

Demand to end illegal sanctions on Zimbabwe intensifies

written by Struggle - La Lucha
September 30, 2019





During the opening of the United Nations General Assembly this week, the United States came under fire. “U.S. imperialist economic sanctions are weapons of war and must end now,” declared Viola Plummer, chair of the December 12th Movement International Secretariat, at a march and rally to lift the illegal U.S. sanctions on Zimbabwe, held in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza on Saturday, Sept. 21, 2019.

Hundreds marched in defense of Zimbabwe and Africa through the streets of midtown Manhattan echoing chants, “U.S. hands off Zimbabwe! End the illegal sanctions now! Sanctions kill ordinary people of Zimbabwe!”

A counterprotest by the Zimbabwe opposition Movement for Democratic Change got rowdy at one point, but did not take away from the December 12th Movement’s position.

The plaza was filled with protesters condemning U.S. economic sanctions on Zimbabwe and Puerto Rico, which have a devastating impact on the people of both nations.

“We are all here in unity and solidarity to expose the racist foreign policy of the U.S., which is rampant around the globe. In Zimbabwe, basic human needs, including medicine and medical supplies, water purification systems, fuel, agricultural equipment and national infrastructure development, have suffered due to severe illegal sanctions on international trade, loans and currency manipulations,” Plummer

explained.

Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony referred to as a “territory,” crippled by the hurricanes and the effects of climate change, has been willfully neglected and denied adequate U.S. emergency management assistance. The island nation is recovering at a snail’s pace. The people resisted en masse and forced the resignation of the corrupt Gov. Ricardo Rosselló in July. New York City protesters vowed to fight on.

“The U.S. imposed economic sanctions on Zimbabwe in 2001, in response to their land reclamation program, which returned the vast lands stolen by a tiny sector of former British colonizers to the indigenous Zimbabweans. Further, the 2019 summit of the 16 heads of state in the Southern African Development Community condemned the illegal economic sanctions that have affected the entire region.

“The summit declared Oct. 25, 2019, as the date on which SADC member states can collectively voice their disapproval of sanctions through various activities and platforms until the sanctions are lifted,” Plummer concluded.

The December 12th Movement has also conducted this campaign in Pan African unity. For more information, call 718-398-1766 or visit D12M.com.

<https://www.facebook.com/omowale.clay/videos/2519544048122134/>



Biden's crimes in Ukraine — and Trump's

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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As U.S. President Donald Trump gave a [bellicose speech](#) to the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 24, attacking Iran, Venezuela, China, and workers and oppressed people all over the world, Democratic Party House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced the beginning of an [impeachment inquiry](#) against Trump.

However, the impeachment process is not about Trump's numerous violations of international law, such as casting aside the Iran nuclear deal, abetting the seizure of Venezuela's overseas assets and its Embassy in Washington, or tightening the illegal blockade of Cuba.

Nor does it have to do with the mass violation of human rights at the U.S.-Mexico border or the imprisonment of refugees in concentration camps. It's not about his policies encouraging environmental destruction, either.

No, the impeachment process centers on a July 25 phone call between Trump and Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky, in which Trump allegedly pressured Zelensky to investigate corruption charges against former Vice President and current Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden.

This “explosive” charge was [made by an intelligence agent](#) who filed a whistleblower complaint. The agent implied Trump had demanded a quid pro quo from Zelensky in exchange for continued U.S. aid.

Later, it was reported that the Trump administration had [put a temporary hold](#) on almost \$400 million in military aid to Kiev prior to the call. The military aid was later released. Trump says there was no connection between the call and his “review” of the aid.

It is reasonable to ask why the Democratic Party leadership considers this impeachment-worthy when life-and-death issues affecting millions of working people are not.

The official explanation, [as reported by the Guardian](#), is that “It is illegal for a political campaign to accept ‘a thing of value’ from a foreign government. Democrats say an investigation into a political opponent—for which Trump appears to have been pushing—would amount to “a thing of value.”

What no one in Washington or the corporate media cares to mention are the real and deadly crimes of the U.S. government and big business in Ukraine — under both the Democratic Obama administration in which Biden served, and now the Trump administration.

