction to Socialist Action's new pamphlet entitled, "The Worldwide Crisis of Capitalism and the Relevance of Socialism." Authored by Socialist Action's 2020 candidate for the U.S. presidency, Jeff Mackler, the article reviews the central ideas adopted by Socialist Action at its October 2018 Eighteenth National Convention in Minneapolis.

Socialist Action's Political Committee and National Committee prepared the initial draft of the resolution in this pamphlet for consideration of the membership during the party's three-month pre-convention period of internal discussion and debate in the lead-up to Socialist Action's October 2018 National Convention. In its final adopted form herein, the resolution entitled "The Worldwide Crisis of Capitalism and the Relevance of Socialism" serves as the party's assessment of the nature and depth of the present world capitalist crisis and, therefore, the framework for Socialist Action's understanding of and participation in the myriad of social and political movements where working people struggle to improve their lives.

The pamphlet includes major excerpts from a joint statement on the world economic crisis issued by Socialist Action (U.S.) and its sister party of the same name in Canada:

"Global capitalist competition, including the current trade wars, is a completely unavoidable aspect of the system of private profit. Competition results in new innovation/automation that increases the rate of profit for the initial innovator. But these gains are offset again by the rapid adoption of ever more advanced technology by competitors, and profit rates continue to fall.

"In this profit or die system those competitors that can't keep up are driven from the field or forced to consolidate or merge with others to stay in the game. In the end the profit or die game is played by giant multi-national monopoly corporations that continue the competition on a global scale with dire consequences for all humanity.

"In their desperate struggle to fight the falling rate of profit capitalists try to reduce costs and increase their competitive edge by attacking trade unions and workers' rights, by attacking wage and benefit levels, by attacking general social benefits such as education, health care, and pensions, by refusing to accept responsibility for the massive environmental damage caused by cutthroat capitalist competition, and

The common interest of workers lies in defending working people everywhere against the onslaughts of capital. This means international solidarity on every front.

by transferring production to low-wage, unregulated areas both within and outside their own countries...

"The world's working people have no interest in this potential world conflagration. When capitalists win, workers lose—a fundamental law of the capitalist system. The common interest of workers lies in defending working people everywhere against all the onslaughts of capital. This means international solidarity on every front, from united worldwide efforts to organize workers into powerful unions to united opposition to capitalist wars and the capitalist destruction of the environment...

"There is no such thing as peaceful and/or regulated competition among capitalist nations. No self-respecting capitalist is in business to be the world's 'nice guy.' There are only winners and losers in this deadly game of production for private profit."

Today, with U.S. and global corporate profit rates continuing to decline, the major capitalist behemoths increasingly shun investments in new plants and have turned to unprecedented government-promoted speculative investments in the stock market, hedge funds, and other financial instruments that have generated massive paper profits and led to the present global shift of wealth from the vast majority to the elite one percent who own close to 50 percent of the world's wealth.

In this financialization of capital process, giant paper bubbles of capital are produced with no corresponding creation of real value. The stupendous rise in the share values in the U.S. stock market has no relation to the actual value of the corporations. As in the 2008-9 crash/depression, yet another massive bust is on the order of the day, wreaking untold misery on working people.

Thus, any serious explanation of today's increasing global misery; massive impoverishment; environmental destruction; persecution and demonization of immigrants; endless wars; and racist, sexist, homophobic and Islamophobic attacks have less to do with whether the Democrats or Republicans are in power at any particular moment than with the inherent contradictions in the capitalist system itself. It is these contradictions that explain both the rise

of right-wing and neo-fascist currents worldwide on the one hand, and the rising and simultaneous interest in socialism on the other.

The ruling-class response is always to foster divisions by scapegoating and persecuting the oppressed; the socialist response is to unite all of capitalism's victims in common struggles that aim at challenging the legitimacy of the system itself. In this context the resolution in its various component sections focuses on unifying, strengthening and fostering the independent mass action character of all fighting social movements.

Russia and China

The resolution takes up some of the important questions that have been in dispute in the broader socialist movement, including the nature of the Chinese and Russian states. "China," the resolution asserts, is "a major and growing imperialist power in its own right, but considerably less developed in key areas than the U.S." (See Keith Leslie's "China: A New Imperialist Power," soon to be published by Socialist Action.) Russia too, the resolution holds, is an imperialist nation "of considerably less weight in the world economy and in many other respects. Socialist Action's analysis of the respective roles of China and Russia in the increasingly polarized world political situation, as with all other analyses, is subject to an examination of the facts and context at hand."

Statewide teacher strikes

The resolution devotes considerable attention to the eruption, seemingly out of nowhere, of statewide "red state" teacher strikes in West Virginia, Kentucky, Arizona, Oklahoma and North Carolina, predicting that these may well be the heat lightning that sparks broader and effective fightbacks that portend a fundamental change in the present negative relationship of forces.

These teacher mobilizations employed a series of class-struggle strategies beginning with powerful statewide strikes accompanied by massive teacher-community rallies as opposed to isolated strikes in a single school district. Mass decision-making based on democratic discussion and debate marked an historic return to the kind of democratic fighting unionism that won major gains in decades past.

In this context the aroused and directly engaged teachers and their allies challenged and rejected the class-collaborationist directives of the union bureaucracy, which counseled caution and warned against strike action that "violated the law." Indeed, this conscious mass defiance of capitalist laws prohibit-

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ing statewide strikes, in combination with broad-based demands aimed at improving public education and uniting parents and working class communities, proved to be decisive.

In West Virginia, teachers broke new ground by demanding and winning the restoration of funds for *all* public employees, that is, not only for teachers. In contrast to the usual one-day, token strike wherein teachers are called to state capitols to lobby legislators, teachers insisted that they would not return to work until their demands were met. And these included the key demand that the state legislature return to public education and public employees the billions of dollars that had been looted from state budgets and gifted to the corporate elite over the past decade. The teachers had the facts to prove it. Their demand to “Tax the rich, not working people!” was elevated from a slogan to an immediate demand.

This “red state” militancy undoubtedly inspired the Los Angeles and Oakland teacher strike actions that followed a year later—actions that demonstrated the power of teacher-community unity but lacked the decisive impact of the statewide confrontations in West Virginia.

Subordination to the Democrats

The Socialist Action resolution also took note of a critical weaknesses in the teacher-union movement and, indeed, in most social struggles today. Following the strike victories, the AFT and NEA leaderships pledged to run some 400 teacher candidates as Democrats in the 2018 midterm elections. Similarly, the leadership of promising social struggles led by Black Lives Matter, March for Women’s Lives, and 350.org, all of which have led massive mobilizations against racism, sexism, and catastrophic impending climate change, largely ushered these promising movements into the electoral framework of the Democratic Party.

