

Massacre in Hanau, Germany: Effects of chauvinist and xenophobic policies

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 25, 2020



Vigil for victims of the mass shooting in Hanau, Germany, Feb. 20.

Fascism is a crime, not an opinion. Fascism is inhuman. Fascism is an evil that must be eradicated. Any block or front which does not aim at overthrowing fascism is

destined to remain within the limits of the new world order and to suffocate within the limits of the order.

Every massacre, every terrorist attack and murder in the world is signed by fascism and imperialism.

What happened in Hanau, Germany, is only the latest manifestation of this ideology that strikes and spreads without any filter or legislative limit.

Tobias Rathjen, a 43-year-old German man, entered two different cafes in the city frequented mainly by citizens from non-European countries, opening fire. Then he returned to his home, killed his mother and committed suicide. Provisional balance sheet: 11 dead and several injured.

Among the victims, all of foreign origin, are mainly Turks and Kurds. According to the media, the assault in the two cafes was carried out by a man suffering from a serious psychiatric illness, but he had a weapons license and openly sympathized with the neo-Nazi fringes, he incited racial hatred on social media, and last year he wrote a manifesto calling for the total destruction of most countries in North Africa and the Middle East.

After the massacre, a note found in his house said, "Arabs and Muslim Turks must be exterminated."

The massacre is part of a disturbing trend of growing violent fascist and racist attacks. But it could not be otherwise, since there are (not only in Germany) extreme right-wing parties such as the Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany, AfD), which feed undisturbed on racial tensions.

In the heart of Europe, the evil heart of neo-Nazism grows. While, as usual, the Nazi-fascists are described as "mad," but only after they have massacred or killed someone, it is also emerging that within the state apparatus, particularly in the

police and the army, neo-Nazi cells have been created.*

While criminalization, repression, persecution and blackmailing of leftists, anti-fascists, and especially organized left political migrants is increasing, Nazis and extreme right-wing groups and people linked to them can freely move and were enabled again to kill innocent people.

Racist-motivated, discriminating and fascist ideas can't be put on a level with those of the anti-fascist movement. Fascism is a crime. It's a human duty to fight back!

Freedom for all political prisoners, who are charged and arrested for their anti-fascist, anti-imperialist political ideas and defense of the freedom struggle!

The Anti-Imperialist Front expresses its condolences to the victims of the xenophobic and fascist massacre in Hanau, Germany, on Feb. 19, 2020. Attacks like this are merely the sharpest expression of the growing fascism in Germany and indeed Europe, often expressed at the ballot box in votes for far-right parties.

This is also against a background of official apathy about fascist murders, especially in Germany, and a tendency to see them as the deeds of mentally ill individuals. As Patrik Köbele, chair of the German Communist Party (DKP) noted, garbage cans allegedly set on fire by the left are placed on the same level as fascist murders.

The Anti-Imperialist Front calls for the greatest possible unity of action among anti-fascist forces to confront the fascist wave, of which these murders are merely the latest example.

**A short time ago in Frankfurt, five police were suspended on charges of belonging to a neo-Nazi network; they had threatened by fax to slaughter the 2-year-old daughter of Turkish lawyer Seda Basay-Yildiz.*

Source: [Anti-Imperialist Front](#)



Harlem event: ‘Lift illegal sanctions off Zimbabwe!’

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Fifty-five years after Malcolm X was assassinated, people came to the National Black Theatre in Harlem on Feb. 21 to demand the lifting of illegal sanctions off Zimbabwe. The December 12th Movement organized this important event.

The renowned musician and jazz scholar Jerome Jennings opened the program with fantastic drumming. Omowale Clay of D12 welcomed the standing-room-only crowd.

Viola Plummer, chairperson of D12, quoted Malcolm X: “We have to be free by any means necessary.” Plummer introduced the featured speaker, Ambassador Arikana Chihombori-Quao, M.D., as “a sister who speaks the truth.”

The diplomat and physician is the former representative of the African Union to the

United States. Born in Zimbabwe, Dr. Chihombori-Quao is a scientist with a master's degree in organic chemistry.

A graduate of Meharry Medical College, she spent 29 years as a family physician in Murfreesboro, Tenn. Dr. Chihombori-Quao is currently leading the African Diaspora Development Institute.

Dr. Chihombori-Quao reminded people of the consequences of the evil Berlin conference of 1884 that carved up Africa among the European colonial powers. The Belgian King Leopold had millions of Africans in Congo killed and mutilated for rubber profits,

The ambassador spoke of how her father and his family were driven off their land by white settlers in Zimbabwe. Under British colonial legislation, whites could seize 2,000 hectares — almost eight square miles of land — and burn the homes of Africans.

Yet, virtually every capitalist media outlet denounced the late Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe for leading Africans to reclaim their land!

Dr. Chihombori-Quao also described how the French imperialists, while being forced to grant formal independence to African countries, demanded that their financial reserves be controlled by French banks. But the media only talk about the alleged corruption of certain African leaders.

She emphasized the importance of the African Union initiating an all-African customs union on July 1, 2020.

The doctor and diplomat also spoke movingly about how much was stolen from Africa. The African Holocaust includes thousands of African skulls that are displayed in European museums. Dr. Chihombori-Quao told how women belonging to the Ashanti nation in Ghana prevented the British colonialists from stealing the Golden

Stool, an important symbol of nationhood.

Dr. James McIntosh, member of N'cobra, (National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America), gave a dynamic fundraising appeal. Dr. McIntosh is the author of "The Unauthorized Psychoanalysis of Donald Trump."

Viola Plummer denounced the nearby Bloomberg for President office as an insult to Harlem. She reminded people that the U.S. sanctions against Zimbabwe are coming up for renewal by Trump in March.

Ending the meeting, Plummer led the crowds in chants of "Sanctions are a weapon of mass destruction!"

Hands off Zimbabwe!