U.S. soldier aids neo-Nazis

On Sept. 23, Grayzone investigative journalist Ben Norton [reported on the FBI’s arrest](#) of Jarrett William Smith, a U.S. soldier who sought to join the Azov Battalion,

a neo-Nazi military group in Ukraine.

“While serving in the U.S. military,” Norton wrote, “this right-wing extremist gave fascist militants in Ukraine and other countries information on how to build bombs.

...

“The FBI said he had also planned to travel to Ukraine in order to join the Azov Battalion, a neo-Nazi militia that has for years been directly supported by the U.S. government.”

This is the real story about Ukraine that should be brought to the attention of workers and oppressed people, because it gets to the far more significant crimes of Biden, Trump and the wealthy boss class they both serve:

- how the U.S. ushered in a right-wing coup regime in Ukraine in 2014 with the aid of open fascists;
- how the new government backed by Washington launched a bloody war against the people of the Donbass mining region, while also increasing military threats against neighboring Russia;
- ongoing repression against opponents of the regime, including the jailing of hundreds of political prisoners, beatings and killings by neo-Nazi groups,



and the massacre of 48 people at the House of Trade Unions in Odessa on May 2, 2014;

- how austerity and privatization have benefitted big Western capitalists and

banks while harming the people of Ukraine;

- and the fact that this process—which began under the Democratic Obama administration—continues under Republican Trump today.

Norton cites several earlier examples of collaboration between U.S.-based white supremacists and Ukrainian fascists. Last year, for example, [members of a California group](#) that participated in the violent, racist attacks in Charlottesville in 2017 were revealed to have attended an Azov training camp.

Azov was formed in 2014 as one of several neo-Nazi “volunteer militias” which, together with the Ukrainian Armed Forces, have waged war against the mostly Russian-speaking residents of the Donbass mining region of eastern Ukraine. In a popular referendum, the residents of Donbass voted overwhelmingly to declare independence and formed the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics.

In 2015, when some U.S. congresspeople expressed discomfort with providing support to a group that uses fascist sigils, Azov was promptly incorporated into the Ukrainian National Guard to give cover for U.S./NATO military training and equipment.

On Feb. 25, the [United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights reported](#) that the number of deaths had reached up to 13,000 since the war in Donbass began in 2014, with more than 30,000 wounded. Millions of people were displaced and became refugees as a result of the war.

In order to keep a gauze of “plausible denial,” the Obama administration had banned the direct sale of “lethal weapons” to Ukraine, instead facilitating those sales through third countries, like the Gulf monarchies. [Trump removed that restriction.](#)

Although Zelensky was voted into office by Ukrainians hoping he would end the war, military attacks by Kiev have increased since he took office in May.

Biden's role

From the start of the war in 2014 through 2016, Vice President Joe Biden served as the virtual colonial governor of Ukraine. He visited the country frequently, dangling carrots and swinging sticks, to make sure the motley crew of oligarchs, pro-Western politicians and neo-Nazis who took power did what Washington wanted.

On April 25, 2014, [this author wrote](#): “The so-called ‘anti-terrorist campaign’ [military attack on Donbass] was launched after a visit by CIA Director John Brennan to Kiev on April 12-13. Following humiliating setbacks, including the desertion of many troops the regime had believed loyal, the attack resumed immediately after U.S. Vice President Joe Biden flew to Kiev on April 22 to apply more pressure and promise more aid.”

It was Biden, more than any other figure in the Obama administration, who oversaw the brutal austerity and privatization “reforms” demanded by the big banks and the equally brutal war in Donbass.

This included privatization of Ukraine’s rich farmland and its [takeover by Monsanto](#) and other Western agribusiness corporations pushing GMOs—one of many provisions demanded by the International Monetary Fund in exchange for a \$17.5 billion bailout—and the introduction of fracking. Biden’s son, Hunter Biden, was directly involved in the latter as an executive of gas production company Burisma Holdings, along with other capitalists with close ties to the Obama administration.

The corruption charges which Trump reportedly wanted Ukraine to investigate have to do with [Joe Biden’s role](#) in the firing of Ukrainian Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin, who was supposed to investigate corruption. One of the entities Shokin was investigating was Bursima Holdings.

[At a meeting of the Council on Foreign Affairs](#), Joe Biden later bragged about how he

used the threat of withdrawing a billion dollar line of credit to get the prosecutor fired. All perfectly legal and normal, we are assured.

