

Russia's Anti-Imperialist Marathon: 'We have much to learn from each other'

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Dec. 13 protest against domestic violence in Moscow. Photo: United Communist Party



Jane Letova Photo:
Alexander Kubalov



Organizers of the Anti-Imperialist Marathon Broadcast in Moscow.

On Dec. 8, 2019, activists in Moscow organized an event called the Anti-Imperialist Marathon, which broadcast live for over four hours on YouTube and other social media and was viewed by thousands of people in Russia and worldwide. While taking up many issues, there was a special focus on the struggle in Latin America, following the recent coup in Bolivia, massive protests against austerity in Chile, and U.S. aggression toward Venezuela and Cuba.

Struggle-La Lucha spoke with Jane Letova, a supporter of the New Communist Movement and member of the United Communist Party of Russia, who helped to



organize the Anti-Imperialist Marathon. Readers can

view the

Struggle-La Lucha: What was the inspiration for the Anti-Imperialist Marathon broadcast? What organizations were involved in making it possible? Were you happy

with the outcome?

Jane Letova: The inspiration for the marathon was the call, made by trade unions, left parties, women groups, social movements and Indigenous organizations, to declare December 9 as the International Day of Struggle Against Imperialism. It was announced earlier this year in Caracas, Venezuela, and we decided to take part. So it was not a local initiative, but part of a broad international struggle.

My comrades and I are always in search of new ways to reach out and convey our message, so when Alexander Kubalov of the Moscow Rock Commune suggested we hold a marathon broadcast, we decided to try. We've never done anything like that before, so it was really a challenge, but this gave us a possibility to cover a wide range of issues from many countries, to create a space where the voice of anti-imperialist resistance from Chile to Donbass could be heard.

I can't say we were absolutely satisfied with the outcome — there is still much to work on. But I can say that this broadcast has brought many great activists together on both sides of the screen, and that's what really matters. I believe the solidarity movement is really about establishing connections between activists, organizations and countries. We have much to learn from each other, we can inspire each other, and inspiration is something that we really need in this reactionary and depressive period.

The organizations that were involved were the United Communist Party, Workers' University, Cuba Solidarity Movement, Moscow Rock Commune and our comrades from Station Marx Channel.

SLL: For non-Russian speakers, can you tell us what some of the highlights of the broadcast were?

JL: Difficult question! There were many. Venezuelan Ambassador Carlos Faria, our

honorable and special guest, gave an overview of the economic war that is being waged on Venezuela by the government of the United States. That was very informative and much needed, since there isn't much coverage on the real situation in Venezuela in mainstream news, as you know.

A great surprise was a musical greeting sent by women from the Venezuelan band Sueños Repetidos. [I recommend listening to it](#). It will really lift your spirits with revolutionary beats!

And it's always a special moment to hear and to see our comrades in the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. It was good to see that our comrades of many years were joined by young people, who are just joining the struggle. This is good news. It means, despite difficult living conditions and continuing war [by the U.S.-backed regime in Ukraine], the great work is kept up and the movement for justice, for a better world, in the republics is growing.

SLL: As you mentioned, the ambassador from Bolivarian Venezuela participated, as did the Cuban ambassador. Can you tell us about the activities of the Latin America solidarity movement in Moscow?

JL: The Latin America solidarity movement is very hardworking. There are cultural events organized regularly, such as concerts, poetry readings, lectures and joint events with the embassies of Venezuela and Cuba. I think one of the goals of the solidarity movement is to show people that there is an alternative to capitalism, that victory is possible, and there are examples of such victories in our world. Of course, it's important to provide informational support for our comrades in Nuestra América, but it is also very important to be able to tell people here at home what we are fighting for.

SLL: There's been an increase in popular protests in Russia, especially around austerity measures and other "reforms" that seem to bring the economy more in line

with Western capitalism. The same weekend as the Anti-Imperialist Marathon, there were actions in Moscow and other cities against the “optimization” of health care, and in St. Petersburg against rate hikes for public transportation. How do the revolutionary communists relate to these actions?

JL: Yes, there were rallies against cuts in health care, organized by unions of medical workers and supported by activists of various communist and progressive organizations. At the same time that we were doing the broadcast, some of our comrades from the United Communist Party were at the rally. Of course, it is a very important issue which affects us all, and I am glad there is no question in our organizations about whether we should support this initiative.

SLL: Anti-Russia, pro-war propaganda has dominated U.S. politics for the last several years, especially since the ultraright coup in Ukraine. Recently it was reported that the U.S. military will deploy more troops to Europe in 2020 than it has in at least 25 years. How does the situation appear to you as a communist organizing in Russia? How do you balance the struggle against the capitalist regime in Russia with the threats of U.S. and European imperialism?

JL: We must always keep in mind that our main goal is to build a strong and conscious working-class movement at home, which at a certain point will become a real force in the coming class struggle. Unfortunately, our enemy is strong and has many faces. The capitalist regime in Russia and U.S. imperialism are both parts of that same enemy — world capitalism. And that is something that we as Marxists and educators of the working class should understand well.

Meanwhile, we must look critically at the current situation in the world, and if we do that, we see that U.S. imperialism is truly the worst enemy of the working people today. It continues its bloody wars all over the world, and really, it's hardly surprising when it finds another country in desperate need to be “saved.” So, of course, it is our responsibility to denounce the U.S. government's actions, and we

are especially eager to do so after we've seen what's been done to Ukraine.

At the same time, the struggle at home continues. The Russian capitalist regime keeps attacking working people, making our lives quite unbearable sometimes, and here there is much work to be done. The confrontation helps the ruling classes on both sides of the border to subjugate the workers, to pursue a policy of "rallying around the flag." Activist work is needed on both fronts, and it's possible, just a question of distributing our resources.



New Years greetings from No Pasarán Hamburg

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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To the comrades at Struggle-La Lucha and the Socialist Unity Party/Partido de Socialismo Unido,

We were happy to receive your New Years greetings and reciprocate them wholeheartedly. We are united in our struggle, and we reaffirm our commitment to deepening international collaboration.

Throughout 2019, we mobilized and supported anti-imperialist initiatives within the imperialist beast of Europe. Most significantly, No Pasarán Hamburg and a coalition of like-minded organizations and individuals engaged in a solidarity campaign to

support the peoples of Venezuela, Chile, Bolivia and Ecuador, who have heroically stood up against waves of attempted U.S.-backed coups, neoliberal economic policies and austerity, and inhumane sanctions leading to the suffering and death of thousands.

No Pasarán Hamburg had the privilege to participate in two anti-imperialist conferences with representatives from Chile, Germany, Mexico, Italy, Palestine, Spain, Sudan, Ukraine, the United States, Turkey and Venezuela. All participating parties affirmed their commitment for increased cooperation in anti-imperialist actions and the necessity of demonstrating international solidarity to those oppressed peoples and nations suffering under the siege of U.S. and European imperialism.

In 2020, we will continue to participate and initiate campaigns to raise awareness of the crimes committed by the imperialist powers in the name of “freedom” and “justice” and to combat the relentless propaganda carried out by Western powers against the peoples of the so-called Global South, who are engaged in a bitter struggle to defend their right to self-determination.

Down with imperialism!

Freedom for all political prisoners!

Solidarity with the peoples of Cuba and Latin America, Syria, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the People’s Republic of China, the People’s Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk, and Palestine!

In drafting this missive, we received word of the criminal assassination of Gen. Qassem Soleimani. We condemn the actions of the United States government and military and will participate in the worldwide protests against yet another act of criminal, imperialist aggression.