Indeed, the 2020 national elections will undoubtedly see a concerted, if not unprecedented rush to “lesser evil” politics, as evidenced by the Democrats running some 23 candidates, all focused on proclaiming themselves best suited to “Dump Trump.” No doubt, all will dutifully unite, as was the case with Bernie Sanders in 2016, behind whichever candidate emerges as the top dog in capitalism’s carefully orchestrated election swindle. Already Sanders has been the first to sign such a unity pledge.

Receptivity to socialist ideas

Recent polls by the Pew organization, Gallop, and *The New York Times* report that a majority of youth under 30 prefer socialism over capitalism; for the Black communities over all age groups, the figure stands at 55 percent. Socialist Action’s recruitment of a new layer of Black and Latinx youth is a prime indication of the reality of this preference. Confidence in the capitalist system today stands at a low point in the modern era, while the appeal of socialism to increasing millions informs us that the times are propitious for revolutionary socialist ideas to sink deeper roots in broad layers of the population.

In this context, Socialist Action’s decision in mid-April 2019 to run its National Secretary, Jeff Mackler, for the U.S. presidency and National Committee member Heather Bradford for vice president offers the party a unique opportunity to popularize socialist politics and win new fighters to the socialist cause.

Similar polls register majority support for trade unions at a time when the percentage of union membership stands at a modern all-time low. The recent and impressive teacher strikes, the union mobilizations against the government budget shutdowns, and other militant strike actions inform us that a new layer of class-struggle union fighters is emerging.

DSA and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

In noting the mid-term election victory of New York City Democrat and Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the resolution states: “Here, we are qualitatively less concerned with criticizing the limitations of the Ocasio-Cortez campaign platform than we are in pointing to its overall confirmation that socialist ideas are increasingly finding a receptive ear among broad layers of the population.”

The resolution continues: “We need not review our historic opposition to any capitalist candidate or party. As we are fond of saying, ‘If Lenin ran as a Democrat on the Bolshevik program, we would not support him!’” Ocasio-Cortez and the DSA, their “so-



To abolish war requires the abolition of capitalism. An indispensable step toward this is the construction of a mass united front antiwar movement to challenge U.S. imperialism.

cialist’ imprimatur notwithstanding, had no problem endorsing *all* Democrats in the 2018 midterms, including the ‘Blue Dog’ Southern racist variety and all other stripes within the spectrum of ruling-class politics.

Though they call themselves “democratic socialists”—falsely implying that other socialists oppose democracy—we prefer the traditional label, “social democrats,” which makes clear that the DSA and similar organizations are Democratic Party supporters first and foremost, who pretend that socialism—a fundamental break with capitalist exploitation and rule—can be won through electoral reforms and other incremental changes to the capitalist system.

Trump threatens North Korea

President Trump’s grandstanding negotiations with North Korea should not put anyone fearful of nuclear war at ease. For Socialist Action the starting point in explaining our views is our historic demand for the total and unconditional disarmament of the imperialist U.S. military nuclear behemoth. Not one penny for war!

Just as Trump abrogated previous treaties with Iran and the nearly worthless COP 21 UN Paris climate “agreement,” he and any future president, in the name of “national security” or some other pretext, is fully capable of invading and destroying any nation.

Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba

U.S. recent threats to invade Venezuela and Nicaragua, to further embargo revolutionary Cuba and now threats to send 130,000 U.S. troops to the Middle East to potentially wage war against Iran and Iraq and to deepen the imperialist war against Syria, inform us, yet again, that war is inherent in the imperialist system. Today, the bipartisan war-making parties speak the same language, whether it be in voting for the trillion-dollar annual war budget or in supporting Trump’s “regime change” wars in Latin America and the Middle East.

To abolish war once and for all requires the abolition of capitalism. An indispensable step toward this end is the construction of a massive, united front, democratic antiwar movement to challenge all U.S. imperialist wars against working people at home and abroad. The central demands of today’s antiwar movement must be clear and unequivocal: “U.S. Hands Off!” and “Self-determination for all poor and oppressed nations!”

Regardless of our most serious criticisms of the leadership of nations in the imperialist gunshots, we unequivocally and unconditionally defend their right to self-determination. While we lend no *political* support to these or any other capitalist governments, we

(Above) With environmental catastrophe getting ever nearer, Democratic and Republican politicians have no answer. Avoiding the worst effects of climate change will require replacing the profit-driven capitalist society by socialism.

defend their right to seek military aid from Russia and China or from any other quarter.

We fully understand that a mass revolutionary socialist party is an absolute necessity in winning a socialist world. But the road to the construction of such a party begins with winning the confidence and mass support of the working class. This begins with a program of unalterable opposition to imperialist intervention and war, whether it be in the form outright U.S. coup efforts, sanctions, embargoes, blockades, drone wars, privatized army wars and all the rest. Our revolutionary comrades and co-thinkers in any nation facing imperialist intervention and war stand on the front lines in opposition to all imperialist invaders.

Socialist Action on Syria

The resolution reaffirms the party’s previously adopted position. To wit: “With regard to Syria, our unconditional support to self-determination includes Syria’s right to seek allies and support against U.S. imperialist intervention and war from Russia, Iran, and the Lebanese-based fighters of Hezbollah.

“While we extend no *political* support to the capitalist Bashar Assad regime in Syria, or to any other capitalist regime, we remain unconditionally opposed to all imperialist efforts to remove it. The job of challenging capitalism in Syria is the sole responsibility of the Syrian people. The future construction of a mass revolutionary party in Syria remains a prerequisite to socialist revolution there and in any other nation.”

Latin America’s “pink revolutions”

Whatever differences have distinguished one of Latin America’s “pink revolutions” from another regarding the implementation of sometimes substantial reforms, all retained the essential social structures and institutions of the capitalist state. The fundamental ownership and control of the commanding economic heights of the nation remained in capitalist hands including the land and natural resources, the key banks and the financial institutions.

In sharp contrast, the Cuban Revolution of 1958-59, in the words of Fidel Castro leadership nationalized bourgeois property “down to the nails in the heels of their boots” and went on to establish a state of the working class. This is the preeminent explanation for why the Cuban state endures and all the others have suffered retreat and/or humiliating defeat.

Experienced revolutionaries, as well newcomers to the socialist cause, will find in this 2018 Socialist Action convention resolution, “The Worldwide Crisis of Capitalism and the Relevance of Socialist Revolution,” a resounding affirmation of the party’s confidence in the socialist future.

An acute analysis of the central and inherent contradictions of predatory capitalism today is combined with plan of action aimed at winning the present radicalizing generation of youth and all working people to the fight for new world where the fulfillment of the highest aspirations for human dignity, equality and social justice are primary. ■



... Women's choice

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patients in obtaining contraceptives and other reproductive health services. The decades of attacks on abortion access was heralded by the Hyde Amendment, which was passed in 1976 with bipartisan support and barred the use of federal funds for abortion services. The truth of the matter is that the pro-choice movement has been fighting a losing battle for over 40 years.

A boycott of Alabama?