The mainstream media—and even alternative media like [The Nation](#) and [The Intercept](#)—have gone to great pains, bending and twisting pretzel-like, to justify Biden’s conduct as legal and unassailable, even if they admit an appearance of “impropriety.”

After all, this kind of conduct is business as usual for U.S. politicians and the wealthy class they serve — regardless of which capitalist party they belong to!

The austerity preacher

In December 2015, [Biden spoke in the Rada](#), the Ukrainian parliament, lecturing his subjects on the need to “end cronyism.” He praised those who carried out the coup two years earlier and those conducting war crimes against the civilian population of Donbass.

He also warned the assembled politicians not to lose their nerve in carrying out austerity measures on the backs of the workers if they wanted to continue getting money from the U.S. and the International Monetary Fund.

“The big part of moving forward with your IMF program — it requires difficult reforms. ... to vote to raise the pension age is to write your political obituary in many places. ... It requires sacrifices that might not be politically expedient or popular. ... I urge you to stay the course as hard as it is.”

Any worker, looking at the facts here, might ask not only about the evident corruption, but about how it is “normal” and “legal” for a U.S. politician to dictate the political and economic policies, including war and peace, poverty and austerity, of another country.

Both Biden and Trump, congressional Democrats and Republicans, are playing out their struggle for power and privilege atop a mountain of bodies of children, civilians and anti-fascists killed in Donbass, and the ongoing repression of political oppositionists, journalists and ordinary workers in Ukraine.

That is the real scandal and the real story that must be exposed.



Long live the memory of Robert Mugabe!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

September 30, 2019

New York — Hundreds came to Harlem's All Souls Episcopal Church on Sept. 17 to pay tribute to the late Robert Gabriel Mugabe. The memorial meeting for the former president of Zimbabwe, who died on Sept. 6, was organized by the December 12th Movement.

Mugabe was hated by all the imperialist overlords—from Wall Street to London to Paris—whose capitalist world market was jump-started by the African Holocaust. But to tens of millions of Africans and oppressed people everywhere, Robert Mugabe was a liberator.

The people of Zimbabwe were invaded in the 1890s by the British Empire on behalf of the diamond and gold mining multimillionaire Cecil Rhodes. Africans were forced off their land and their leaders were executed for resisting.

The resulting white settler regime was called Rhodesia. When Africans protested in the 1960s, police dogs were used against them like they were used against civil rights demonstrators in Birmingham, Ala.

African leaders were jailed by Rhodesia's leader, the white farm owner Ian Smith. Among them was Robert Mugabe, who was jailed for 11 years. Smith refused to let Magube attend his child's funeral.

While Hitler promised a thousand-year Third Reich, Smith vowed that it would be a thousand years before Africans ruled their own country. But Robert Mugabe and the people of Zimbabwe defeated Smith.

Mugabe became the leader of the Zimbabwe African National Union, which launched a liberation war from newly independent Mozambique. By 1980, Zimbabwe was free.

Land and freedom

Baba Zayid helped start the memorial and libations were performed by Camile Yarbrough. Members of the audience shouted out names of African liberators.

The famous photographer Kwame Brathwaite was introduced and the Rev. Frank Morales of All Souls welcomed the audience to the church. New York State

Assemblyperson Charles Barron and New York City Councilperson Inez Barron saluted Robert Mugabe.

Omowale Clay and three other leaders of the December 12th Movement who had attended Robert Mugabe's funeral spoke. Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa attended the funeral, as did several other African heads of state. So did Cuban Vice President Inés Maria Chapman.

Young people at the memorial read words of Robert Magube. Among them were, "We have fought for our land, we have fought for sovereignty, small as we are we have won our independence and we are prepared to shed our blood!"

Zimbabwe was free but the land was still owned by thousands of white farmers who exploited tens of thousands of African farmworkers. Zimbabwe's people, under the leadership of President Mugabe, took their land back.

As Charles Barron noted, taking back the land is what really made the wealthy and powerful hate Robert Mugabe. New York's media have never forgiven Charles Barron for bringing Robert Mugabe to the New York City Council.

The U.S. government placed cruel economic sanctions on Zimbabwe, as it has done to Cuba, Iran, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen. Sanctions kill. People in the church chanted, "Lift the sanctions now!"