Unity & Struggle,

[No Pasarán Hamburg](#)

Germany



U.S tech giants back India's Hindu nationalist prime minister

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are weaponizing India's digital communications industry with the goal of turning India into a religious Hindu state.

The giant U.S. internet corporations have supported and even funded the Modi campaign with millions of dollars.

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg has been Modi's most ardent fan. "Facebook

held India up as a model for how governments could use the social network,” the New York Times reported on April 1, 2019.

Zuckerberg has been backing Modi since 2011. From the start, Modi’s BJP used the internet to incite violence against the oppressed Muslim minority.

Modi’s use of misinformation to manipulate Indian elections has been widely reported. In a sinister twist, the BJP is currently promoting legislation that would give the government access to personal information without consent.

Modi’s control of India’s social media is subverting potential resources needed to overcome underdevelopment caused by colonialism. The right-wing Hindu nationalist is also shredding India’s hopes for economic sovereignty by throwing the economy wide open to plunder.

His “Digital India” and “Make in India” campaigns are open invitations to the U.S. tech giants to exploit one of the world’s largest online markets, currently estimated to be at from 700 to 800 million people with a potential to be well over a billion people.

Modi has traveled to California more than once to meet with top tech leaders, including Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google; Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft; Tim Cook, CEO of Apple; Shantanu Narayen, CEO of Adobe Systems; Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook; Intel’s Brian Krzanich; and Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla Motor. Their aspirations for the opportunities this afforded them was displayed by open wallets and unquestioning support.

Facebook

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg even had his mom and dad in the front row as he hosted India’s prime minister at the social network’s new campus in Menlo Park, Calif., according to “India Today” Sept. 28, 2015.

Before and after he won the May 2014 election in India, Facebook helped Modi develop his online presence to ensure that he had more “followers” on the social media platform than any other political leader on the planet, according to a study titled “World Leaders on Facebook” released by publisher Burson Cohn & Wolfe, May 2018. The huge, well-organized, online following helped win the election.

On May 12, 2016, the Guardian reported that the person who ran Modi’s social media operation said that Facebook was extraordinarily responsive to requests from the Modi campaign, and recalled that Ankhi Das, Facebook’s head of public policy in India, “never said no” to any information the campaign wanted.

Ankhi Das’ presence seemed to open any door, a Facebook executive said. “We used to joke that it was like she was Modi’s granddaughter.”

After Modi’s first visit to Silicon Valley, Zuckerberg returned to Delhi, where he met with many of India’s most prominent online entrepreneurs, who assembled for a closed-door meeting.

They wanted to talk about who had access to Facebook. “Everybody started saying, ‘Well, why are you controlling who gets on this?’” recalled Vijay Shekhar Sharma, the proprietor of the mobile payments firm Paytm.

When it was Sharma’s turn to speak, he did not hide his feelings. “I said, ‘Zuck, what are you talking about?’ In my view, it’s like the British coming in and saying, ‘While everything’s OK, we’ll come in and help you with your tax collection – and this is the percentage we’ll take.’ It’s incredible.” (The Guardian, May 12, 2016)

An infamous history of anti-Muslim violence

Narendra Modi began his political career in the state of Gujarat as a member of India’s fascist paramilitary Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

An early leader of the RSS, M.S. Golwalkar, wrote a book in 1939 praising Hitler and saying Nazi Germany's "purity" by "purging the country of Semitic races" was "a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by." (The Times of India, Sept. 30, 2004)

Modi became active in RSS's political branch, the BJP, in 1987, when the party had only two seats in Parliament.

Looking for an inflammatory issue to build their ranks, the BJP/RSS initiated a campaign in 1990 against a mosque called Babri Masjid, built in 1528, in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh.

The BJP promoted a legend that the god Ram—an avatar of Vishnu, often depicted with blue skin—had been born there and that a Hindu temple had once been on the site.

They called for the mosque to be destroyed and for a Hindu temple to take its place. They conducted a two-month rampage, called the Ram Rath Yatra, across India, traveling aboard a jeep refitted to look like a chariot and giving speeches to incite Hindu nationalism. Hundreds of Muslims were killed.

On Dec. 6, 1992, RSS partisans swarmed Babri Masjid and razed the mosque with axes and hammers.

The destruction of the mosque incited communal attacks across the country, with the biggest and bloodiest of them in Mumbai. Thousands of Muslims were slaughtered.

Modi used Facebook for election victories

During the 2014 election, BJP's primary digital tool was Facebook. Since then, smartphone use in India has exploded and Facebook's WhatsApp became their

preferred campaign platform. It was often used for distributing fake news that attacked political opponents and inflamed religious violence.

Right-wing Hindu groups have used WhatsApp to spread grisly faked videos of attacks on Hindu women by Muslim mobs.

Aria Thaker reported on Quartz India, “India’s raging fake news menace has reportedly led to dozens of mob-lynchings over the past few years.” This fake news can be spread unknowingly.

One WhatsApp message exhorted Hindus to vote for the BJP because “this is not just an election. This is a war of faiths.” (New York Times, May 14, 2018)

Life for journalists critical of the BJP and Modi is dangerous. Several have been killed.

“On the night of Sept. 5, a Honda motorcycle pulled in front of the Bengaluru home of Gauri Lankesh, an outspoken critic of Modi who had been targeted by patriotic trolls on Facebook and other social media. As the Indian journalist was unlocking her gate, three bullets struck her in the head and chest, killing her. No arrests have been made.

“The final editorial that Lankesh had written for her newspaper was titled “In the Age of False News.” In it, she lamented how misinformation and propaganda on social media were poisoning the political environment.” (Bloomberg, Dec. 21, 2017)

Shutting off the internet to stifle protest

In August, Modi’s government announced that it was suspending Article 370 of the Constitution, which grants autonomy to Kashmir, India’s only Muslim-majority state.

As masses of people rose in protest, Modi flooded Kashmir with troops and detained

hundreds of prominent Muslims. To crush all resistance, cell-phone and internet service was cut off.

Starting in November, the BJP's National Register of Citizens (NRC) began to be enforced in the state of Assam.

On Dec. 11, supplementary legislation—the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB)—was passed in India's Parliament. CAB changes the Constitution, altering the basic principles of universality of citizenship, which was obtained irrespective of race, sex, religion or place of birth. Religion will now be a key determinant for obtaining Indian citizenship.

CAB and NCR leave Muslims stateless

Millions of Muslims, especially poor families living in rural areas, are unable to provide the documents required by NRC and CAB. Hundreds have already been sent to detention (concentration) camps or forced out of the country.

When massive protests erupted against CAB, the Indian government sent in troops and shut down the internet in the states of Assam, Meghalaya and Uttar Pradesh. They were not able to silence the students whose rebellion has sparked protests in all the Indian campuses and cities.

The Indian government, which controls the world's second largest internet market, with more than 700 million connected users, continues to shut down the internet as a way to prevent people from staying in touch with one another, and from access to news and information.

Access Now, a digital rights group, reported earlier this year that India alone had about 134 of 196 documented shutdowns throughout world in 2018.

Internet spying

An Indian reporter, Manish Singh@refsr, said on Dec. 10 that the Indian government has proposed new rules that would require technology companies to get consent from people before collecting and processing their personal data.

The rules, dubbed “Personal Data Protection Bill 2019,” imply that they will protect personal data.

According to Singh, leaked copies of the bill showed that it does not offer personal protection.

In fact, the bill would “exempt any agency of the BJP government from application of the act in the interest of … the security of the state and public order.” This means that they would have the power to collect anyone’s data without consent.



After British election, urgent need for fight against racism

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The Dec. 12 British election was a contest between the reactionary, arch-racist Boris Johnson of the Conservative (Tory) Party and Jeremy Corbyn, who is representative of the most progressive wing of the British Labour Party.