There have been a number of responses in reaction to the recent restrictions on abortion. Some activists have called for an economic boycott of Alabama and other states with strict abortion restrictions. A disturbing sentiment that sometimes accompanies the call for a boycott is that the people of Alabama are backwards, uneducated, and even incestuous.

While boycotting can be an effective tactic, it is important to remember that many people in Alabama are not supportive of the new abortion law. In a 2018 survey of likely Alabama voters, Planned Parenthood found that 65% of respondents felt abortion should be legal in cases of rape and incest. The law does not represent the sentiments of many Alabama voters, even those who are pro-life. Marches against the bill were held in Montgomery, Birmingham, Muscle Shoals, and Huntsville. Rather than boycotting the state of Alabama or denigrating the state as backwards, the efforts of pro-choice organizers should be recognized and the potential acknowledged for educating the more conservative populace of the state on this issue.

A quarter of the children in Alabama live in poverty. The state has the second highest infant mortality rate in the country and is the sixth poorest state. It is ranked 50th in education, 46th in health care, and 45th in crime and corrections. The people of Alabama need solidarity, not shame. Rather than boycott the state, which already lacks infrastructure and is marked by racism and poverty, it would be more useful to boycott corporations that actively support or donate to the pro-life movement, such as My Pillow, Hobby Lobby, Curves, Gold's Gym, and Electric Mirror.

Another reaction to the recent ban is to wait for the courts to overturn the restrictions. Activists are reminded that abortion remains legal, all three of Alabama's abortion clinics plan to stay open, and that these new laws will be tied up in litigation before they can be enacted. The narrative goes that the Supreme Court is not eager to overturn *Roe v. Wade* outright and that other restrictive abortion laws have been struck down elsewhere. For instance, a 2013 heartbeat bill in North Dakota was struck down as unconstitutional. Six-week bans were also struck down in Iowa and Kentucky.

However, there are a number of flaws with this perspective. First, it is disempowering, and it is difficult to build a movement around waiting for court decisions. Second, this perspective grants legitimacy to the court system. The presidential nomination of and lifetime tenure of Supreme Court justices and federal judges is fundamentally undemocratic. The feudal nature of these courts should be challenged.

This has lent itself to a cultish following of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who is viewed as a liberatory figure who must never retire (or die), lest abortion rights be overturned once and for all. The centrist justice is celebrated for her support of women's rights, but her critique of Kaepernick's taking a knee (which she apologized for), ruling against paying overtime to Amazon workers, support of warrantless searches in *Samson v. California*, and failure to condemn solitary confinement within the prison system in *Davis v. Ayala* mar her record.

Finally, it is important to remember that *Roe v. Wade* was approved on the premise that abortion is a matter of privacy. The courts have never framed abortion rights

as fundamental to ending the oppression of women or gender minorities. Abortion legality has always had a shaky foundation.

Democrats' shaky support for reproductive justice

Some activists look to the Democratic Party to protect abortion rights, framing this as a matter of electing more Democrats into office. Already, potential presidential nominees have issued statements about abortion, ranging from Kamala Harris' remarks in a February 2019 interview that abortion should be a decision between a woman, physician, priest, and spouse to Bernie Sander's statement that abortion is health care and would be covered by his plan for Medicare for All.

Yet, the track record of Democrats on the issue of abortion is part of the reason why we find ourselves with so many restrictions today. Of the 24 candidates vying for the presidency, only 11 mention prioritizing reproductive rights on their websites. It was Bill Clinton who said that abortion should be safe, legal, and rare in 1992, which was echoed by Hillary Clinton in her 2008 election campaign.

Abortion has indeed become "rare," as access has been curtailed in a legislative death by 1000 cutbacks. Joe Biden voted in favor of partial birth abortion bans in 1999 and 2003 and against federal funding for abortion. Like "heartbeat" bans, "partial birth abortion" is an anti-choice construction, as the medical term is "intact dilation and extraction."

In 2017, Bernie Sanders unapologetically campaigned for Heath Mello, an Omaha Nebraska mayoral candidate and anti-choice Democrat. Some Democrats, such as Louisiana Gov. John Bel are anti-choice. Bob Casey Jr., Joe Donnelly, and Joe Manchin are "pro-life" Democratic senators who voted for abortion bans at 20 weeks.

While abortion has become increasingly partisan since the late 1980s, voting for Democrats is no guarantee of abortion access. Between 2007 and 2009, Democrats controlled the House and Senate and in 1993-1995 controlled the House, Senate, and presidency. These episodes of majority power did nothing to roll back anti-abortion laws or overturn the Hyde Amendment. Democrats have consistently supported the Hyde Amendment.

Even Barack Obama stated in a 2009 health-reform debate that although he is pro-choice, he did not feel that financing abortions should be part of government funded health care. In the Machiavellian shell game between the two parties of capitalism, electability trumps values; it is ultimately the power of social movements and organized workers that sways the opinions of politicians. Recently, some Democratic candidates have vowed to repeal the Hyde Amendment or defend abortion rights, but this is a function of the success of social movements rather than a sign of courage or conviction.

A response by women worldwide

Boycotting anti-abortion states, depending upon courts, or voting for Democrats will not secure abortion rights. The way forward for the abortion-rights movement is to take cues from mass movements elsewhere in the world.

In October 2016, thousands of women in over 140 cities in Poland protested against legislation that would have punished anyone who terminates a pregnancy with five years in prison and investigated women who had miscarried. In March 2017, Polish women protested wearing black, boycotted classes, and went on strike against the proposed new law and the restrictive abortion laws passed in 1993. This mass mobilization shifted abortion discourse in Poland and forced politicians to quickly retreat from new restrictions. In March 2018, thousands of demonstrators marched against a renewed effort to pass more restrictive abortion laws.

Ireland's movement, Repeal the 8th, likewise mobilized against Ireland's constitutional ban on abortion. Inspired by Poland's Black Protests, activists marched and went on strike on March 8, 2017. About 66.4% of

Irish voters voted to legalize abortion in a referendum held on May 25, 2018. Abortion is now legal and free in Ireland due to a movement that was catalyzed by the death of Savita Halappanavar, who died in 2012 because she was denied an abortion while experiencing a miscarriage. The vote to legalize abortion was shocking to some, as Ireland had been a bastion of conservatism regarding abortion; like Poland, the country had strict anti-abortion laws.

Social attitudes can change quickly, which should offer some hope to those who dismiss the Southern United States as impossibly reactionary. Despite the efforts of the hundreds of thousands of participants in the Ni Una Menos movement that has sought to legalize abortion and end gender-based violence, a bill to legalize abortion in Argentina failed by two Senate votes in August 2018. Even in the face of defeat, the protests and strikes continue as well as efforts to build a feminist international. Recently, activists involved in the movement for abortion rights in Argentina protested on the red carpet at the Cannes Film festival at the premiere of "Let it be Law," a film about their struggle.

A glimpse of the capacity to build such a movement in the United States happened on May 21 with a day of protest actions called Stop the Bans. Thousands mobilized in a day of action that consisted of over 400 protests spread across all 50 states.