'It is clear that this is U.S.

neoliberal interference in Bolivia'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Interview with Julia 'Pachamama' Fernández and Gualberto Arispe Maita

Struggle-La Lucha's Scott Scheffer spoke with Los Angeles Native/Quechua/Chicana activist Julia "Pachamama" Fernández, and with Gualberto Arispe Maita, a MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo) representative and MAS deputy candidate in Chapare and the president of MAS Youth. Julia interpreted our questions to Gualberto by phone and relayed his responses to us.

Struggle-La Lucha: Evo Morales expelled the United States Agency for International Development from Bolivia in 2013. Now, the Trump administration has sent its agents back into Bolivia in January to "assist" the coup regime. What role is the U.S. and USAID playing in the May 3 elections?

Gualberto Arispe Maita: The presence of the DEA [Drug Enforcement Administration] /USAID was to make us fight between Bolivians, dividing the social sectors in our politics. That is why President Evo [Morales] made the decision to expel them and now, after the coup, they will return to our country. It is clear that this is U.S. neoliberal interference. Those institutions have not given good results nor have they helped the Bolivian people; on the contrary, they have always left us massive problems, causing destabilization. The OAS [Organization of American States] and other accredited institutions like them will oversee the elections on May 3, but they do not have the confidence of the Bolivians because they were the ones that supported the consummation of the coup in our country. We are asking other organizations to come to see the elections to make the results transparent.

SLL: What has been the impact on the Indigenous and working-class population of the expulsion of Cuban health care workers?

Gualberto: On the issue of our Cuban medical brothers/sisters, it is unfortunate because thanks to them many Bolivians recovered their eyesight. On the issue of literacy, they have also helped us a lot, but the so-called transitional government, which clearly is a U.S. backed coup, expelled them and their accredited embassy in Bolivia. We want the social sectors to repudiate those dictatorial acts. ... Our effort is to recover democracy for our people, which we are currently lacking.

Julia “Pachamama” Fernández: I was just told by a woman in Bolivia who does not want to have her name publicized that the Juana Azurduy program has been suspended by the de facto government today. And, it's a stipend program that's designed to provide health and nutrition benefits, basically for pregnant mothers and young children in underserved sectors of the population — so that's been suspended.

And it's clear that most of the most vulnerable communities which predominantly comprise our Indigenous peoples in the rural areas are the ones obviously being most affected. And that, along with the expulsion of our Cuban medical doctors, has basically created panic within the sectors.

And so we have elders, we have children, pregnant women and men, which includes those protectors of democracy who were assaulted and shot during those peaceful marches in Senkata and Sacaba, who still have not received medical attention, so they are the most vulnerable. For me that spells out G-E-N-O-C-I-D-E. For me that's what's happening.

SLL: The illegitimate government of [Jeanine] Áñez wants to bar Evo Morales from running for senator, saying he hasn't been a resident of Bolivia, even though it was their coup, backed by the U.S., that forced him at gunpoint to leave. They've also

implied that they may try the same tactic to stop the MAS presidential candidate [Luis] Arce and vice presidential candidate [David] Choquehuanca from running. Of course, there is also continuing repression, harassment and ongoing arrests of MAS supporters. Yet, the movement seems so strong and determined. What is the MAS view on possibilities of the upcoming elections and how to move the struggle forward?

Julia: It's going to get heavier in the months to come. But I just don't want to think the worst. I'm hopeful because my people are very strong. We've been through so many different wars and we've gone through the gas war and the water wars, and we've won.

Basically, the Indigenous movement is being forced to rebuild amid all the chaos happening in Bolivia. Right now, there's like a series of intimidations, of persecution and unlawful detention of innocent MAS supporters, false accusations against grassroots journalists and against MAS political leaders — even, you know, false allegations against the presidential candidate Luis Arce Catacora. The focus-in spite of what they're facing-is to really stay together against all odds. And the Bolivian Indigenous peoples have fought and won the gas and water wars in the past. The May elections may not be fair, but international volunteers will arrive to be witnesses of the upcoming historical events happening in Bolivia. And as for the Bolivian people, their courage and their strength will pull them through.



In spite of persecution, Bolivia's MAS registers candidates for the upcoming elections

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On February 3, the presidential candidate of the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS), Luis Arce, and his running mate, David Choquehuanca, registered their candidacy at the office of the Supreme Electoral Court (TSE) for the general elections on May 3 in Bolivia. Despite the constant political persecution by the coup regime, led by far-right, Jeanine Áñez, the leftist party MAS, led by former President Evo Morales, presented the list of its candidates for president, vice-president, senators and deputies and successfully filed their nomination.

The MAS candidates, Arce and Choquehuanca, arrived at the office of the TSE accompanied by a massive crowd of the MAS leaders, supporters and social movements, who marched with them from the San Francisco Plaza to the electoral office.

"We have the people on our side, we are the only party, the only political option that represents the interests of the poorest people, of the indigenous brothers, peasants, of the impoverished middle class, which has been increasingly impoverished by this de-facto government. There are many people who are suffering, not only because of the limitation in political participation, but also in the economy. We have the support of the majority of the people," said Arce, minutes after filing his nomination, manifesting his confidence in the people of Bolivia.

Arce also sharply criticized the de-facto government for its hostile actions against the MAS functionaries to prevent their participation in the elections. Referring to the recent incident of harassment and attempted arrest of the legal representative of President Morales, Patricia Hermosa, and his lawyer, Wilfredo Chávez, Arce said that "we denounce the harassment that our delegates suffer before the Electoral Court, another trick of the de-facto government that does not want us to take part in the elections."

Hermosa and Chávez came to the TSE with all the necessary documents to register former President Morales as a candidate for the Plurinational Legislative Assembly. However they were stopped from doing so and became the new victims of the harassment and political persecution of the dictatorial government of Áñez. Hermosa, who was carrying the power of attorney by President Morales and a military service notebook, was arrested by the police and sentenced to six months preventive detention the same day. Chávez, who couldn't be arrested with Hermosa, had taken refuge at the Argentine embassy in La Paz, Bolivia.