Johnson hung his electoral hat on the racist anti-immigrant campaign that provided the wind in the sails for Brexit – the push to separate Britain from the European Union.

Corbyn, the leader of the Labour Party, is a longtime target of reactionary attacks by the British media and Tory politicians. During the runup to the election, the campaign against him reached a new level with the entirety of the British corporate press joining in. Charges of anti-Semitism, because of his longtime support for the Palestinian struggle, were central.

Corbyn's Labour Party still won nearly 33 percent — more than 10 million votes — compared to 43 percent for Johnson. In addition, many workers in Northern Ireland and Scotland voted for parties that have historically struggled for independence from British imperialism.

Over the years, Corbyn has taken some courageous positions: opposing the imperialist war against Syria, calling for denuclearization of the British military, calling for a minimum 50 percent tax on the richest 1 percent, national rent control legislation, scrapping tuition fees, strengthening collective bargaining and a national living wage bill.

Almost all of these proposals enjoyed [majority or close to majority support](#), according to various polls of voters.

Even though more than 10 million people voted for Corbyn in the face of a storm of reactionary attacks, he is being singled out for criticism for the electoral loss. The nature of the criticisms varies, but few — if any — have raised the most important

question in the aftermath of the election: whether a full-court press against the racism of Boris Johnson and all-out solidarity with Arab, Asian and African immigrants and other migrant workers in Britain could have strengthened the electoral chances of Labour.

It may have, and more importantly, even if such a solidarity-building campaign did not win out over the barrage of right-wing propaganda against Corbyn in this election, it could have strengthened the entire British working class in preparation for struggles that are sure to come in the future.

Needed: solidarity against anti-immigrant racism

The 1993 consolidation of the European Union included in its constitution a lessening of the restrictions on cross-border movement between member countries.

In recent years, large numbers of migrant workers have moved to England from those European countries where stronger and left-led unions have won better protections and better wages. Where minimum wage laws are higher there is also higher competition for those jobs. The migration to England has been prompted by the hopes for a better chance of finding work.

As endless imperialist wars and economic sanctions have caused devastation, joblessness and hunger, hundreds of thousands of working-class people in Latin America, the Middle East, North Africa and Eastern Europe have fled their ravaged homelands at great peril, to try to find survival in the U.S. and Western Europe.

Boris Johnson gained support by railing against the lighter immigration restrictions of the European Union and by spewing racist hate. His tirades gained him the support of the section of the British ruling class pushing for Brexit and won him the leadership of the Tories, and then the majority of seats in Parliament on Dec. 12.

Johnson is a notorious racist, considered by many to be the second coming of Enoch

Powell, a Tory MP whose infamous, fascist “Rivers of Blood” speech in 1968 spurred outrage, but also set the stage for tightening immigration laws in England. Johnson has made a political career out of a revival of Powell’s white nationalism and anti-immigrant racism.

Brexit and capitalist crisis

The despicable use of racism by right-wing politicians like Boris Johnson is meant to distract from the real motivation of the pro-Brexit section of the British ruling class – the capitalist crisis.

The increase in efficiency of the productive forces, the globalization of production combined with vast improvements in the technology used to produce goods and services, has meant that fewer and fewer workers produce more and more. With fewer workers needed, the demand for labor lessens, and wages go down.

With fewer people able to buy the goods and services that they themselves have produced, it becomes more difficult for the billionaire corporate owners to sell at a profit, and the competition for markets between the capitalist countries heightens.

The last several decades have seen an intensification of this process because of the boom in globalized high-tech, and it has led to a period of constant struggle and shifting alliances to try to gain a competitive edge. Britain’s “Brexiters” are hoping that a stronger economic alliance with the U.S. — the dominant imperialist power — will give them an edge against other European powers, Germany first and foremost.

The repugnant scapegoating of migrants and people of color is meant to conceal the capitalist crisis. A working-class struggle against racism is what is needed to uncover the truth and point the way forward.



International Human Rights Day actions condemn U.S. crimes

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On Dec. 4, 1950, the United Nations General Assembly formally established International Human Rights Day. This day was to be observed every year on Dec. 10 in honor of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted on Dec. 10, 1948.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights seeks to guarantee some basic individual protections — freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of thought, religion and association, and the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Interestingly, one article of the declaration guarantees “the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services.”

The great irony is that despite being one of the signers of this declaration, the United States has continuously violated this article, not only by its actions all over

the world, but at home as well.

So on this past International Human Rights Day, people all over the world organized actions to condemn the U.S. as a violator of human rights.

Washington, D.C.

In Washington, D.C., a coalition of organizations sponsored a demonstration on Dec. 7 called “People and Planet over Profit” to raise this call. The coalition gathered about 70 people to rally in front of Union Station and condemned the U.S.’s blatant violations of human rights.

Among the organizations supporting the action were the Malaya Movement, the Baltimore Peoples Power Assembly (PPA), Pan-African Community Action, the Communications Workers of America (CWA), the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), DMV Bolivia Solidarity, D.C.’s International Womxn’s Alliance, Anakbayan D.C., and BAYAN USA.

Ameenah Salaam of CWA, which has built strong connections with labor unions in the Dominican Republic and the Philippines, spoke about building international workers’ power: “Instead of letting corporations divide and conquer, we’ve adopted an international perspective on what it means to fight corporate power and stop the race to the bottom.”

Salaam spoke about the Filipino call center workers who refused to scab during the Verizon strikes in 2016 and how that built solidarity between workers there and in the U.S. She also reported that the Philippines is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a union activist, and demanded that not one more dollar be sent to the Duterte administration until human rights violations are investigated.

Speakers also raised that human rights can also be used as a pretext to invade and intervene in countries that are in the crosshairs of imperialism. Steven Ceci,

representing the PPA in Baltimore, said: “We need to be aware that human rights can be a false flag, because there’s such a thing as ‘humanitarian imperialism.’... So when we talk about human rights, we need to be very clear about what type of human rights.”

Los Angeles

On Dec. 10, some 200 people and over 29 organizations in Los Angeles County held a series of rallies and marches to several consulate offices condemning Donald Trump, U.S. wars and interventions by both the Democratic and Republican parties, and Washington’s racist targeting of migrants and their children.

Nikole Cababa, national secretary general of BAYAN USA and one of the key organizers of the event, said: “We’re concerned about the growing displacement of families who face the wrath of a Trump administration that only dehumanizes and scapegoats them for a crisis the U.S. has a hand in. While Trump pours billions into its destructive wars, families in the U.S. suffer.”

At the El Salvadoran and Ethiopian consulates, Walter Ruiz “Graywolf,” director of the American Indian Movement Southern California (AIM SoCal), reminded everyone about the people whose stolen land they were standing on: Indigenous people who were displaced and massacred for U.S. economic interests.

He noted that the massacres continue with the recent death of 16-year-old Guatemalan migrant Carlos Vásquez: “I don’t want to change the person in charge, I want to change the system that allows these people to be in charge. We live in economic slavery.”

Jasmin Tobar of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) then condemned the newly elected Salvadoran president, Nayib Bukele, for attacking the progressive movement there with increased militarization of the

region.

At the Ethiopian Consulate, Tadios Belay of the International Migrants Alliance exposed the massive displacement of African migrants and its root cause, U.S. foreign policy. “The U.S. government is spending billions of dollars in Africa funding civil wars. ... The U.S. has over 50 military bases in Africa currently,” said Belay. “We must end U.S. militarism at home and abroad.”