The feminist movement must build upon the successful mobilization for the Stop the Bans day of action and continue to show up in mass to put pressure on politicians to support abortion rights. Based upon recent feminist organizing that culminated in the International Women's Strike, a framework for building a global feminist movement was put forth by Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser in "Feminism for the 99%: A Manifesto." Key ideas from the manifesto include mass action and strikes against the conditions of paid and unpaid labor.

The feminist movement must abandon the liberal feminist vision of equality under the law and instead fight capitalism head on, including fights against imperialism, mass incarceration, environmental destruction, and austerity.

Social Reproduction theory grounds the tasks of building a global anti-capitalist feminist movement. Understanding social reproduction theory (SRT) is vital to combating anti-abortion laws in the context of capitalism. SRT posits that capitalism does not reproduce the labor power required to perpetuate itself. In other words, capitalism produces goods and services, but doesn't in itself produce workers and due to profit motive (wherein profit is derived from surplus value of labor), capitalism does little to provide for the upkeep of workers. Thus, women are tasked with supporting the continuation of capitalism through biological reproduction, the care of non-laborers such as children, elderly, or people with illnesses, and unpaid household labor such as cooking and cleaning.

When women can control their biological reproduction through birth control or abortion, they are denying capitalism the reproduction of a future labor force. Lack of bodily autonomy enforces traditional family and gender roles, thereby further enforcing social reproduction. At the same time, the drive for profit works to erode or deny social provisioning such as paid maternity leave, free day care, socialized health care, or other social benefits that the United States lacks, but encourages or supports reproduction. This creates a contradiction wherein birth is mandated but not supported.

It is little wonder that the war against abortion access has intensified in the last decade, following the world economic crisis that erupted in 2008. Abortion became legal in the United States in the same era as our waning hegemony and the accompanying age of neoliberalism that promotes austerity and the movement of industrial production to the low wage "developing" world. Women's bodies are punished into ameliorating the crisis of capitalism.

The United States was founded upon the subjugation and destruction of bodies through slavery and genocide. Reproduction is controlled in the name of national interests, which is itself a guise for the overarching interest of amassing wealth for an elite few. At times, this has meant the forced sterilization of Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, Blacks, low-income women, and women with disabilities. For population control, birth control was first tested on women with mental illness without their consent, and later on Puerto Rican women.

Today, the rhetoric of walls and criminal immigrants is used to control some populations while the limits on abortion access are used to control another. A part of this continuum of control is violence and oppression of trans and non-binary people, whose existence challenges the gender binary and traditional family structures that have so long been the cornerstone of social reproduction. Trans and non-binary people are denied reproductive justice too.

The struggle for abortion access, as part of the larger movement for a feminism for the 99%, must also struggle against racism, transphobia, ableism, and for the liberation of all bodies long subjugated by capitalism. ■

Why Zionists are in a panic

By BARRY WEISLEDER

On Saturday, May 18, the first Pan-Canadian Day of Action for Palestinian rights took place. In Toronto, close to 500 people rallied and marched to demand justice for the Palestinian people. Shortly after 2 p.m., the gathering at Yonge and Dundas heard the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish, listened to music, then speeches from a number of leading activists.

An attempt by a dozen flag-waving Zionists to infiltrate and disrupt the event was repulsed by loud chanting and the presence of a stalwart corps of marshals.

Speakers at the rally included: Hammam Farah, newly elected to the executive board of the Palestinian Canadian Community Centre; Emily Green of Independent Jewish Voices; Felipe Nagata of the Canadian Federation of Students; Zafar Bangash of the Canadian Council for Justice and Peace; Wala Al-Safi from Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights at McMaster University; Ali Mallah, a veteran union activist and member of the Al Quds Committee; this writer on behalf of Socialist Action; and Rabbi Dovid Feldman of Neturei Karta International (whose written statement I read aloud at his request due to his strict observance of the Sabbath). MC Lina Assi of McMaster University SPHR, did a brilliant job of chairing and leading chants en route.

The Day of Action, sponsored by the Canadian BDS Coalition, took place in cities from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Demands included Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against the Israeli state and economy, End the Occupation, Tear Down the Apartheid Wall, Lift the Siege of Gaza, and establish the Right of all Palestinian Refugees to Return home.

The Toronto crowd grew as it marched slowly north on Yonge Street to Bloor, site of an office tower that houses the Israeli Consulate. There we occupied Canada's busiest intersection for over 45 minutes to hear speakers and to engage in loud chanting. Please take note that we did not apply for a parade permit; we did not ask for police permission to rally. In fact, they closed off lanes of traffic and intersections, including the final rally site. They cooperated with our marshals, while BDS Coalition members distributed information to passers-by, all afternoon.

The array of red flags and colourful banners, along with a contingent of anti-Zionist Jewish rabbis, was a sight to behold. It was the first time that proponents of Palestine solidarity seized that famous crossroad and held it long enough to present a democratic, anti-imperialist narrative for the city and the world to witness through social media. How could this happen, especially at a time when the authorities, at all levels, are trying to vilify, even to outlaw BDS, to ban the Al Quds march and stop anti-Zionist free speech?

Part of the answer is this: Public opinion in Canada now backs sanctions against the Zionist state. That is why Socialist Action proposes that there be an annual cross-country Day of Action, and that Palestine solidarity work be stepped up on a year-round basis. It is important to grasp the growing convergence of anti-imperialist struggles, to see the fissures in the world system of domination, and to comprehend our tasks as working people, from the Middle East to Latin America to Africa and Asia.

As I said to the May 18 rally, the eyes of the world are on Palestine and Venezuela. Why? Because of their proximity to vast reserves of oil. The corporate energy giants want to control the resources of the world. They try to crush any nation that stands in their way. Recently, we saw examples of that behaviour when Washington seized the embassy of Venezuela in the U.S. capital, and earlier when it moved the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, indicating that the Zionist Occupation will be permanent. To that we say NO, NO, NO. Imperialist Hands Off Venezuela! Free, free Palestine!

The Palestinian people are in the forefront of resistance to world imperialism. They did not choose this role. It was thrust upon them. When the Ottoman Empire collapsed in the early 20th century, the Western powers carved up the Middle East, just as they did Africa and Asia earlier.

Never forget that it was Winston Churchill, as Britain's war minister, 1919-1921, who authorized dropping poisonous mustard gas on the population of Iraq. In the face of rebellion by the Arab masses, the imperial masters sponsored a military fortress in the region. They exploited the survivors of the Nazi Holocaust for their greedy goals. But the fact remains: Israel is a colonial settler state, an outpost of imperialism in the Arab East. Zionism began as an extreme bourgeois

Northern Lights

News and views from SA Canada

website: <http://socialistaction.ca>



(Left) March in Ottawa in 2014.

nationalist minority movement. It ran counter to the strong socialist and internationalist tradition of Jews in the diaspora.