The capitalist media lied about Zimbabwe for years before independence. According to a 1979 documentary that was shown at the memorial, 80 percent of the coverage in London's daily newspapers supported Ian Smith and was hostile to the liberation struggle.

Viola Plummer, the chairperson of the December 12th Movement, called His Excellency Comrade Robert G. Mugabe one of the greatest leaders that Africa has produced. The Pan African scholar, professor Leonard Jeffries, praised Mugabe.

Activists from the Côte d'Ivoire declared that "Robert Magube fulfilled his mission."

Members of the December 12th Movement urged people to come out on Saturday, Sept. 21, to demand: "Lift U.S. sanctions off Zimbabwe." The demonstration will start at 12 noon sharp at 53rd Street and Lexington Avenue and will march to the United Nations.

For more information, call 718-398-1766 or visit D12M.com.

Long live the memory of Robert Mugabe!

Photos: Nayaba Arinde / December 12th Movement



Women miners honored on Day of Liberation of Donbass

written by Struggle - La Lucha

September 30, 2019

On Sept. 8, 1943, the Soviet Red Army liberated the city of Stalino, today known as

Donetsk, from Nazi occupation. The anniversary is celebrated as the Day of Liberation of Donbass throughout the anti-fascist Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, which today are defending themselves from an ongoing war by the U.S.-backed government of Ukraine. Since 2014, more than 10,000 people have been killed in the conflict. This report was translated by Struggle-La Lucha's Greg Butterfield.

Donetsk: On Sept. 8, the Aurora Women's Club dedicated our meeting to the Day of the Liberation of Donbass. This was a great victory for all Soviet people and especially Soviet women.

Few people know that the liberation of Donbass was carried out by women. In Donetsk, there is a commemorative sign indicating that on this site "grateful descendants erect this monument to the women of Donbass who performed a labor feat in restoring coal mines destroyed during the Great Patriotic War and achieving the pre-war level of coal production."

We, the Aurora Club and friends, visited this place and brought flowers in gratitude to those workers, who made the Soviet Donbass a prosperous mining region.

A bit of history:

In 1943, when the Donbass was liberated from the Nazi invaders, almost all of its mines were blown up and flooded. Abroad, assessing the extent of the destruction, they predicted that the region would not rise for a long time and would lose its significance for the development of industry and the economy of the Soviet Union. The New York Times wrote: "Donbass is lost. ... It will take decades to restore it."

The restoration of the mines and the revival of coal mining fell on the shoulders of women. Already by 1946, 106 million tons of coal were mined in the Donbass, which is 4 million tons more than the pre-war level of coal production. In honor of this, in

1947, a decree was signed on the establishment of the professional holiday of Miner's Day, which has been celebrated since 1948.

From 1943 to 1947, up to 80 percent of those who worked underground in the mines of Donbass were women. In total, from 200,000 to 250,000 women worked in the mines during the war and post-war years, respectively. Some 46,300 people were awarded the medal "For the Restoration of Donbass Coal Mines" – more than half of them women.



Hands off Boris Litvinov and the Communist Party of Donetsk People's Republic!

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An [*assassination attempt*](#) was made July 19 against Boris Litvinov, first secretary of the Communist Party of the Donetsk People's Republic (KPDPR). Litvinov discovered

a bomb strapped to the underside of his car. This message from Struggle-La Lucha was sent to the KPDP on July 21.

Struggle-La Lucha newspaper and the Partido de Socialismo Unido/Socialist Unity Party of the U.S. were outraged to learn of the latest assassination attempt against Comrade Boris Litvinov on July 19. We send our solidarity to First Secretary Litvinov and all comrades of the Communist Party of the Donetsk People's Republic.

We hope the authorities in Donetsk will act quickly to find those responsible for planting the car bomb that threatened Comrade Litvinov. But we know that, whoever may have carried out this awful deed, the ultimate responsibility for this terrorist act and other war crimes against the people of Donbass rests with Western imperialism, especially the United States, which helped to engineer the 2014 Maidan coup in Ukraine and continues to arm, train and finance the Ukrainian regime and its neo-Nazi enforcers.