The final consulate visited was that of Bolivia. Juan Baldelomar, a Bolivian activist from the city of Cochabamba, condemned the U.S.-supported coup in Bolivia and said of the legitimate president, Evo Morales: “He is a socialist, and he was able to get millions out of poverty. We were able to reduce poverty from a horrible 38 percent to 16 percent. He built hundreds of schools, hospitals, sports arenas and miles of road to help families like mine in Bolivia.”

At the Honduran and Filipino consulates, a speaker from the Socialist Unity Party and others exposed the various assaults by U.S. imperialism on these countries and urged a continuation of the type of unity it took to bring the organizations together for this very successful event in defense of human rights all over the world.

Co-sponsors of the event included AIM SoCal, BAYAN USA, the Border Angels, CISPES-LA, Guatemaya LA Mujeres Resistiendo, the Human Rights Alliance for Child Refugees & Families, the International Migrants Alliance, Me Too Survivors’ March International, the Party for Socialism and Liberation, Occupy ICE LA, PUSO SoCal, Struggle-La Lucha newspaper, the Socialist Unity Party/Partido de Socialismo Unido and Unión del Barrio.

Solidarity with Cuba

On the same day as the Los Angeles action, a multiplatform “anti-imperialist tide” refuted the U.S. slanders against the blockaded island of Cuba.

A twitter storm with hashtags #UnblockCuba, #NoMasBloqueo and #DDHHCuba, supported by the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the People and video posts from Cubainformacion.tv, uplifted Cuba's real advances in fundamental human rights — not just in Cuba, where literacy, health care and homes are a human right, but through its international leadership and solidarity.

As Gail Walker, executive director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO), tweeted: "I'm tired of the lies about #Cuba. The truth is Cuba is a world leader in health, education and fighting climate change. Let's honor Human Rights Day by telling the truth about Cuba."

John Parker contributed to this report.



Bolivia's free territory of Chapare ousted coup regime, braces for

bloody re-invasion

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Cochabamba, Bolivia — Known as Bolivia's Chapare region, the Tropico of Cochabamba is a sanctuary for elected President Evo Morales' most dedicated base of support. Since the November 10 coup, it has effectively become a self-governing territory where the military junta is absent.

The police and military fled the area as the coup began and were told they would only be welcomed back if they "get on their knees and apologize" to the community.

Chapare is a 12,000 square kilometer swath of land where hundreds of unions have flourished. Spending time with those union members, who run society in a collective fashion, offers special insights into the resistance to the coup.

Despite the resilience on display here, there is also a sense of dread. Union leaders have told me that if the state decides to militarize the region, as it has signaled, then only a bloodbath could break the strength of the community.

Transforming the region

Chapare has always had a high degree of self-governance, owing to the needs of the community. When the neoliberal Bolivian governments of the 1980s closed down a large number of state mines in Potosi and Oruro, many rural workers “relocated” to this tropical region to grow coca and other crops.

The presence of former miners, who had been part of the revolutionary struggles of Bolivia’s miners’ union, brought a proletarian tradition that fused with the Indigenous politics of campesino communities.

The relocation was far from a smooth process. The U.S. was stepping up its so-called war on drugs at the time, using it as a pretext to intervene militarily in Latin America. The DEA teamed up with the Bolivian military to declare war on the campesinos, and attempt to eradicate coca.

The commanders in that effort were DEA agents; Bolivian troops served as foot soldiers at their disposal. The DEA was given so much power it could determine who could enter and exit the area.

It was during the struggles against the presence of the U.S. that Evo Morales rose to the top of the union structures in Chapare. And in facing down the DEA and the Bolivian military, an extraordinary level of organization was developed.

Today, there are six union federations in the region, and within each federation there are about 30 “centrals.” Within each central there are about 10 unions, each of which has between 100,000 and 200,000 members. The total number of unions in Chapare numbers somewhere in the hundreds.

Due to the weak presence of the state, the unions organize most aspects of daily life in the area. They establish plans for infrastructure projects, manage land and social disputes in the community, set up local media outlets, and, of course, organize the campesinos' political activities.

Since Evo Morales' 2006 land reform effort, the land has been owned by those who work it, with each union member controlling their parcel of land with no landlord.

The unions won't give up these victories easily.

Taking on the coup

Since the coup, that union-based resistance of Chapare has taken on the role of policing.

On Nov. 10, as it became clear that the coup had overwhelmed Evo's elected government, the police preemptively fled the area, escaping to the nearby city of Cochabamba.

Coup officials knew that social organization was so solid in Chapare that they would never be able to contain the resistance. And they were right. After the coup took hold, almost every police station in the region came under attack from the local population.

Israel, a local journalist at Radio Kawsachun Coca, a union-run station, explained, "The people were so enraged, no one could stop them."

Israel was echoed shortly after by Senobio Carlos, the mayor of Puerto Villaroel. "We never told the police and military to leave, they fled," Carlos said. "In fact, there was one military base where soldiers hadn't managed to leave before protesters had blocked off all exits. I personally went there and told them that I would guarantee their safety if they join the community and don't turn their guns on us."

Carlos said he was branded a traitor by his own community for attempting to negotiate with the soldiers, who were whimpering for mercy.

Since then, the community's position has hardened. Union leaders now say that the police are entirely unnecessary, and can only return if they get on their knees and ask for forgiveness.

With the coup's security forces expelled from the area, the unions established the "union police," under the command of the community. I met them while they were standing guard at a union meeting, and found them unarmed other than a few sticks. They are drawn from and fully accountable to the community.

Everyone I spoke to in the Chapare appeared content without the state's police in the area. One council member, Limbert, from the local town of Ivirgarzama, said, "We're even safer now without the police. They used to charge truck drivers illegal tolls, they'd ambush people who were walking home at night and steal their phones. Now we don't have that, anyone can walk around safely in the Tropic."

Still, a couple of military bases that have remained intact. Inside, local teenagers are performing their military service. As the coup unfolded, a local journalist named Sabina told me how the parents of those young men flooded towards the military base and pleaded with their children not to side with the coup. Since then, troops have been "active," but have agreed to only stay within their base. All other military units have fled.

Massacre ahead?

Though the police haven't been able to re-enter the region, the coup government has tried to punish the residents of Chapare for expelling them. They have cut off all services to the public bank, Banco Union, which across most of this region is the only national bank with ATMs.

What's more, the coup's interior minister Arturo Murillo, whose nickname is "El Bolas" (in reference to his macho posturing and violent attitude), has threatened all of Chapare with the denial of the right to vote in any upcoming elections - unless they allow the police to re-enter.

Murillo's police have since announced that they are preparing to "enter, jointly with the armed forces, into the Tropic of Cochabamba, in order to establish the rule of law in this area." They haven't yet explained exactly how, because the only possible way is by military invasion and occupation.

"The police can't come back, people won't accept it," said Segundina Orellana. When I asked her what could be done to combat a potential invasion, she said that the region would rise up, and hoped that it would push the rest of the country to do so as well.

It's not hard to see why the community won't countenance the return of the police. On the 15th of November, union members from this region were marching towards the city of Cochabamba, and were shot at by officers, some from helicopters. Nine were killed that day in the Sacaba massacre.



Information war intensifies

Chapare is one of the most demonized regions of the country. Mainstream Bolivian media routinely portrays its population as a collection of narco-terrorists, pumping out evidence-free claims that the FARC [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia] is controlling protests.

The reality is entirely the opposite, as the production of coca has actually been reduced under Evo's rule, while it has skyrocketed in U.S. allies like Peru and Colombia. The unions themselves play a role in ensuring that production is

controlled and destined for traditional use. In fact, most so-called “cocaleros” also produce fruits, rice, cheese and other agricultural products.