Theodore Herzl, a non-religious Jew and founder of Zionism, gained sponsors in France, Britain, even Czarist Russia. Later, Canada, the USA and Christian Zionists joined the project. Even the Stalinist-ruled USSR voted at the United Nations in 1948 for the partition of Palestine that led to the establishment of Israel. Why did the Stalinists do this? Because they thought that the Israeli Communist Party, then called the Maki party, could be part of the government in the new state. The Palestinian people were sacrificed by Stalinism on the altar of bourgeois electoral expediency. Looking at the big picture, the Zionist state was founded on a big lie: that Palestine was *a land without people for a people without land*. But the Palestinian people are here today to refute that lie.

I speak for Socialist Action as its federal secretary. SA is part of the world Trotskyist movement. Our movement opposed the creation of the Zionist state 71 years ago. We oppose the so-called two-state solution—which is just a cruel cover for racism and ethnic cleansing. The truth is there is no solution to the Jewish Question under capitalism. The only solution is world socialist revolution.

Leon Trotsky predicted in the 1930s that a Jewish state would be a death trap for the Jews. The odious actions of the Zionist state fuel hatred of Jews. Though world revolution may seem beyond reach, world capitalism is clearly a prescription for racism, war, and climate catastrophe that threaten the demise of civilization. The best hope for humanity is majority self-empowerment, the revolutionary road forward. The precondition for that is firm and undying support for national liberation struggles, which only the working class and poor farmers can lead to victory. That means no reliance on bourgeois parties, or on the capitalist state, or on imperialist military alliances like NATO. This is a cornerstone of Trotsky's strategy, which is summed up in two words: Permanent Revolution.

Oppressed nations the world over, from Kurdistan to Ireland to the Philippines, have long eaten the bitter fruit of betrayal after their aspirations to national liberation have been subordinated and betrayed in favour of the preservation of capitalist rule.

SA is proud to have initiated, through the Canadian BDS Coalition, the first cross-country Day of Action for Palestinian rights. It all began with a discussion in the SA leadership last November, followed by adoption of the idea by the Coalition in December, its confirmation in January, and then four months of solid, grassroots organizing with many wonderful people all across the country.

But, once again, why now? Because over the past decade, public opinion across the Canadian state has shifted. A big majority, 66 per cent, support sanctions against Israel. The majority recognize that Israel is guilty of systematic oppression and war crimes, according to a 2017 poll by EKOS, commissioned by the CPJME.

- Canadians believe overwhelmingly that sanctions are a reasonable way for Canada to censure countries violating international law and human rights;

- Given the UN Security Council's recent condemnation of illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian territory, a strong majority of Canadians believe that government sanctions on Israel would be reasonable;

- In the context of Israel's ongoing violations of international law, a very strong majority of Canadians believe that the Palestinians' call for a boycott of Israel is reasonable;

- Far more Canadians oppose than support Parliament's February 2016 decision to condemn individuals and groups who promote the Palestinian call for a boycott of Israel.

Voters for four out of five major parties in Parliament favour sanctions. Among Liberal voters it is 75 per cent. Among NDP voters it is 84 per cent; Green Party 85 per cent; and Bloc Quebecois 94 per cent. Even among Conservative voters, 30 per cent say sanctions against Israel are reasonable.

So, why are Zionists in a panic? *Because they have lost the battle for public opinion.*

In the Jewish community a remarkable change has occurred. A September 2018 survey conducted by polling firm EKOS, co-sponsored by Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV) and the United Jewish People's Order (UJPO), found that among Jewish Canadians:

- More than a third (37 percent) have a negative opinion of the Israeli government;

- Almost equal proportions oppose (45 percent) and support (42 percent) the U.S. decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel;

- Almost a third (30 percent) think that the Palestinian call for a boycott of Israel is reasonable, and 34 percent also oppose Parliament condemning those who endorse a boycott of Israel; and

- Almost one in three (31 percent) oppose the military blockade of the Gaza Strip.

But party leaders and the big media conceal this tectonic shift in general public opinion, and in Jewish opinion. So, now is the time to proclaim the truth. Across the board, we represent the new majority! And we will not be denied.

The time has come to target Canadian corporations that profit from the misery of the Palestinian people. Here is a question for the audience: Can you name any Canadian companies that operate in Occupied Palestine?

Actuonix Motion Devices, based in Canada, provides micro motion solutions for robotics, aerospace, automotive, medical and radio control industries. Bombardier, the Canadian multinational aerospace and transportation company, says it is no longer involved in Jerusalem Light Rail. But a senior manager of Bombardier has gone over to WSP. WSP/Parsons Brinckerhoff provides technical expertise and strategic advice in property and buildings, transportation, and infrastructure sectors.

EffiSolar enterprises Inc. is a renewable power developer with projects in Ontario, New Jersey, Saipan and Israel. The Metrontario Group is a private Canadian corporation with investments in real estate, environmental development, nuclear medicine, marine agriculture and tourism.

Have you heard the news? South Africa has broken diplomatic relations with Israel. But Trudeau and Freeland, following in the foot steps of Stephen Harper, continue a free trade and military security alliance with the Zionist state. NDP MP Randall Garrison was recently reappointed vice-chair of the Canada Israel Interparliamentary Group (CIIG), which promotes solidarity with a government that says Israel is a national homeland for the Jews and not a state for all its residents.

It is a state that just annexed the Golan Heights, aims to do the same to the West Bank, and has used snipers and bombers to kill hundreds in Gaza who protest the lack of clear water, electricity and freedom of movement. Randall Garrison is retiring. Now his policy should be retired. Jagmeet Singh ought to learn the lesson of Paul Manly, or Jagmeet too must go.

Around the world today there are many states guilty of atrocious conditions. The importance of Israel is that it is a lynch pin of global imperialist rule. Richard Nixon, a strident anti-Semite, put it best when he called Israel "America's biggest aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean."

Freedom for Palestine means freedom for humanity. For that reason, we will not stop demanding: End the occupation! Down with the Zionist apartheid state! For the right of all refugees to return to their homes. Lift the siege of Gaza! For a democratic and secular Palestine for all its residents: Muslims, Jews, Christians, atheists and agnostics! Disarm the nuclear powers, starting with the U.S. and its Israeli client state. From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be Free! ■

Two Venezuelan embassy protectors speak

Marty Goodman / Socialist Action



(Photo) Julie Leak (left) and Martha Allen wave from window of Venezuelan embassy in Washington.

By MARTY GOODMAN

"We denounce these arrests, as the people inside were there with our permission, and we consider it a violation of the Vienna Conventions,"

— Venezuelan Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Ron

I was in Washington, D.C., most of the time between May 7 to May 19 to support the Venezuela solidarity activists of the "Embassy Protectors Collective." They were staying inside the embassy at the invitation of the elected government, defending the sovereignty of the Venezuelan Embassy and the Venezuelan people. The embassy was under siege by a CIA-backed, fake president, Juan Guaidó, whose thugs sought a takeover of the embassy.