Ukraine is once again escalating its attacks on the civilian population of Donbass, as we saw with this weekend's [deadly shelling of Pervomaisk](#) in the Lugansk People's Republic. Despite the aspirations of many Ukrainians who voted for President Vladimir Zelensky in hopes of ending the fratricidal war, the crisis can't be resolved through elections controlled by the very same oligarchs, fascists and imperialist powers that benefit from the war.

As Comrade Litvinov said: "Attempts on political figures of the DPR and LPR-like A. Zakharchenko, V. Bolotov, D. Pushilin, me and many others-indicate that it is too early for us all to relax. It is necessary to strengthen the unity of all politicians, public organizations and political parties which are ready to defend the ideas and principles of building a sovereign DPR and LPR, for which the overwhelming majority of Donbass residents voted in the referendum in the spring of 2014."

In their desperate scramble for profits and global power, the U.S. imperialists are

greatly overextending themselves everywhere—threatening war against Iran, Venezuela, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Palestinian people, to name just a few.

But this colossus has feet of clay. The U.S. ruling class faces growing internal resistance from the workers and oppressed peoples here. As we write this, there are mass protests throughout the country against Washington’s brutal treatment of refugees, as well as popular uprisings of the colonized peoples in Puerto Rico and Hawaii.

As we work to build solidarity between the workers of the U.S. and the people of the world, the valiant anti-fascist struggle of the Donbass remains a high priority for us. Though our united efforts, we can stop the imperialist war drive and unite the workers of the world to fight for a socialist future.



Repression against Palestinians,

leftists surges in Germany

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Little known to the left in the U.S., an escalating war of repression is being waged in Europe against Palestinians, those who take action in support of migrants and refugees, and other leftists fighting for a better world for all workers and oppressed people. Today, imperialist Germany is at the center of this war, and its acts of state repression are being closely coordinated with the U.S. and Israeli governments and far-right groups.



On June 22, [Palestinian writer and activist Khaled Barakat](#) was banned from speaking under threat of imprisonment. Barakat, who heads the international campaign to free [political prisoner Ahmed Sa'adat](#), was stopped by police outside a Berlin community center where he was scheduled to speak about a U.S.-sponsored conference in Bahrain dubbed the "deal of the century." As concocted by the Trump administration, Palestinians were supposed to be bribed into exchanging their right to return to their homeland and other fundamental rights for aid money and bogus promises of "peace" under Israeli occupation.



Police stopped Barakat and Charlotte Kates of [Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network](#) and told them the pro-Palestinian event had been banned. As Samidoun explained: “Barakat was presented with an 8-page document and told that he was not allowed to give speeches in person or over video, participate in political meetings or events or even attend social gatherings of over 10 people; he was told that violations were punishable by up to a year in prison.” Barakat and Kates were also told that their residency in Germany would not be renewed.



When fascists charge ‘anti-Semitism’



The censorship and threats against Barakat come just months after another internationally known Palestinian activist, former U.S. and Israeli political prisoner Ramea Odeh, was [banned from speaking](#) in Berlin about the role of women in Palestine’s liberation struggle. Odeh’s visa was repealed and she was assaulted by racist cops, members of the fascist anti-immigrant party, Alternative for

Germany (AfD), and Zionist supporters of Israeli apartheid. U.S. and Israeli diplomats were directly involved in organizing the attack on Odeh.



On June 29, hundreds protested outside the Bundestag (parliament) in Berlin in defiance of these repressive acts and a recent resolution attacking the Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israeli apartheid. The Bundestag resolution “falsely equated this Palestinian movement with anti-Semitism,” says a [Samidoun photo report](#) from the demonstration. A series of anti-Palestinian resolutions were proposed by the various political parties in the Bundestag after the extreme-right AfD with the ultra-capitalist Free Democratic Party kicked off this particular attack on Palestinians with a proposal to ban the BDS movement.



“However, the anti-BDS resolution is not an outlier, but reflects an ongoing and escalating campaign to criminalize Palestinians and Palestine organizing in Germany.”



This reactionary offensive has had a chilling effect on much of the German left. Some groups, especially those that are oriented toward reform rather than revolution, have even joined in the false rhetoric equating Palestine solidarity with anti-Semitism in hopes of shielding themselves. Not only is this a betrayal of solidarity—it also aids imperialism in spreading the lie that the reactionary, U.S. armed and funded Israeli state is the same as the Jewish people.