Though their community benefited from the flood of public infrastructure projects and investments in public services under Evo, that's all gone now. Yet they're still here, as determined as ever in their commitment to the MAS [Movement Towards Socialism].

Nor is anyone here acting under obligation from union leaders, as is alleged by mainstream media and Western-backed pro-regime-change NGOs. In fact, the members are usually more radical than their leaders. I went to numerous union meetings with a federation leader named Julian Cruz, and watched as he was forced by his rank-and-file to explain why he wasn't a traitor for negotiating a peace deal with the coup government.

The participatory nature of this movement is remarkable. Julian explained to me how he has to attend every single meeting of every union central within his federation, and that if he doesn't, union members members will take him out to the jungle and “tie me to a tree for 24 hours” as a punishment for lack of transparency. Not many unions in the U.S. or North America can count on that level of grassroots engagement.

Watching the media's campaign against the campesinos from Chapare, it feels like the demonization is a prelude to bloodshed. Coverage of the Sacaba massacre was instructive, as the national media falsely framed the killing as “crossfire.” Coup supporters point to the one-sided coverage as proof that there was no massacre, but rather an armed clash with narco-terrorist cocaleros.

Nevermind the lack of evidence that the protesters were armed, and that not a single police officer died.

"The media say we're armed terrorists, but in reality we haven't got anything to defend ourselves with if the military does attack," a young campesino named Eleuterio Zurita, who has offered protection for journalists, told me. "The point of an attack would be to break the union organization we've got here, so I hope the world can support us and show the truth."

The self-governing nature of Chapare has arisen out of the practical need for sustenance and self-defense, not a devotion to anarchistic ideology. All the unions here are currently holding emergency meetings, not to discuss the administration of local affairs, but to lay out a strategy about how to confront the coup nationally, and thereby take back state power.

At every meeting I have attended, union members have passed a resolution committing to contributing grassroots donations for the MAS campaign, not to be used here, but instead by MAS chapters in other parts of the country where the party isn't as strong. This is how MAS has thrived from its earliest phases, so it would be difficult to imagine the party putting forward a ticket without a representative of this organizing tradition.

The coming days and weeks will determine whether this radical space of resistance will be drowned in blood by the Bolivian junta. If it survives, it will be the base from which the left resurrects its national project.

Ollie Vargas is a Bolivian journalist and writer. He has contributed to teleSUR, Morning Star, and other media outlets.

Source: [Orinoco Tribune](#)



Masivas protestas se oponen a agenda anti musulmana de gobierno indio

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 17, 2020

Masivas protestas están estallando en toda la India tras la aprobación el 11 de diciembre del Proyecto de Ley de Enmienda de Ciudadanía (CAB por sus siglas en inglés). La legislación despoja de sus derechos fundamentales a 200 millones de musulmanes indios que representan el 14 por ciento de la población.

En agosto, el primer ministro Narendra Modi y el gobernante Partido Bharatiya Janata (BJP) instituyeron medidas similares contra los musulmanes en Jammu y Cachemira al revocar su autonomía constitucional. Para aplastar a toda la oposición, el gobierno impuso un toque de queda debilitante cerrando las telecomunicaciones y arrestando a los líderes políticos. Jammu y Cachemira son un estado de mayoría musulmana que India controla dentro del disputado territorio del Himalaya que limita con Pakistán.

Modi y el BJP han construido su base de poder a través de un programa de supremacía hindú contra una minoría musulmana menos privilegiada con el objetivo aparente de convertir a la India en un estado religioso hindú. Desde el principio de su carrera política, Modi se ha esforzado por destruir la unidad secular de la India mediante la promoción de una agenda de violencia comunitaria. El BJP se ha basado en un programa divisivo para enterrar los problemas de una economía vacilante y la creciente preocupación por la violencia contra las mujeres en la que el BJP ha estado implicado.

Protestas contra el CAB comienzan en Assam

El epicentro de las protestas contra el CAB es Assam, Tripura y los estados del noreste que limitan con Bangladesh y Myanmar. El CAB se inició en esta región, aunque Modi ha expresado su intención de llevar a cabo la purga del CAB y del Registro Nacional de Ciudadanos (NRC) en todos los estados de la India.

El CAB es visto como un suplemento a un ejercicio de NRC propuesto en toda la India. La primera etapa se llevó a cabo en Assam durante noviembre, lo que llevó a que más de 1.9 millones de personas fueran declaradas ilegales o extranjeras en la India, lo que las convirtió en apátridas. Cientos fueron enviados a campos de detención, denominados por muchos, campos de concentración. Alrededor de 26 personas ya han muerto en estos campos de detención, según el People's Dispatch del 13 de diciembre.

Hasta la fecha, más de 3.5 millones de musulmanes Assam, muchos nativos del estado, han sido eliminados del registro NRC y están amenazados con detención o expulsión.

Estudiantes en universidades musulmanas lideran lucha

Las primeras protestas contra el CAB fueron lideradas por estudiantes en Guwahati,

Assam, con grandes manifestaciones de antorchas. Decenas de miles de manifestantes desafiaron el toque de queda del gobierno y el despliegue de tropas militares. Se ha informado que a las pocas horas del paso del CAB, la policía disparó y mató a golpes a seis personas, mientras arrestaba a docenas de otras.

- En Delhi, estudiantes y otros protestaron contra la brutal represión policial en la Universidad Islámica Jamia Millia. A medida que la noticia del asalto policial se extendió por todo el país, las universidades se solidarizaron con los estudiantes musulmanes de Jamia.
- Primero fue la Universidad Musulmana Aligarh, donde los estudiantes en la puerta de la universidad gritaban consignas. La policía atacó e hirió a más de cien estudiantes. Cuando llegaron las ambulancias, la policía les impidió ayudar a los estudiantes heridos.
- Una gran protesta estalló en la Universidad Maulana Azad Urdu de Hyderabad. “¡Qué vergüenza la policía de Delhi!” era una consigna que cantaban los estudiantes.
- En Mumbai, los estudiantes del Instituto Tata dirigieron una marcha con velas cantando el poema urdu de la era Raj “Sarfaroshi ki Tamanna”, conocido por su asociación a revolucionarios como Bhagat Singh, que luchó contra el Imperio Británico.
- En Bihar, donde la coalición gobernante BJP apoyó al CAB, los estudiantes de la Universidad de Patna se enfrentaron con la policía.
- En Kolkata, los estudiantes de la Universidad Jadavpur y la Universidad Aliah también se movilizaron en apoyo.
- Y en todo el resto del país: en Varanasi, los estudiantes de la Universidad Hindú de Banaras protestaron, junto con los estudiantes de la Universidad de Pondicherry; En Lucknow, los estudiantes del Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama y el IIT Bombay también se unieron, marchando con antorchas y llevando pancartas que decían: “En solidaridad con Jamia”. (Del reportaje en Scroll.In)

Las protestas masivas repudiando los ataques contra los musulmanes se extendieron rápidamente desde Assam a Bengala Occidental y luego a toda la India. La indignación por la violencia de los supremacistas hindúes, la policía y las tropas de Modi en Assam llevaron a batallas callejeras. También han estallado furiosas protestas en un número creciente de ciudades, incluidas Mumbai, Chennai, Varanasi, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Bhopal, Patna y Pondicherry.

La oposición al CAB atraviesa todas las barreras étnicas y religiosas. Como lo expresó un ex trabajador de BJP de la región de Assam: "Querían poner a los hindúes contra los musulmanes, han vuelto a los hindúes contra los hindúes".