Outside of the embassy were daily protests against U.S. intervention. Surrounding the embassy were cops and those with bullet-proof vests with Secret Service written on it, who oversaw the seeming stand-off between anti-imperialist and pro-coup picketers. But, in reality, the cops and Secret Service worked hand-in-glove with coup supporters.

On May 16, the four remaining Embassy Protectors were arrested on misdemeanor charges of "interference"—Kevin Zeese, Margaret Flowers, Adrienne Pine and David Paul. The four were released the next morning without bail. Their first court appearance was that morning, which is now set to reconvene June 12.

Mara Verheyden-Hilliard, their attorney and co-founder of the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund, said, "Instead of leaving the government of Venezuela up to the people of Venezuela, you now have the U.S. government deciding for the people of Venezuela who their leadership will be, and handing over an embassy compound to their designated representative."

Socialist Action interviewed two of the embassy protectors, Martha Allen, who spent a month inside the Venezuelan Embassy, and Julie Leak, who spent two weeks inside. I started by asking them why they put themselves on the line for Venezuela given the hostility of the Trump administration and his pro-coup thugs and then let them relate their experiences to me.

Martha Allen: "The Venezuelan government was an elected government and I do not want the U.S. having our military overthrow a Latin American government or anywhere around the world. The U.S. has been doing that forever and it needs to stop!"

"Medea Benjamin [of Code Pink] had stayed at the embassy and called on others to protect it and the Embassy Protection Collective was formed. The next day [April 11], I slept at the embassy for the first time."

Julie Leak: "Initially, anger, and of course, disappointment, but more than ever in solidarity with people of Venezuela. When I read and heard about people at high altitudes without water and what they must endure it is heartbreaking. We must end these illegal sanctions. The blockade prevents them from securing equipment from abroad to repair their pumping stations. It is the sanctions and the fact that the U.S. prevents them from doing business with other countries who want to help them."

"On April 25, at New York's People's Forum, Jorge

Arreaza, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela spoke to a packed audience. Members of the Embassy Protection Collective joined us via Skype. The next morning on WBAI [radio], Medea Benjamin invited people to come join the Collective and become a part of history.

Martha: "Around the time of the failed coup the opposition became more violent and taking control over the space around the embassy. Blaring horns into our ears of our protectors standing along the wall for hours. I had to hold my ears because it was so loud. The protectors had laser lights shone in their eyes."

Socialist Action: I heard about racist remarks. Did you hear any?

Martha: "Yes, quite a few and misogynistic ones also. I would avoid looking at them but since I was inside I would look across at our people because looking at the coup people's faces was creepy and full of hate. Eventually, it became so abusive that we could not hold the space around the embassy. We were non-violent and they were willing to do anything."

Martha: "When the first coup happened things escalated tremendously, we thought that the raid would happen. We were very happy for every day that passed and we were still there and the embassy was protected. We had big rallies during the day when the Secret Service and the pro-coup people went around the back."

Martha: "I was seeing all of these Secret Service people and all these opposition people and what they were saying was that they wanted to let these people in. Then they said that the only people that would be let in were those with Venezuelan passports. This doesn't make any sense because the embassy couldn't do any services. This was not an operating embassy. They were not invited in by the government in power. That was their way to get the opposition in and get us out. It didn't work because we blocked the door so they couldn't come in, but that also meant that our people couldn't come in."

Martha: "The next time we thought it could happen was when Carlos Vecchio [Guaidó's so-called U.S. ambassador] was going to give a talk to people right in front of the embassy. We thought that he would say 'I want you out of my embassy' and that that would be the time that the Secret Service would let him in and get us out."

"In anticipation we loaded up our two cars with our laptops, overnight bags, etc., everything we didn't want the police to have. It was challenging to get the cars out but at that point they weren't guarding the outside 24 hrs. ... We would have some successes at getting some food in. Early on, we could see with the numbers that we had that we had to scale down to two very small meals a day."

Julie: I arrived Saturday night, April 27. It was just like a big house—one where you were invited. It was cool to wake up, go to breakfast and have so many people with interesting discussions going on. As a new face, I was asked where I was from, how I decided to come, etc. As I explained how I came over from a Mumia Abu-Jamal event in Philly, not one single person asked me who he was! Wow, I was with my people!"

Martha: "Most of the time they [cops, Secret Service] pretended that they were not interfering, but they were letting the opposition do all the dirty work. "We had food that could last quite a while. What made it difficult we had made more people than we needed to make a case in court. We had lost the water but we anticipated this. But when they turned the power off and when they turned off the water some people had to leave. When food and water couldn't come in we decided to let volunteers go. We had a core of people."

SA: "Did Trump declare that no food could be delivered?"

Martha: "No, because they allowed the opposition to make it impossible for us to get anything in by controlling the whole area around the embassy. They would surround our people and stamp on their feet and say, 'arrest them!' and then the Secret Service would arrest them. They surrounded [Vets for Peace President] Gerry Condon, who was holding a cucumber, and the Secret Service grabbed him and slammed him to the ground and arrested him. He hadn't even attempted to throw it!"

"Before that Arielle was arrested for throwing a baguette, for 'throwing a missile.' Anything that involved bringing food they'd say 'throwing a missile.' Like when Gene tried to bring us toothbrushes, they attacked him violently. I saw a Secret Service guy carrying a box of food, and I thought he was going to bring it to our people, but he took it across the street to a dumpster (I took video). In five minutes a truck picks up all the trash. I saw it with my own eyes, the Secret Service stole our food and threw it out."

Julie: "For the next 12 days I did not leave the building but had a bird's eye view from the windows of the embassy of these people in action with my phone camera to document it."

"May 1 was a bit scary for me as I had volunteered to take the security shift beginning at 11 p.m. The opposition actually tried to break down the front door. I called David, our security coordinator. I did not want to be a wimp as I knew there were two chain locks and a bicycle lock on the front door but I was totally afraid (heart racing, leg jumping) that somehow they might break the wall. Never in my life have I been this afraid. I could hear them outside and did not know how many there were, and the wall was shaking."

Julie: "These right-wing extremists and the U.S. Secret Service halted entry into the building and made it difficult to leave. They occupied the exterior of the embassy, harassing protectors both inside and outside with loud noise makers, strobe lights, vile, and insulting remarks to us. It was clear the Secret Service was on their side and not ours."

"There were four break-ins and yet no arrests. They did nothing to protect us, nor the embassy, even though that was their job. They did nothing to stop them from breaking in, just merely escorted the intruders out of the building. I have a picture of the second intruder who after he was escorted out draped a Venezuelan flag around himself and paraded around the building like a celebrity."

"This continued for several days and culminated with our electricity being turned off on the evening of May 8 and then the water on May 11. While it had become my intention to stay until the end, this new set of circumstances required careful consideration by the Collective. We had stored water for such an emergency but it was decided that some of us would leave in order to conserve resources. That being the case, I left on Mother's Day, May 12."