President Morales condemned Hermosa's arrest on twitter and denounced the lack of evidence to carry out the arrest. "Justice in Bolivia is subordinated to the dictatorship. In a completely illegal way, they send my representative Patricia Hermosa to prison; without any evidence or legal basis they deprive former public servants of their freedom," Morales wrote.

However, despite the coup regime's desperate attempts to prevent Morales's participation, he was successfully registered as a candidate for the Senate. Social and peasant leader, Leonardo Loza, informed the local media yesterday that Morales's name is on the official list of the MAS candidates and he is a candidate for the Senate from the department of Cochabamba.

The persecution of the former government members happened over the weekend as well. On February 1, the former Mining Minister Cesar Navarro and former Agriculture Minister Pedro Dorado were arbitrary arrested at the El Alto airport when they were about to board a plane to Mexico to seek political asylum in that country. The officials were granted a safe-conduct which allowed their free departure from the country, despite that, the Interior Ministry arrested them disrespecting the safe-conduct granted by its government. After spending hours in detention and the public apologies of the interim government, both officials were released and they managed to reach Mexico.

Last month, the de-facto government tried to impede Arce's participation in the upcoming elections by [filing a false corruption case](#) against him.

Since the civic-military coup against the constitutional president Evo Morales on November 10, selective persecution of MAS functionaries and social leaders has become normal practice on part of the coup-born government. After the right-wing coup, the MAS deputies and ministers, who sought refuge in the Mexican embassy located in La Paz, were intimidated by an increased military presence and arrest warrants were issued for five MAS ministers. A warrant has even been issued for former Bolivian President Evo Morales accusing him of sedition, terrorism and financing of terrorism.

Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)



On the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, fascism and the triumph of revolution

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Over the past two weeks, the global working-class community has observed several anniversaries dating back to World War II. These anniversaries have included the victory of the Soviet Union over Nazi Germany in the 1943 Battle of Stalingrad, the lifting of the 1944 siege of Leningrad and the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp in 1945. The anniversary of the Stalingrad victory is Feb. 5. The end of the siege of Leningrad and the liberation of Auschwitz share an anniversary, Jan. 27. They occurred a year apart, to the day. Jan. 27, 2020, was the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The Auschwitz Concentration Camp is the most notorious of Nazi concentration camps. This is due to the extremely high death count and the experiments of the "Angel of Death"-Josef Mengele-on innocent people. Over a million people died

within the walls of Auschwitz, the vast majority of whom were Jewish or Roma. Of the million who perished, 850,000 were Jews who were killed in gas chambers upon arrival. The tragedy of the Holocaust left a deep scar in the Jewish community, which is still healing today.

When the multinational Soviet Red Army marched into Auschwitz as liberators on Jan. 27, 1945, they found a horrific scene. Days earlier, 58,000 prisoners at Auschwitz were forced by the Nazis on a march of over 100 kilometers in freezing temperatures. As the Nazis retreated, they had left behind approximately 7,000 prisoners. All of these prisoners were starving and ill.

The Soviet troops that liberated Auschwitz were commanded by Lt. Col. Anatoly Shapiro, a Jewish officer in the Red Army. Another Jewish Soviet officer, Georgii Elisavetskii, was one of the first soldiers inside the camp. His experience was recounted in the 2015 book “Liberation of Camps” by Dan Stone:

“When I entered the barrack, I saw living skeletons lying on three-tiered bunks. As in fog, I hear my soldiers saying: ‘You are free, comrades!’ I sense that they do not understand and begin speaking in Russian, Polish, German, Ukrainian dialects; unbuttoning my leather jacket, I show them my medals. ... Then I use Yiddish. Their reaction is unpredictable. They think that I am provoking them. They begin to hide. And only when I said to them: ‘Do not be afraid, I am a colonel of the Soviet Army and a Jew. We have come to liberate you.’ Finally, as if the barrier collapsed, they rushed towards us shouting, fell on their knees, kissed the flaps of our overcoats, and threw their arms around legs. And we did not move, stood motionless while unexpected tears ran down our cheeks.”

This passage reflects the conflicted reality of the liberation. The military defeat of the Nazis was a great victory for all workers and oppressed people across the globe. The liberation of Auschwitz was a moment of relief and joy for those who had been kept there. However, the situation was as equally horrific as it was victorious.

Leading up to the liberation were two Soviet victories over Nazi forces: at Stalingrad and at Leningrad. Anniversaries of both these battles were also recently observed. These victories came at immense cost to the Soviet people. The Battle of Stalingrad lasted over 5 months and came at the cost of one million Soviet lives, soldier and civilian. Throughout the battle, the people of Stalingrad suffered disease, hunger and frigid weather. But their sacrifice led to the destruction of the German Sixth Army, which surrendered on Feb. 2, 1943. It was the biggest defeat the Nazis had yet suffered and was the turning point in the war.

On Jan. 27, 1944, Soviet forces finally broke the lines of the Nazi army at Leningrad. Nazi forces had besieged the city for almost two and a half years. Over 800,000 civilians died in the siege, mostly of hunger and disease. That was as many as the combined casualties of the U.S. and Britain in the entire war. Eventually, these victories would allow the Soviet army to launch the Vistula-Oder offensive, which resulted in the liberation of Auschwitz.

The evils of fascism should never be forgotten. And we must reject the capitalist line that the United States and Britain defeated Hitler. Nazi fascism only rose in the first place as an outgrowth of capitalist crisis in the wake of World War I. Many in the U.S. capitalist class supported the Nazis, who drew inspiration from the murderous racism and “white supremacy” which was still the law of the land in the United States. The socialist Soviet Union, aided by Communist-led Partisan movements across Europe, played the decisive role in their defeat.