Los gobiernos estatales de oposición en Kerala, Punjab y Bengala Occidental han dicho que no permitirán que se aplique la agenda de supremacía hindú, calificándola de inconstitucional. En Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, el primer ministro Pinarayi Vijayan calificó el proyecto de ley como parte de la estrategia de Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), un grupo paramilitar de derecha nacionalista hindú alineado con BJP, similar a los adoptados por los británicos en India y Hitler en Alemania para dividir a las personas según su religión.

El gobierno de Modi ha respondido a las protestas con tropas, cierres de internet y toques de queda militares, tal como lo hizo cuando reprimió a Cachemira.

En toda la India, los partidos de izquierda, incluido el Partido Comunista de la India, el Partido Comunista de la India (marxista), el Partido Comunista de la India (marxista-leninista)-Liberación, el Bloque All India Forward y el Partido Socialista Revolucionario están organizando conjuntamente acciones de protesta popular contra el CAB-NRC el 19 de diciembre.



Indian government's anti-Muslim agenda opposed by massive protests

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Massive protests are erupting throughout India following the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) on Dec. 11. The legislation strips 200 million Indian Muslims, who account for [14 percent of the population](#), of their fundamental rights.

In August, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) instituted similar measures against Muslims [in Jammu and Kashmir](#) by revoking their constitutional autonomy. In order to crush all opposition, the government imposed a debilitating curfew, shutting down telecommunications and arresting political leaders. Jammu and Kashmir is a Muslim-majority state that India controls within the disputed Himalayan territory bordering Pakistan.

Modi and the BJP have built their power base through a program of Hindu supremacy against a less privileged Muslim minority with the apparent goal of

changing India into a Hindu religious state. From early in Modi's political career, he has striven to destroy India's secular unity by promoting an agenda of communal violence. The BJP has relied on a divisive program to bury issues of a faltering economy and growing concern over violence against women in which the BJP has been implicated.

Anti-CAB protests begin in Assam

The [epicenter of anti-CAB protests](#) is Assam, Tripura and the northeastern states bordering Bangladesh and Myanmar. CAB was initiated in this region, although Modi has expressed intentions to carry out the CAB and [National Register of Citizens \(NRC\)](#) purge in every Indian state.

The CAB is seen as a supplement to a proposed all-India NRC exercise. The first stage was carried out in Assam during November, leading to more than 1.9 million people being declared as illegal or aliens in India, rendering them stateless. Hundreds were sent to detention camps, termed by many concentration camps. Around 26 people have already died in these detention camps, according to [People's Dispatch of Dec. 13.](#)

To date, more than 3.5 million Assam Muslims, many native to the state, have been eliminated from the NRC registry and are threatened with detention or expulsion.

Students in Muslim universities lead struggle

The first protests against CAB were led by students in Guwahati, Assam, with large torch rallies. Tens of thousands of protesters defied a government curfew and a deployment of military troops. It's been reported that within hours of the passage of CAB, the police shot and beat to death six people, while arresting dozens of others.

- In Delhi, students and others protested against the brutal police crackdown at Jamia Millia Islamic University. As news of the police assault spread

across the country, universities came out in solidarity with the Jamia Muslim students.

- First off was Aligarh Muslim University, where students at the university gate shouted slogans. The police attacked, injuring more than a hundred students. When ambulances arrived, police blocked them from helping the wounded students.
- A large protest broke out in Hyderabad's Maulana Azad Urdu University. "Shame on the Delhi Police!" was one slogan chanted by the students.
- In Mumbai, students at the Tata Institute led a candlelight march singing the Raj-era Urdu poem "Sarfaroshi ki Tamanna," known by its association with revolutionaries such as Bhagat Singh, who fought the British Empire.
- In Bihar, where the ruling BJP coalition supported the CAB, Patna University students clashed with the police.
- In Kolkata, students of Jadavpur University and the Aliah University also mobilized in support.
- And around the rest of the country: in Varanasi, students of the Banaras Hindu University protested, joined by the Pondicherry University students; in Lucknow, students of the Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama and the IIT Bombay also joined in, marching with torches and bearing placards which read, "In solidarity with Jamia." (From report at [Scroll.In](#))

<https://www.facebook.com/SuciCommunist/videos/2813104292067609/>

Massive protests against the attacks on Muslims rapidly spread from Assam to West Bengal and then across India. Outrage against the violence of Hindu supremacists, the police and Modi's troops in Assam led to pitched street battles. Furious protests have also broken out in a growing number of cities, including Mumbai, Chennai, Varanasi, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Bhopal, Patna and Pondicherry.

Opposition to CAB cut across every ethnic and religious barrier. As one [former BJP](#)

[worker](#) from the Assam region put it, “They wanted to turn Hindus against Muslims, they’ve turned Hindus against Hindus.”

Opposition state governments in Kerala, Punjab and West Bengal have said that they will not allow the Hindu supremacist agenda to be enforced, calling it unconstitutional. In Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan termed the bill a part of the strategy of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a right-wing, Hindu nationalist, paramilitary group aligned with BJP, similar to the ones adopted by the British in India and Hitler in Germany to divide people along the lines of religion.

Modi’s government has responded to the protests with troops, internet shutdowns and military curfews, just as it did when it clamped down on Kashmir.

Across India, left-wing parties, including the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)-Liberation, the All India Forward Bloc and the Revolutionary Socialist Party are [organizing joint popular protest actions](#) against the CAB-NRC on Dec. 19.



Monopoly profits fuel U.S. maneuvers in Southwest Asia

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 17, 2020

- Part 1: [Syria, Yemen, Palestine: Trump talks peace, escalates war](#)

Trump called an Oct. 27 press conference to brag about the alleged assassination of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and his family by U.S. Special Operations troops. Baghdadi was said to be hiding in Hayat Tahrir Al Shams (HTS)-controlled Idlib, Syria. He has been reported killed at least five times in recent years.

Trump announced the assassination one year and nine days before the 2020 election. President Barack Obama announced the extrajudicial execution of Osama Bin Laden by U.S. Navy SEALS on May 2, 2011, some 18 months before the 2012 election.

In an [Oct. 30 interview](#), Syrian President Bashar al-Assad had this to say about Baghdadi: "It is well known that he was in American prisons in Iraq, and that they

let him out in order to play this role. So, he is someone who could be replaced at any moment.

“Was he really killed? Was he killed but through a different method, in a very ordinary way? Was he kidnapped? Was he hidden? Or was he removed and given a facelift? God only knows. American politics are no different from Hollywood. They rely on the imagination. Not even science fiction, just mere imagination. So, you can take American politics and see them in Hollywood or else you can bring Hollywood and see them through American politics.

“I believe the whole thing regarding this operation is a trick. Baghdadi will be recreated under a different name, a different individual, or ISIS in its entirety might be reproduced as needed under a different name but with the same thought and the same purpose. The director of the whole is the same, the Americans.”

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov described Baghdadi as a “brainchild of the United States. ... Therefore, to a certain extent, the Americans eliminated the one they gave birth to, if it actually happened,” he said.

The ISIS deception

The “Islamic State in Iraq and Syria” is the product of a U.S.-Saudi project to disrupt anti-U.S. resistance with sectarian violence. Originally called “Al-Qaida in Iraq,” it was first funded by the Saudi General Intelligence Directorate. After the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, AQI launched a bombing campaign against Shia Muslim mosques and holy places across the country.

Saudi Arabia, a virtual U.S. colony, has long funded covert operations on Washington’s behalf. In the 1980s, at Ronald Reagan’s request, the Saudi Kingdom paid for the CIA’s contra wars in Afghanistan and Nicaragua.