"Needless to say it was an unforgettable experience that will be with me forever. I will forever remember the chants, laughter, and most of all the commitment and camaraderie. In addition, there were the protectors outside (day and night) no matter the weather who were there to support the protectors inside—participants from many organizations coming together. Amazing coordination, planning, and teamwork. An amazing experience."

Martha: "I was inspired by how all of these diverse people, most of them who didn't know each other, worked together under these extreme conditions. We made food, made security, they brought their skills and just plugged in where they could. That was truly inspiring."

Julie: "We must revive the antiwar movement of earlier years. Already, plans are being made to make the most of the momentum we have now. A mass mobilization (International Day of Peace) is being planned for Sept. 21 at the UN in New York City. Please watch for details, mark your calendar and come!"

... Venezuela

(continued from page 12)

peated as truth ad nauseam, according to the media investigating group, FAIR (Fairness in Accuracy and Reporting), in virtually every major newspaper in the country. (See <https://fair.org/home/failed-coup-a-fake-corporate-news-story-designed-to-trick-venezuelan-soldiers-and-us-public/>)

The named “defecting” Venezuelan military officers—who had apparently been contacted by the CIA and offered huge bribes—played along with the would-be coup makers only to later expose their deeds, repudiating Guaidó’s and the CIA’s fabrications (see the May 5, 2019, *Los Angeles Times*). None defected. The mass protests that Guaidó announced never materialized. Small groups of Guaidó supporters gathered briefly in Caracas’ upper-middle-class neighborhoods to engage police with rocks.

Meanwhile, the subsequent May Day mobilizations a day later of 400,000 government supporters, the largest in several years, were invisible to the corporate media. In the end, the entire rigged scenario proved to be a fiction. *The New York Times* finally reported in a front-page article on May 22, “Weakened and unable to bring the political crisis gripping Venezuela to a quick resolution, Mr. Guaidó [fleeing from one safe house to another in Venezuela] has been forced to consider negotiations with Mr. Maduro.”

Yet to this day the fiction of Guaidó’s presidency is maintained by the duopoly war parties of the United States. Not a single U.S. politician moved to expose this charade. Manufacturing such scenarios, accompanied by demonization of a nation’s leader as a mass murdering tyrant, often accompanied by “proof” of heinous misdeeds such as the now-refuted charge of using lethal sarin gas against civilians in Syria, is the stock in trade in imperialism’s arsenal of mass deception aimed at justifying “humanitarian” and regime change wars in the public mind.

Self-determination for Venezuela

The articles in this Socialist Action pamphlet serve as a resounding refutation of these crudely orchestrated regime-change efforts and as an affirmation of Socialist Action’s unconditional support of the right to self-determination of Venezuela’s people and democratically elected government.

Today’s central antiwar movement demand, “U.S. Hands Off Venezuela!” has proved to be increasingly effective in forging broad united-front-type mass-action coalitions like the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC), whose focus is on bringing thousands into the streets in clear opposition to the bipartisan warmakers. UNAC’s component organizations, of course, hold a range of often divergent assessments on the policies of the Venezuelan government. They are united in rejecting U.S. intervention in all its horrific expressions, but as a mass action coalition they take no position on the nature of the Venezuelan government. As individual organizations each is free to present its own views.

Socialist Action’s assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of Venezuela’s Bolivarian Revolution is presented here in some detail. While standing full square on the side of the Venezuelan government and people against every effort of the U.S. government to overthrow it, we have also been harsh critics of Venezuela’s “pink revolution” policies that have tragically served to weaken its fight against imperialist-imposed isolation and war.

Socialist vs. “pink” revolutions

Venezuela’s “pink revolution”—as with all of Latin America’s recent experience with the political rule of



Via Massachusetts Peace Action

social-democratic, reformist, or left nationalist governments that promised to improve the lives of the working masses without fundamentally challenging their nation’s capitalist and private property foundation—has proved to be inadequate to the task. John Pilger’s Feb. 22, 2019, *Counterpunch* article entitled “The war on Venezuela is built on lies” makes this absolutely clear. Pilger, a longtime admirer and friend of former Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and a sympathetic, anti-imperialist friend of Venezuela, explains in great detail what has been widely viewed as Venezuela’s democratic electoral process and its significant social achievements. But Pilger’s balance sheet includes this painfully accurate yet contradictory statement: “For all the Chavistas’ faults—such as allowing the Venezuelan economy to become hostage to the fortunes of oil and never seriously challenging big capital and corruption—they brought social justice and pride to millions of people and they did it with unprecedented democracy.”

The iron laws of capitalism, whether in the U.S. or anywhere else in the world, repeatedly demonstrate that advancing the interests of the vast majority is inherently incompatible with defending the prerogatives of the minority ruling-class capitalist elite. The Chavez/Maduro governments, as Pilger painfully notes, “never seriously challenged big capital,” that is, the overwhelming ownership and control by the “one percent” of Venezuela’s major industries including its oil—partial “nationalizations” notwithstanding—its land, banking, and related financial institutions, basic resources, systems of transportation, shipping, etc. Venezuela’s land largely remains the private property of big landowners.

In short, the Chavez/Maduro project of “coexisting” with capitalism left it incapable of developing a rounded economy capable of producing its own food—Venezuela imports almost all of its food—and instituting a semblance of planned and balanced economic growth aimed at satisfying human needs as opposed to capitalist profits. Today, 70 percent of Venezuela’s economy remains in capitalist hands, not to mention some 70 to 90 percent of its media.

Rhetoric aside, Venezuela is no socialist economy. The rhythms of its economic, and therefore social development, are contingent on the exigencies of the world capitalist market. When world oil prices, always manipulated by the U.S. and a few of the most powerful oil producers, plummeted from over \$110 per barrel to less than \$40 over the past decade, Venezuela’s economy suffered greatly and became increasingly subject to imperialism’s ever-deepening destabilization measures.

The Chavez government’s conscious decision to avoid any fundamental break with capitalism left it

unprotected, as was the case with similar reform-minded governments in Brazil (Lula), Ecuador (Correa) and Nicaragua (Ortega). The Chavistas sought to coexist with the “boli-bourgeoisie” (Venezuelan capitalists) who occupied essential parts of the government infrastructure and were included in Venezuela’s United Socialist Party. Capitalism and government corruption are inseparable.

In contrast to Venezuela’s reform-minded but capitalism-committed Chavistas, Cuba’s socialist revolution of 1959 proceeded to rapidly, in Fidel’s words, “nationalize the capitalist class down to the nails in the heels of their boots.” It quickly established a planned economy based on meeting human needs, not capitalist profits; it distributed the land to the long-oppressed and exploited peasantry; and it armed its population to defend all of those gains. In consequence, Cuba’s proud revolutionary achievements remain largely intact and a shining example to oppressed people everywhere, despite more than a half-century of U.S. imperialist efforts to restore it to its former neo-colonial status.