The blood was not dry on Europe’s battlefields, its ruined cities still smoldered, when the U.S. and Britain allied with former Nazis to launch a “Cold War” against the USSR and the new socialist countries of East Europe and East Asia. This was also a war against the liberation struggles of oppressed people in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Today, despite its “Cold War victory,” the global capitalist system is in contraction.

The specter of fascism again raises its ugly head. The danger of a new world war looms on the horizon. Working-class and oppressed peoples around the world must draw inspiration and lessons from our struggles in the past.

The writer is a Jew who had ancestors perish in the Holocaust.



Urgent call for internationalist solidarity with Chilean people's struggle

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 25, 2020



To the social and popular organizations, to the workers and intellectuals of Our America:

It's been three months since the great popular uprising that Chile is experiencing began. Since those days in mid-October 2019, when a noisy group of students decided to evade the fare in the Santiago Metro to protest the very high cost of the ticket and thus awaken Chilean society from a long sleep, the country has experienced a shake-up that without a doubt gave birth to a new Chile.

The bravery of those youth who circumvented the surveillance of the Metro and were then violently repressed by the carabineros generated a chain of solidarity with the beaten and injured students. All together, the people of Chile took to the streets and did not abandon them until today. Successive assaults by the police on thousands and thousands of youth very soon led to a qualitative leap in the protests. The demand that is being heard today throughout Chile is synthesized in two

slogans: “Piñera resign” and “Pacos culiaos” [“Fucking pigs”], referring with irony and rage to that Nazi-like institution that tortured and murdered during the Pinochet dictatorship and now continues to repeat that script against those who protest peacefully.

From those first hard lessons in October, many imagined that this revolt was going to be a summer rain and that the young people, fed up with wild capitalism and feeling excluded in every way, were going to let up. That they would “get over it,” as one minister suggested. None of this happened; quite the contrary. The youth rebellion turned into days and into a massive interclass mobilization that encompassed all ages.

Gatherings of hundreds of thousands or even a million people in the renamed Plaza de la Dignidad became a common scene. All this in spite of the increasing repression, the powerful jets of water with caustic soda that burns the body, the gases and the bullets targeting the face and eyes, following the Israeli manual on the subject. Nothing has turned back this hurricane that knows what it does not want and what moves it to rebellion. “We have woken up and are fighting for our dignity.” Nothing more, nothing less.

Nothing has lessened the healthy anger of those who “have nothing to lose because we have lost everything,” not even the mobilization of the military, the curfew, the clandestine executions, the torture and murder by the “pacos culiaos.” Nothing helped the dictatorship, whose officials today cannot step into the streets, except in disguise, if they do not want to be spat on, slapped, or as happens in the stadiums and in every square in the country, made to hear the hit phrase of the Chilean summer: “Piñera, murderer, just like Pinochet.”

This unstoppable movement is horizontal from every point of view, without leaders in the style of other times, but with the vote of confidence from those who fight on the front lines by putting their bodies in front of the bullets, the gas or the ambush.

This movement has left the bourgeois politicians on the sidelines, all of them without distinction, including those of a certain “left” who made a pact with Piñera for a constituent assembly that is not what those at the bottom are demanding. “Ours will be inclusive, popular, activist, feminist and with the Indigenous peoples,” they say.

This mass movement, which includes the grandchildren of those thousands who risked their lives to make the revolution in the 1970s, many being killed in the attempt, is the most complete expression of a unique cultural and political revolution of the 21st century. It unites, from the strength that comes from standing back to back in the street, the historical legacy of the Chilean rebellions, from Manuel Rodríguez to Víctor Jara, Salvador Allende and Miguel Enríquez. It does not need to be displayed on posters or flags, but rather incorporates the singing, poetry and anger of the new insurgencies. For these young people, other names weigh closer to home, such as Mauricio Fredes, from the front line, who was killed in the scuffle with the “pacos,” meters away from the Plaza de la Dignidad. Or Gustavo Gatica, who was blinded by the bullets aimed at his eyes.

These fighters write their documents and statements on the walls, with creative texts, just like the handmade banners with which they mobilize. They are an overwhelming force when they face the warlike brutality of the uniformed, who will never understand why these “youth,” who carry a Chilean or Mapuche flag in their hands, laugh and dance, run as if they were playing, ride bicycles, and sing to the sound of the music broadcast by Radio Plaza de la Dignidad. They kiss passionately or hug to remember while a pandemonium of gases, explosions and screams explodes around them. They are living in the face of death, because “we have lost our fear.”

The revolt is national, it is either erupting in Santiago, or in Valparaíso, in Pudahuel Sur, in Antofagasta, Temuco, Concepción or Iquique. The whole country “has said enough is enough and is marching,” banging the pots, to which the combative

rapper Ana Tijoux pays homage, or confronts the rifles with stones or even with fists.

In the face of this broad, gigantic movement, the dictatorship has managed to make its submissive hegemonic media shamefully silent, censoring the obvious, trying to cover up reality, but this one is coming over and over again like waves. And this doesn't only happen in Chilean media, but the unique discourse prevails in all the genuflecting press of the continent. But what they have not been able to tame is the hundreds of communication guerrillas who, through video on social media, are denouncing the horrors of repression and the small but gratifying victories of those mobilized.

Hence the fundamental reason for this urgent note, written from the heart and with the passion that such a popular rebellion provokes in us. It is necessary that in the place where we find ourselves we make the cause of the Chilean people our own, that we do not leave them alone in their attempt to restore a society in which there is room for everyone. That we break down the wall of disinformation and in any way we can, in each city, in each country, we demonstrate, embracing those who fight in Gabriela Mistral's homeland.

It is time for us to awaken that indispensable stimulus of internationalism in solidarity. Chile, its people, its courageous youth, are calling us by example. Let's not fail them, let's bring them a fraternal greeting that does not only mean that, but that commits us to the streets of our countries to also see those two flags (the Chilean and the Mapuche) fly, which have been forever entwined. Let our neighbors know that what is happening there is not by chance but rather because imperialism and capitalism suffocate the people in such a way that one day the explosion will come, and it will be unstoppable.