ISIS used Saudi cash to recruit thousands of former Iraqi soldiers and mercenaries

from 54 countries. Most came through Turkey. With these forces, ISIS seized land in northern Iraq and eastern Syria, where it found a new source of revenue in captured oil fields.

Oil money allowed ISIS to set up its own “caliphate” and break with al-Qaida. Much of the oil was smuggled out through Turkey to the Mediterranean and sold secretly to Israel.

The brunt of the battle against ISIS, al-Qaida and their offshoots has been borne by the Syrian Army and defense forces, Lebanese Hezbollah, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, Iraqi Popular Mobilization Units and the Russian Armed Forces. The U.S., however, used “fighting ISIS” as a pretext to bomb, invade and occupy much of northern and eastern Syria, seizing the country’s oil and gas fields. Washington’s proxy war against Syria became an open military invasion.

In April 2017, the Trump regime ordered the first direct U.S. airstrikes on Syrian government installations. In January 2018, the White House announced an open-ended U.S. military occupation of northern Syria. On Feb. 7, 2018, U.S. planes and artillery attacked Syrian forces near oil fields in Deir Ezzor province, murdering 55 soldiers.

Thieves fall out

Washington’s long war in Southwest Asia (“the Middle East”) is a war of plunder. As one would expect in such a war, there are conflicts and divisions among the plunderers, from the mercenary forces on the ground to their state sponsors to the corporate war profiteers on Wall Street and their servants in Washington.

Trump’s phony withdrawal from Syria provoked apparent outrage in Congress, from Democrats and Republicans alike. Some of it, like the withdrawal itself, was a charade. Some reflected a genuine rift over U.S. relations with Turkey.

There was no fury on Capitol Hill when Trump announced that the U.S. Army had returned to seize Syria's oilfields. But the House did pass a nonbinding resolution threatening sanctions against Turkey. It also voted for the first time to condemn the Armenian genocide, carried out by the Turkish Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923.

The White House and State Department oppose sanctions on Turkey. So does Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell.

Why the U.S.-Turkey crisis?

The political fig leaf for the U.S. occupation of northern Syria was the "Syrian Democratic Forces" (SDF), an alliance of Kurdish nationalist and former Free Syrian Army (FSA) militias armed and protected by the U.S. military. The Pentagon spent at least \$500 million arming and training SDF troops.

The U.S.-SDF alliance, however, complicated U.S. relations with NATO Turkey. The Turkish state, with U.S. support, has long been at war with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which is fighting for Kurdish autonomy in southeast Turkey. The strongest force in the SDF is the People's Protection Units (YPG), led by the Democratic Union Party, the PKK's Syrian affiliate.

Turkey has the second-largest land army in NATO and is the U.S. war industry's fourth-largest overseas customer. It hosts a nuclear-armed U.S. Air Force wing at Incirlik Air Base. It is the main route by which Western-backed forces bring arms and fighters into Syria and smuggle oil out.

If Trump and U.S. oil companies seriously want to "develop" and steal Syria's oil, they would need to bring it out via Turkey. More important to Trump's oil industry bosses, the U.S. needs Turkey's cooperation to keep Iran's oil and gas off the world market.

But Washington's sanctions and wars on Turkey's neighbors — Iran, Iraq, Russia, Syria — have taken a toll on the country's economy. "Turkey Faces Hike in Oil Prices as U.S. Thwarts Iran Oil Sales," Al-Jazeera reported on April 24. "Initially Defiant, Turkey Complies with U.S. Sanctions on Iranian Oil," Oilprice.com reported on May 21.

The sanctions have forced Turkey to buy oil from U.S.-controlled Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. But the situation has also driven Ankara to seek closer economic ties to Russia.

Turkey imports 50 percent of its gas from Russia. It is a potential pathway for Russian gas to reach southern Europe, bypassing U.S.-controlled Ukraine. Several joint Russian-Turkish pipelines are being built across the country. Bilateral trade between Russia and Turkey is expected to reach \$110 billion this year, over five times that between Turkey and the U.S.

In June, Turkey outraged the U.S. military by buying Russian S400 anti-aircraft missiles instead of Patriot missiles made by Raytheon. Russia had agreed to allow greater technology transfer. At the Pentagon's demand, the White House kicked Turkey out of the F35 Joint Strike Fighter program. That cost Lockheed Martin \$500 million.

Republican Sen. Lindsay Graham is now one of the loudest advocates of U.S. sanctions on Turkey. But in August, he represented the White House in negotiations with Turkish officials. In that role, he expressed sympathy for Turkish action against "your YPG Kurdish problem."

Graham also offered Ankara a "free-trade deal" if it broke its missile contract with Russia. We know this because one "Turkish official" Graham spoke with was Russian prankster Alexei Stolyarov, posing as Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar.

Looting Palestine's gas

There's a much bigger prize at stake than Syria's 2.5 billion barrels of oil: control of Europe's energy market. To recapture it, U.S. firms seek to grab newfound gas reserves beneath the Eastern Mediterranean. At least 125 trillion cubic feet of gas are believed to lie there.

Some 20 percent of that is known to be below the waters of Israeli-occupied Palestine. Much of the rest lies in a "joint-exploration zone" between Cyprus and Palestine and off the coasts of Lebanon, Syria and Egypt.

In March, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo presided over an "energy summit" in Jerusalem between Cyprus, Greece and Israel. The meeting approved plans for a \$7-billion pipeline to bring stolen Palestinian gas to Europe via Cyprus, Greece and Italy.

Noble Energy, a Texas-based company with links to the Trump regime, is the lead investor in the project. ExxonMobil, which just found a huge gas field off Cyprus, is also interested. Noble already sells stolen Palestinian gas to Jordan.

Cyprus, however, is partitioned between the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish-backed Republic of Northern Cyprus. Turkey opposes any energy projects there that don't include Northern Cyprus. It also does not recognize the 200-mile offshore territorial limit that Cyprus claims under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Turkey, which never signed the convention, is exploring for gas in waters that Cyprus claims. In August, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak announced Russia was prepared to collaborate with Turkey on oil and gas exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean.

In April, the U.S. lifted an embargo on arms sales to Cyprus. In October, Pompeo

traveled to Athens to sign a U.S.-Greece defense pact. On Oct. 8, he warned Turkey to stop drilling off Cyprus. On Oct. 9, from Rome, he announced the sale of 90 F35s to Italy.

A bill before Congress, the “Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act,” supports a Greek-Cyprus-Israel military alliance to counter “Russia’s malign influence in the Eastern Mediterranean.”

Many in Washington seem to have written off the U.S.-Turkey relationship. The Trump regime, however, appears to be using “good cop, bad cop” tactics to try and pull Turkey away from Russia.

“We need Turkey back in the fold,” Defense Secretary Mark Esper said on Nov. 13. Raytheon, Esper’s former employer, provides electronics for the F35 fighter.

Monopoly profits depend on restricting supply

The Saudi ARAMCO auction and Eastern Mediterranean gas discoveries may conjure dreams of huge profits for bankers and investors. But there’s a rub: The contradictions of the capitalist profit system itself.

The world energy market is reeling from oversupply. In the past two months Iran announced big new oil and gas discoveries. Iran leads the world in gas-powered vehicles. “A surge of oil is coming, whether the world needs it or not,” wrote the New York Times on Nov. 3, citing new production in Brazil, Guyana, Canada and Norway.

Meanwhile, new technologies, pioneered by oil-importing countries, threaten the future of fossil fuels. Looming over all this is the specter of a capitalist economic downturn.

Trump and his handlers know there is little chance that U.S. oil companies will

invest in eastern Syria. U.S. troops are there to stop Syria from using its own oil and to block the long-planned Friendship Pipeline from bringing Iranian gas to the Mediterranean.