The way forward for Venezuela

Venezuela today stands at the threshold of social change. It can take the Cuban route and move toward a fundamental break with capitalist domination or it can continue on the dead-end path of “peaceful” coexistence with an imperialist-backed internal capitalist elite. The latter course, as history has repeatedly demonstrated, is a sure road to disaster.

Genuine socialist revolution, established via the direct and democratic rule of the working-class majority, requires the formation of a deeply rooted, mass revolutionary socialist, working-class-based party. While no such party exists in Venezuela today, the conditions for its formation, given the deep radicalization brought on by the immediate threat of a U.S. invasion and the experience of millions with the severe limitations and failures of previous reform projects, are propitious.

The road to the construction of such a party centers on winning the confidence and mass support of the working class and absolute opposition to imperialist intervention. In the current context, the best defense is a good offense. There is nothing the Venezuelan government can do to placate the rapacious capitalists in the U.S. or within Venezuela. Appeasement will not work. Power must be met with power. And the only source of power within Venezuela that can match the imperial behemoth at the gates is an emboldened, organized, mobilized working class headed by a mass revolutionary socialist party that proves in action to be the best defenders of the interests of Venezuela’s working masses. U.S. Hands Off Venezuela! ■

By ERNIE GOTTA

Chinese imperialism targeted in Balochistan

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) has launched multiple attacks in the last seven months against Chinese assets in Balochistan, Pakistan. On Sunday May 12, gunmen from the Majeed Brigade of the BLA claimed responsibility for an attack on a hotel in Gwadar. This most recent attack occurred days after an attack at a coal mine in the Quetta region of Balochistan that killed two workers and two security personnel.

Balochistan is the largest province in Pakistan and is rich in mineral resources. A majority of the people living in Balochistan are of Baloch (52%) or Pashtun (36%) ethnicity. Baloch anger over the exploitation of natural resources by Chinese capitalists has given way to a strong separatist movement in the region of

which the BLA is one of many independence groups.

The Balochistan province, and Gwadar in particular, have been the intense focus of Chinese capital, which built a \$60 billion port in Gwadar as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Chinese companies stand to make significant profits from the CPEC deal. For example, China will receive 91% of the revenue from the Gwadar port for the next 40 years.

Gwadar is a poor and neglected part of Pakistan where costs of food and water are extremely high. Yet Chinese capitalists have even bigger plans for Gwadar. The building of the port is just one of many development projects headed by

Chinese capitalists in the region, which also include mining, rail, and shipping for extraction and export of natural resources to European, Asian, and African markets. Plans also include building luxury hotels as a Dubai style playground for the world’s elite.

Chinese capital has not provided a progressive alternative to European and U.S. exploitation. Port cities in other countries that have accepted Chinese investments have paid a heavy price. Sri Lanka had to hand over ownership of its Hambantota port back to Chinese capital after being unable to repay loans to China for the cost of the ports construction. In Greece,

Chinese companies employ members

of the fascist Golden Dawn party at the Port of Piraeus to help crush workers’ organizing efforts and protect Chinese economic interests.

In Pakistan, resistance to what is widely viewed by locals as exploitative Chinese development has taken forms other than armed struggle, including 2018 protests and strikes by fishermen over access to routes to the Arabian Sea. Their actions cost the economy millions.

The Chinese-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a vehicle for taking hold of Pakistani resources at the expense of the people in Balochistan. It is likely that Baloch resentments will deepen alongside the incursion of Chinese capital in the region; more conflict can be expected. ■

U.S.-backed 'revolt' fails in Venezuela

Marty Goodman / Socialist Action



By JEFF MACKLER

It took some 34 days for the Donald Trump administration to decide on May 18, 2019, to forcefully evict from the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington, D.C., four antiwar activist members of the Embassy Protection Coalition. The four were there with the formal and express consent of the Venezuelan government and its president, Nicolas Maduro. Their attorneys repeatedly informed threatening U.S. government officials that any attempt to evict members of this Embassy Protection Coalition would be in flagrant violation of U.S. and established international law, wherein the embassies of recognized governments cannot be violated.

Embassy personnel and appointed representatives, as well as their offices and contents, cannot be breached or infringed upon by the host government. These principles were recently affirmed with regard to the Ecuadoran Embassy in London that provided sanctuary to Wikileaks founder Julian Assange. Until the new Ecuadoran government reversed its previous position and decided to allow British authorities to remove Assange, no one had dared to enter for some seven years.

In this matter, the Trump administration finds itself ensnared in its self-declared and delusional contradiction. On the one hand, it maintains official recognition of the Venezuelan government and, therefore, the sanctity of its embassy; on the other, it insists that

its puppet "president," appointee Juan Guaidó, is the true representative of this government. In the end, as with all such matters when U.S. imperialism's "interests" are at stake, international law and all other "laws" are ignored with impunity and brute force is employed to achieve heinous ends.

No doubt, if the embassy matter becomes subject to future litigation, Trump and Company fully expect that their U.S. Supreme Court, or any other judicial body, will find or invent some "legal" justifications to suit the imperial needs of the capitalist system they are sworn to uphold. One can only imagine reading a Supreme Court decision wherein the Court recognizes the right of the U.S. government to appoint its agents/puppets to the presidency of another country!

Certainly, no such U.S. judicial authority has ruled that the myriad of recent regime change wars that leveled much of the infrastructure of Iraq, Libya and Syria, and now Yemen, and slaughtered millions of civilians, were illegal.

U.S. embargo/blockade/sanctions kills 40,000

Today, the full force of U.S. imperial power is directed against Venezuela, including enforcing an international embargo and blockade, unprecedented sanctions, overt threats of intervention and the massive U.S. sequestering of billions of dollars in Venezuela's international assets. The combination of these U.S. actions alone, according to the Center for Economic

(Above) Antiwar activists rally at the Venezuelan embassy in Washington in support of protectors who are inside, May 11.

and Policy Research, has resulted in the incredible loss of 40,000 Venezuelan lives due to U.S.-imposed starvation and lack of medical supplies.

CIA's fake revolution

U.S. media monopolies for months, and to this day, dutifully report each and every Trump and CIA-manufactured lie to justify its ongoing regime-change coup efforts. Trump's warmongering cohorts, National Security Adviser John Bolton, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and Elliot Abrams went to the extreme in scripting and orchestrating a "Wag the Dog" Hollywood-style, fake revolution against the Venezuelan government, aimed at convincing the Venezuelan people and world public opinion that the Venezuelan army had gone over to Guaidó's side, that Guaidó was in power, and that masses were in the streets proclaiming his victory. Guaidó's April proclamations to this effect included that he had won the support of three major military officers, that his soldiers had captured a prime military base in Caracas and that massive numbers had rallied to his cause in Caracas and across the country to demand President Maduro's ouster.

All of this soon proved to be CIA-created fiction, re-

(continued on page 11)