Source: [*Resumen Latinoamericano, North America bureau*](#)



New election date announced in Bolivia amidst persecution and threats

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Bolivians will return to the polls on May 3, almost six months after former President Evo Morales was ousted in a coup. Having been declared the winner of the October 20 election, the leader of the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) was forced to resign three weeks later after opposition protests denouncing fraud culminated in the police and military calling on Morales to step down.

With a right-wing senator, Jeanine Áñez, sworn in as “interim president,” the post-coup government has set about ensuring that after 14 years of MAS government, the leftist party will not return to power. Backed by the military, media and judiciary, the government has been persecuting MAS activists and repressing protests.

Almost 30 protesters have been killed since the coup and, in a show of strength, the

government ordered the military onto the streets of the capital, La Paz, on January 16 ahead of anti-coup protests planned for January 22 — the day Morales' term constitutionally ends.

Despite this, the MAS continues to lead in the polls, writes Fernando Molina from La Paz.

For two months, the media have bombarded Bolivians with daily reports on an investigation into the charging or arrest of one or another ex-collaborator of exiled ex-President Evo Morales. Morales is the subject of an international arrest warrant issued by Jeanine Áñez's transitional government.

The latest story was of the arrest of ex-minister of government Carlos Romero on January 15, whom prosecutors have accused of corruption. Romero was taken to jail after being informally arrested — first in his home and then at a medical clinic — by civilian groups that refer to themselves as the “resistance,” and have the backing of the police to impose their law on the street.

Morales calls them “fascist paramilitary groups.”

Fascist paramilitaries

These groups also maintain a daily presence around the Mexican Embassy in La Paz, where various ex-ministers and Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) leaders have sought refuge but have not been—and will not be—granted safe passage to leave the country.

Members of these groups take turns inspecting vehicles entering and leaving the exclusive neighborhood of La Rinconada, where the ambassador's residence is located.

For now, they operate in two cities, La Paz and Cochabamba, the scenes of most of the fierce clashes between Morales' supporters and opponents prior to his overthrow. The "resistance" is comprised of organised middle-class residents and students who, during the crisis, armed themselves with sticks, helmets and improvised shields to confront the contingents of workers and peasants that sought to neutralise the opposition protests.

The person most hated by the "resistance" is one of the key MAS leaders seeking asylum in the Mexican ambassador's residence, Juan Ramón Quintana: An ex-minister of the presidency and key figure in the previous government, he has been charged with sedition and terrorism.

The ex-minister of justice, Héctor Arce; of culture, Vilma Alanoca; of government, Hugo Moldiz; and of defense, Javier Zavaleta, are all trapped in the diplomatic house and facing various criminal charges.

They are accompanied by Nicolás Laguna, ex-director of the Government Agency for Electronics and Information and Communications Technology, who is accused of electoral fraud, as well as other former high-ranking officials who, for now, are not facing criminal proceedings but have been refused safe passage.

Many of the charges have to do with something the person said: Morales is accused of terrorism and sedition for having called a peasant leader and asked him to blockade the cities and make sure "food cannot get in."

The ex-president was also recently charged for having said in Argentina that, if one day he returns to power, he will have to organise armed militias, like late socialist President Hugo Chávez did in Venezuela, to ensure his mandate.

Quintana is accused of terrorism and sedition for having declared to Russian news outlet Sputnik that a coup against Morales had to be intensely opposed by

converting Bolivia into “a modern-day Vietnam.” The government has jailed an au pair and a courier who worked for him.

These and other controversial arrests—such as that of a doctor who attended to a left activist who had been wounded by a bullet in a clinic, or the young public employees who made memes against the government using workplace computers—have provoked some individual complaints in the media, which, in institutional terms, have applauded Áñez’s government and celebrated the existence of the “resistance.”

Along with Romero, dozens of people have been charged with corruption. There are also ongoing investigations into the patrimony of 600 former MAS ministers, vice ministers, directors, governors and mayors.

Threats to labor

When Andrónico Rodríguez, the leader of the Chapare coca growers union, announced that a new stage of “peaceful resistance against fascism” would begin on January 22, and suggested protests be held, minister of government Arturo Murillo tweeted: “Andrónico, be careful, this radicalism is putting at risk your leadership and future.”

Rodríguez had to come out and clarify that he was not planning to commit any crime and denounced the government for trying to suppress union leaders through judicial processes and arrests.

In an attempt to halt the wave of repression, the MAS passed a law regarding human rights in the Legislative Assembly. It demanded the Áñez government compensate the families of the 29 people killed due to repression and opened up the possibility for union and political leaders who feel they are being unjustly persecuted to present their cases to the courts.

The government responded by saying it considered the law “unnecessary” and anti-constitutional.

All of this is occurring with the support of the middle and upper sections of society, who have converted Murillo into a popular figure. The minister, who before coming to power was questioned for the abruptness of his scraps with Morales, today is applauded when he enters any cafe in La Paz.

'Pacification' campaign

The “pacification of the country,” as the measures against the MAS are officially referred to, have converted Áñez into the highest polling anti-Morales politician (15 percent, according to a Cies Mori poll done for Unitel).

Ex-president Carlos Mesa, who came second behind Morales in the October elections, is polling at only 13 percent.

However, Áñez has said she will not be a candidate in the May 3 elections. Instead, she is pushing for the different candidates to unite against MAS which, even before having defined its candidate, remains the largest party in the country, with 20 percent voter support.

[Translator’s note: The MAS announced on January 19 that it would run former economy minister Luis Arce and former foreign minister David Choquehuanca as its presidential and vice presidential candidates.]

However, the MAS is also the party with the highest level of disapproval. Ensuring the “tyrants” and “narcotraffickers” do not raise their heads in the new elections has become the main concern for that segment of the population that was committed to the overthrow of Morales and today dominates public opinion.