The U.S. wars against Iraq and Libya, combined with sanctions on Iran and Venezuela, devastated and impoverished those oil-rich countries. But they rescued the energy industry from a crisis of oversupply that followed the fall of the USSR. They created a bubble that drove prices through the roof and brought oil companies years of record profits.

That bubble spurred trillions of dollars of new investment. Much of that was in the fracking industry, which is poisoning land, water and air across North America. That industry has a powerful voice in the Trump regime.

The bubble collapsed five years ago, putting huge investments in peril. The profitability of new energy projects depends upon limiting global supply.

The Obama-Kerry White House tried to take advantage of the bubble's collapse to hurt the economies of Ecuador, Iran, Russia and Venezuela. It ordered Saudi Arabia to raise production and drive prices down further. The Trump campaign was in large part a revolt of the energy industry against that strategy.

No one in the White House, Congress or the Pentagon can admit going to war to restrict the energy supply and drive up prices and profits. But that is what monopoly capitalism is about. That is the hidden motive driving Washington's brutal wars and sanctions against independent oil-producing countries around the world.

Corporate America's need for endless war goes far beyond the military-industrial complex, critical as that has become. In a world where the productivity of labor is surging by leaps and bounds, only war and destruction can maintain the U.S. ruling class's obsolescent position in the global economy. Ultimately, capitalism needs war

because war destroys — and the value of both capital and commodities depends upon their scarcity.



Bolivia resists racist coup

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On Nov. 19, the tenth day of the coup against legitimate, democratically elected Bolivian President Evo Morales, police and soldiers [fired from helicopters](#) into a crowd of protesters — Indigenous people, workers and peasants — [blockading a fuel depot](#) in El Alto, the South American country's largest city and a center of resistance near the capital, La Paz.

The protesters were demanding the resignation of self-proclaimed interim President Jeanine Añez. Reports say at least one person and [possibly as many as six](#) were killed and 23 wounded.

Four days earlier, in the Indigenous stronghold of Huayllani, Cochabamba, nine people were shot dead during protests against the U.S.-backed coup regime. A [relative of Armando Carballo](#), a peasant farmer who was among the victims, said:

"My brother-in-law died with three gunshot impacts. Leaves a 2-year-old girl in the orphanage. We ask for justice for our brother."

In all, at least 24 people have been killed, more than 700 wounded and over a thousand arrested since the military ousted Bolivia's first Indigenous president on Nov. 10, after the U.S.-dominated Organization of American States supported opposition claims of election fraud — [without proof](#).

Morales and Vice President Álvaro García Linera, both representing the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS), were forced to leave the country, accepting asylum in Mexico [under threat of assassination](#) by police groups.

"We will be back and join the fight to strengthen our social forces," Morales told [Al-Jazeera](#).

The coup plotters, fronted by Añez, proclaimed the military [free to fire on unarmed protesters](#) with no consequences. [Independent journalists](#) are being driven from the country. So were [Cuban health workers](#), after four of them were arrested on bogus charges of funding the anti-coup protests. Diplomats of Bolivarian Venezuela [were expelled](#). Añez and another pretender "president," Juan Guaidó of Venezuela, have expressed their mutual admiration.

Undefeated and fighting back

Looking at these facts in isolation, the situation seems grim.

But the Bolivian people are not giving up. They have not been defeated. They are fighting back.

Despite the danger, protests are growing. Braving teargas and live ammunition, huge marches from the countryside are converging on urban centers, especially La Paz. While the repressive forces were attacking in El Alto on Nov. 19, thousands of

[rural teachers marched](#) into the capital at the head of a major labor demonstration.

Many protesters carry the colorful Wiphala flag — representing the Indigenous people of Bolivia and surrounding countries — which was torched by the racist-fascist forces that earlier mobilized against President Morales.

Indigenous-led groups are [organizing armed self-defense](#). Communities have established bodies of self-government.

This mass courage and determination helps to strengthen the resolve of the political representatives of the movement in La Paz. The Congress, where members of the MAS form a majority, have refused to accept Morales' forced resignation or to recognize the legitimacy of the coup regime.

Significantly, there are reports that rank-and-file soldiers, many of them Indigenous people themselves, are starting to break away and join the protesters, refusing to repress the people.

A report sent by email to Morales supporters on Nov. 20 states: "The coup regime inside Bolivia is falling apart at the seams. According to [sources inside the military](#), there has been friction, both between the military and the police, and between their respective leaders and foot soldiers."

The report continues: "Bolivian media have reported that Bruce Williamson at the U.S. Embassy in La Paz has operated as a bag man, doling out millions of dollars to generals and police chiefs. Local media have reported that the general who told Morales to resign has already left for the USA with his money. The Bolivian news report states that it expects more generals to follow suit as they are fearful of being put on trial for their repressive acts, not to mention their corruption."

The mask of "democracy" and "human rights" fashioned by their masters in Washington fits poorly on the crude white supremacists, anti-Indigenous racists and

fascists at the center of the coup, and the [military and police officials trained](#) by the Pentagon's infamous "School of the Americas" and the FBI. Añez herself is known for her [racist, anti-Indigenous views](#).

International struggle

Most important, the struggle of the Bolivian people is not isolated. A furious class struggle rages across the South American continent and the Caribbean, where the people of Haiti continue to resist under harsh repression.

Everywhere, the forces of the people — workers and peasants, Indigenous and Afro-descendants, women and LGBTQ2S people — are measuring their strength against the capitalist oligarchs and their repressive forces (military, police, death squads), behind whom stands U.S. imperialism.

In Brazil, the people's relentless struggle and the resulting internal conflicts within the ruling class [won the release](#) of former President Lula da Silva of the Workers Party just days before the coup in Bolivia.

In Chile, the people continue to rise after more than a month of mass protests, despite horrific violence like police targeting the eyes of demonstrators, [blinding more than 200 so far](#). They have forced the Sebastián Piñera government to agree to rewrite the Pinochet-era constitution.

But the half-measures proposed by the U.S. stooges in Santiago have not demobilized the people, who demand a Constituent Assembly and genuine change in the relationship between rich and poor, a process that was brutally postponed more than four decades ago by the coup that overthrew Salvador Allende's socialist government on 9/11/1973.

Chilean protesters have proclaimed, "Neoliberalism was born in Chile, and it will die here."

On Nov. 21, workers and students in Colombia will stage a general strike against the death-squad regime of President Iván Duque. Repression against Indigenous communities and left forces by the traitorous Lenin Moreno government in Ecuador is setting the stage for a new uprising like the one that won concessions against an International Monetary Fund austerity plan earlier this fall.

Following the election of a new, left-leaning president in October, workers in Argentina have held [massive protests in Buenos Aires](#) and other cities against the coup in Bolivia and in solidarity with the Indigenous resistance there. Resistance is building in Peru and Uruguay, too.

Bolivarian Venezuela and socialist Cuba — fortresses of popular power besieged by U.S. imperialism and its oligarchic allies with blockades, sanctions, military threats and slanders — continue to resist and offer every assistance they can to the people in struggle.

In Bolivia and elsewhere, the masses are learning valuable lessons every day: by developing new, effective tactics of resistance; that the state cannot be merely taken over but must be smashed and replaced with the power of the workers and oppressed; how the capitalist media turn reality on its head, portraying right-wing violence as heroic while ignoring or disparaging genuine popular protest.

Let's take inspiration from the resisting people of Bolivia to strain with every fibre of our being toward destroying the evil system of capitalism and imperialism in the U.S. and around the world. In the words of the socialist anthem, *The Internationale*, "a better world's in birth."