The pressure to form an anti-MAS united front has not stopped various people

expressing their desire to run. Mesa is putting himself forward as the center option, a space he will probably have to fight over with business owner Samuel Doria Medina, Morales' main opponent in the 2014 elections.

Another ex-president, Jorge Quiroga, is seeking to represent the traditional right. Luis Fernando Camacho, a key figure of the “resistance” in Santa Cruz and principal leader of the cívicos movement that claimed responsibility for deposing Morales, is running together with his Potosí counterpart, Marco Pumari. This list represents an expression of the new right, characterised by its religiosity, its civilian “shock troops” and its strong presence on social media.

Many thought Camacho and Pumari would quickly become the main option for anti-Morales voters, but for now they have not managed to climb in the polls.

This is possibly because the first attempt to bring the two together on a common slate ended in spectacular failure. In early December, Camacho said he would not run with Pumari and later released a taped conversation in which he criticised him for having asked for US\$250,000 and control over customs in Potosí in exchange for his support.

Pumari did not deny the conversation, but said he wanted the money to finance his election campaign and that the nomination of a cívicos representative to the board of directors of customs was a “demand of the people of Potosí.”

The Legislative Assembly remains in MAS hands, but its parliamentary bloc has been neutralised by the popularity of the interim government in the cities; the monolithic alignment of the military, police, prosecutors and judges behind the government; and its own division between a “conciliatory” group and those “loyal” to Morales.

The Constitutional Tribunal has extended the parliament’s mandate, which was meant to end on January 22, until the handover to a new president, which is

expected to occur mid-year.

Source: A version of this article originally appeared in [Brecha](#). Translated for [Green Left Weekly](#) by Federico Fuentes.



Bolivia: Naked fascism

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 25, 2020



Bolivia's de facto government does not even try to hide its anti-people, racist and repressive character. The coup power headed by President Jeanine Áñez seems to be emulating Augusto Pinochet with the purposes of spreading the same type terror that accompanied the Chilean military junta and the rest of the military-fascist governments in 20th century Latin America.

Dozens of reports from Bolivia, provided by human rights organizations, activists from the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS), diplomatic offices, groups and independent individuals, report the terror sown among the population: the massive use of torture; selective assassinations, which include throwing of people alive from helicopters; death threats; lynchings executed by the now infamous "cívicos"; disappearances; and strict censorship of the media, including the burning of

television and radio stations.

Bolivian doctors, especially graduates of the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) who worked alongside the Cuban health care workers, activists from MAS and journalists critical of the coup are among the more than one thousand dead or reported missing.

On social media, the Association of ELAM Graduates has denounced the persecution, unjustified dismissals and vicious campaign of discrediting to which they are being subjected.

The police have given orders not to provide medical care to those injured by the government repression, and failure to comply with this order is severely punished. Recently, Mirtha Sanjinez, the administrator of a major hospital, was presented by the police at a press conference as a “collaborator of criminals and terrorists” because, according to the security forces, she failed to comply with the order.

The repressive action against the press has been called, by Áñez’s henchmen, an “operation to dismantle the propaganda apparatus of the dictatorial regime of Evo Morales.”

Telesur, Bolivia TV and RT in Spanish have been shut down, and the journalists who collaborated with them have been arrested. Al-Jazeera correspondent Teresa Bo was shot in the face with tear gas while transmitting a live report.

Disrespect for political asylum

Holding out in the Mexican Embassy in Bolivia is Juan Ramón Quintana, minister of government, and one of President Morales’ closest associates. The Áñez regime issued an arrest warrant against him on charges of sedition and terrorism.

Also there are Javier Zavaleta López, minister of defense for Morales; Héctor Arce

Zaconeta, attorney general; Félix César Navarro Miranda, minister of mining; Wilma Alanoca, minister of culture from 2017 to 2019; and Hugo Moldiz, who was minister of government until 2015. Also included are Víctor Hugo Vásquez Mamani, who served as governor of the department of Oruro; Pedro Damián Dorado López, deputy minister of rural development; and Nicolás Laguna, director of the Morales government's digital agency (Agetic).

Of the nine officials who have been granted asylum, four have arrest warrants against them and five do not, but the de facto authorities have not granted them safe conduct to leave the South American country.

All these ministers of the constitutional government of Morales are accused by the de facto regime of alleged acts of sedition.

The coup regime has exerted unprecedeted pressure and harassment on the Mexican Embassy, but if the harassment against the diplomats has been strong, the pressure on asylum seekers and their families has been worse.

Despite what Bolivia is suffering through, MAS is reorganizing and preparing to win again in the next elections.

Source: [*Granma*](#); translation by [*Resumen Latinoamericano*](#), North America bureau



India, France, Puerto Rico: Corporate media hide general strikes from U.S. workers

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 25, 2020

Around the world, people are walking off the job in huge numbers, withholding their labor power to protest government attacks on workers' rights and other crimes of the profit system. Why isn't this in the news?

Unless you regularly follow alternative news sources, you might not have heard that the largest strike in history took place on [Jan. 8 in India](#). Between 250 and 300 million — yes, million — workers, urban and rural, joined by students, shut down much of the world's second most populated country.

The strike was long planned by unions as a protest of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies of austerity, price hikes and privatization. But the strike took on added momentum because of recent anti-Muslim laws that threaten to strip many

people of their citizenship and the brutal police violence against protests of the anti-Muslim laws.

[Meanwhile, in France](#), one of the most powerful countries in Europe has been gripped by a historic 40-plus day general strike against President Emmanuel Macron's plan to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64 years.

Not only would French workers be forced to work longer for their pensions; the measure includes a thinly disguised plan to hand over the country's pension funds, now administered and guaranteed by the government, to big banks and insurance companies — just like the rotten system that exists in the U.S. That's why the country's labor unions, the Yellow Vest movement, the unemployed and the unorganized have all united in an unprecedented strike movement.

Closer to home, few workers outside the Puerto Rican community may be aware of a general strike called by unions and social movements in Puerto Rico on Jan. 20. This call for mass action comes on the heels of the Trump regime's continued withholding of urgently needed aid in the wake of ongoing earthquakes, symbolic of Washington's racist conduct and Puerto Rico's colonial status.

Further fuel was added by the [discovery by local activists in the city of Ponce](#) of a warehouse full of supplies withheld from the people following Hurricane María. Last July, a massive general strike that encompassed much of Puerto Rico's population forced the resignation of the island's governor, Ricardo Rosselló.

The year 2019 also saw powerful general strikes of workers, uniting with other sectors of the working class — students, women, Indigenous communities — in Ecuador, Colombia and Chile, to name a few of them.

So why isn't the mass media in the U.S. reporting it?

Bosses scared

In the rare event that these strikes are mentioned — say, in a 10-second flash on a news program, or a photo caption in the local paper — no context is given. The workers' demands are not explained.

The first thing to remember is that the mass media in the U.S. are completely monopolized by mammoth for-profit corporations. Whether it's the local newscast, 24-hour cable news or the local paper, what you are allowed to see trickles down from a [handful of profit-hungry media giants](#). U.S. corporate owned social media, which many workers and youth rely on for their news, are rife with censorship.

The same bosses who hold the strings to these media giants, the banks that finance them and the politicians beholden to their money for re-election, are scared by the recent growth of the strike movement in the U.S. In 2018, [nearly 500,000 workers went on strike](#) in this country — the most in more than three decades.

The capitalist government, from the Trumps and Pelosis on down, and the big bosses they answer to, don't want workers, communities and students here to see the power that they could have if they all get together to shut down business (and profits) as usual.

What makes a general strike different from a more common strike action? It's not only that more people are involved. Instead of being directed against a particular employer, usually for economic demands, a general strike is directed against the government and the whole profit system.

The recent strike wave in the U.S. has been targeted at specific employers and industries. But some, like last year's Los Angeles and Chicago teachers' strikes, show some characteristics of a successful general strike, such as involving the wider community and raising broader demands that would benefit the whole working class, like more affordable housing.

Also, last autumn's global climate strike, though not a labor strike per se, took on a mass character that saw many workers withhold their labor and employers forced to close their doors for a protest against the capitalist system's deadly ravaging of the environment.

The possibility that this could blossom into greater consciousness of workers' power as a class and desire for unity makes the bosses very nervous.

After all, aren't there plenty of things that could warrant a general strike here?

Both the Republicans and Democrats voted in December to hand the Trump administration a [massive increase in the war budget](#), even as Trump prepares to further cut food assistance to low-wage workers.

Federal, state and city governments continue to give tax breaks to big companies and okay development of luxury housing while the numbers of homeless families increase and oppressed people are driven out of their neighborhoods by gentrification.

Then there's the official torture and imprisonment of migrants and refugees, including children.

Help spread the word about the general strikes in India, France and Puerto Rico. Let's share these vital ideas with our class!



Britain: Capitalist decay and the Tories' temporary victory

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 25, 2020

Behind Boris Johnson's victory in the recent British elections are decades of capitalist decay. It's hollowed out the British economy even more than it has done to the United States.

The ruling class in both countries is richer than ever. It's the working class that's suffered from austerity. Homelessness in Britain has soared while the queen and all the other royal parasites live in palaces.

Between 1971 and 2016, [5.2 million manufacturing jobs](#) in Britain were destroyed. Factory employment fell by two-thirds.

That's like what happened in New York state, which lost about a million manufacturing jobs from 1976 to 2019, a 70 percent drop, judging by the "1978 U.S. Statistical Abstract" and the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

The wholesale demolition of industry in Britain went hand-in-hand with a [50 percent drop in union membership](#). While in 1979, more than 12 million British workers were in unions, the number [fell to 6.23 million](#) in 2018.

Earlier periods of capitalism tended to concentrate workers, making it easier to organize our class. By getting rid of millions of jobs in factories, mines and other large workplaces, capitalist decay scatters the working class and helps destroy unions.

Workers in smaller nonunion companies or working by themselves as private contractors are often more susceptible to capitalist propaganda.

Just as in the U.S., British workers were not so much defeated on the battlefield as they had their union fortresses stolen from them.

Thatcher and Reagan

A key turning point was the 1979 election victory of the Conservative Party, the Tories, which made Margaret Thatcher prime minister. A year later Ronald Reagan was elected U.S. president.

Both of these racist union busters supported the apartheid regime then existing in South Africa. Reagan broke the strike of the air traffic controllers belonging to the PATCO union in 1981.

Two long strikes were broken in Britain under Thatcher. These defeats were felt by workers around the world.

Coal miners in Britain and the U.S. were backbones of the labor movement. It was the United Mine Workers in the U.S. that built the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in the 1930s.

The strike of the National Union of Mineworkers in 1974 drove Tory Prime Minister Edward Heath out of office. British capitalists were humiliated by this example of working-class power.

A decade later, they had their revenge by breaking the yearlong miners' strike against pit closures in 1984-1985. They were able to do so by the availability of oil from the North Sea.

Massive police brutality was used against the striking miners. So was an all out media assault against the miners' leader, Arthur Scargill.

A similar slimy campaign used against Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn helped elect the Tories in 2019. While Rupert Murdoch owns the Trump-loving New York Post and Fox News, he has even more of a media presence in Britain.

It was Murdoch who broke British printing unions, whose origins date back to the late 18th century. The media mogul built a new plant in the east London district of Wapping and fired the former printers. Police arrested 1,500 picketers in the 1986-1987 strike.

Inspired by Murdoch's victory, the owners of the New York Daily News tried to break the unions in 1990 but failed.

The Tories' popularity had [fallen to 23 percent](#) in December 1981. A big reason was that one out of eight British workers was jobless by January 1982. The unemployment rate [reached 16 percent](#) in parts of Scotland.

Thatcher survived by waging war against Argentina in 1982 over the Malvinas Islands. The subsequent war fever pumped up by the media led to a Tory victory in 1983 and later helped to smash the miners and printers.

Reagan's popularity [slid to only 35 percent](#) in early 1983. His answer was to invade

the Black Caribbean island of Grenada.

Trump supporters are now thinking that a war against Iran will re-elect the racist pig.

The Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution was born in Britain 250 years ago. The inventions of the spinning jenny and spinning frame, as well as improvements to the carding engine between 1764 and 1775, revolutionized the production of cotton textiles, the first great machine industry.

One result was the starving to death of many hand weavers in Bengal, who were renowned for their cotton goods. Loot poured in from South Asia where the British East India Company made huge profits from famines. By 1914, the British Empire—which started by invading Ireland—was exploiting a quarter of humanity.

Britain became the workshop of the world and its products ruled the world market. British inventions included the slide rest for lathe, that along with the micrometer allowed for interchangeable parts. The first railroads were built in Britain, while Henry Bessemer's inventions were the basis of the steel industry.

Much of the initial capital for these industries came from the African Holocaust. Liverpool became the world's biggest port for slavers. Bristol, where Rolls Royce jet engines are now made, was also a leading port for kidnappers of Africans.

A big market for Birmingham's ironmongers was making shackles for enslaved Africans. As Eric Williams pointed out in "Capitalism and Slavery," James Watt's first steam engine was financed by slave masters. The Tate art galleries in London came from a fortune built on slave-grown sugar.

U.S. capitalism was even more based on African slavery. Cotton accounted for half of

U.S. exports in 1860. Wall Street grew up as the banking house for Southern slave masters. While today New York City has municipal green markets, Wall Street once had a municipal slave market.

'The great unwashed'

What did poor and working people in Britain get from the Industrial Revolution? Their real wages fell by half. Even the average height of workers declined.

The rich called workers "the great unwashed." Six-year-old boys and girls worked in coal mines. Karl Marx described in "Capital" how two-and-a-half-year-old infants helped make lace.

But these children weren't thrown to the sharks like enslaved Africans were in the Atlantic Ocean's Middle Passage.

Employees making cotton textiles—then Britain's largest export— worked 12-hour and 14-hour days in what the poet Byron called "satanic mills." Frederick Engels, Karl Marx's co-worker, heard factory owners in Manchester joke about how workers had their fingers cut off by unshielded machinery.

A million people were allowed to starve to death in Ireland in the 1840s with approval of The Economist magazine. A century later, there was an even greater famine in British-occupied Bengal, where—like Ireland earlier—food was being exported from the country. Tory Prime Minister Winston Churchill's response to these millions of deaths was to ask, "How come Gandhi is still alive?"

British workers fought back against the factory owners. Unions were formed. A 10-hour work day and ultimately an 8-hour work day were won.

The first organized working-class movement was called the Chartist. They fought for a People's Charter demanding voting rights and other democratic demands.

Two of the favorite Chartist leaders were the Irish-born James Bronté O'Brien and Feargus O'Connor. Another Chartist leader was a Black man, William Cuffay, who was deported to Australia.

British workers prevented their ruling class from recognizing the slave-owning confederacy during the U.S. Civil War. Karl Marx, the founder of scientific socialism — that is, communism — helped lead this struggle.

A half-century later, the working class stopped British intervention against the Bolshevik Revolution.

Falling behind

While Britain pioneered the Industrial Revolution, it later fell behind the U.S. and Germany. On the eve of World War I, Britain was still the [third largest producer of steel](#).

By 1967, British steel production had slowly increased to 24.3 million metric tons. But it fell to just 7.3 million tons in 2018, smaller than what was produced in 1913 and [less than one-half of 1 percent](#) of world production. British motor vehicle production [decreased by 31 percent](#) from 1972 to 2018.

Large sections of the capitalist class gave up on manufacturing because there wasn't enough profit in it. The Economist magazine sneers at much of it as "metal bashing." That's how U.S. slave masters contemptuously viewed northern factory owners in the 1850s.

Industrial giants with billions in assets, like Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) and the British General Electric Company (GEC), were thrown to the wayside.

Scottish workers were among those most hurt by deindustrialization. While in 1914, a fifth of all ocean-going ships had been [built on the Clyde](#) in Scotland, there are

now only two shipyards left with 2,400 workers.

Banking, Big Oil and Brexit

Even in the 19th century, British capitalists were investing much of their profits abroad. Karl Marx wrote in “Capital” that “a great deal of capital, which appears today in the United States without any certificate of birth, was yesterday, in England, the capitalised blood of children.”

Lenin, the leader of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, described in “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism” how British capital was invested in railroads around the world. A huge source of profit was the gold and diamond mines in South Africa.

British industry was starved of investment because the export of capital became much more profitable than the export of goods. Profits poured in not just from British colonies but also from Argentina.

The British economy revolves around London banks. Two of the members of Big Oil — BP and Royal Dutch Shell — are headquartered there.

British foreign investments reached [1.4 trillion pounds in 2018](#), equal to around \$1.8 trillion, about two-thirds of the country’s gross domestic product. That’s a higher percentage than the [\\$6 trillion of U.S. foreign investments](#) are as compared to the total U.S. economy.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his fellow Tories are claiming that Britain’s withdrawal from the European Union—Brexit—will lead to an economic renaissance. What’s guaranteed are more cutbacks, particularly in the National Health Service. Johnson is just a servile echo chamber for Trump.

Despite the nonstop hate campaign attacking Jeremy Corbyn, with the media

painting him as a communist, over 10 million people voted for the Labour Party. The British working class, now with millions of Black and Asian workers, will fight. Coats off for struggle!