Samidoun has drawn attention to related cases of repression happening across Europe, coordinated by the same anti-people alliance of imperialist officials, fascist parties and pro-apartheid Zionists. This includes the case of Sea Watch Captain Carola Rackete, who was arrested in Italy after saving refugees on the open sea and docking at an Italian port. [Rackete was freed from house arrest](#) on July 3, when a judge ruled that she was “doing her duty saving human lives.” But Rackete could still face prosecution for “assisting illegal immigration.”



Hamburg anti-fascists take action



In the German city of Hamburg, members of the anti-fascist, anti-imperialist collective No Pasarán Hamburg plan a protest on July 13 “against home raids, repression and political trials.”



They will highlight Barakat’s case, along with recent police raids against members of the leftist, pro-Palestinian Jugendwiderstand (Youth Resistance) organization, and what the group calls the “show trial” of Turkish activist Erdal Gökoglu for his alleged membership in the communist Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C). On June 27 [Gökoglu was sentenced](#) to five years in prison.



Struggle-La Lucha spoke with members of [No Pasarán Hamburg](#) to get their views on the repression and its impact on the left in Germany. (For security reasons, their replies are attributed to the group, not to individuals.)



“In Hamburg, a gradual conquest of all democratic, left ‘alternative,’ and student spaces has been led by pro-Zionist forces. It goes without saying that all left-wing cultural centers and larger demonstrations—such as those for sea rescue operations in the Mediterranean or political prisoners—are to be kept ‘Palestine-free’ if you don’t want to be spat on, insulted, attacked, or photographed and vilified as a Nazi on social media. The university students’ parliament (Studierendenausschuss) is dominated by these forces.



“Anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist perspectives are being driven out, delegitimized, insulted. If you are a woman known for your solidarity with Palestine, you can’t even save yourself from the attacks and insults of pro-Zionist men in the women’s restroom.



“For about a year there has been a smear campaign against the comrades from the Jugendwiderstand [a Maoist organization that formally dissolved in June]. For months, the city has been covered in stickers accusing the Jugendwiderstand of being ‘racist, sexist anti-Semites.’ This was the central theme on May 1 during an ‘anti-authoritarian’ demonstration, with slogans denouncing the Jugendwiderstand on the lead banner. By our experience and estimations, we see no basis for any of the vilification made against this group.



“The aggression is massive against anyone who stands for Palestine. Because we are anti-imperialists and internationalists, our posters calling for solidarity with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela or the Catalanian Estelada have been attacked or destroyed.



“During our commemoration of the Nakba this year, we were filmed, including the children among us, by the pro-Zionists. On Twitter, people begged that a World War II era British bomb, which was uncovered during

construction work that day, be used on us.



“There is an atmosphere of fear and terror built up. If you show solidarity with Palestine, then you are accused of being a Nazi, you are targeted, you can never feel safe. On top of that, there is of course the possibility you will be criminalized by the state.



“For us, as internationalist anti-fascists who live in an imperialist country, this is the watershed moment: Are you actually interested in change, or are you content with imperialism and willing to justify it?”



Hands off Khaled Barakat and the Palestinian solidarity movement! From the belly of U.S. imperialism, Struggle-La Lucha sends solidarity to all comrades fighting courageously in Germany and Europe against imperialism, fascism and Zionist apartheid.



We urge our readers and supporters to help inform the U.S. left about the situation and send messages of solidarity for Khaled Barakat to samidoun@samidoun.net.

Video: Message from Samidoun's Charlotte Kates on German repression



https://youtu.be/F4A_Ebkv5_Y



Stop murder of activists in Colombia

written by Struggle - La Lucha

September 30, 2019

Struggle-La Lucha is sharing this July 10 message from the Aurora Women's Club and Red Carnation anti-fascist group in the Donetsk People's Republic. Translation by SLL's Greg Butterfield.

In Colombia, where leftist FARC guerrillas signed a peace agreement with the government in 2016, far-right terror is now raging. One by one, leaders of social movements, defenders of the rights of peasants and Indigenous people, human rights defenders and civilians are being killed.

Last week, [Tatiana Paola Posso Espitia](#) was killed – the 727th victim of the terror. She helped people affected by the civil war. In total, about 1,000 leaders of social movements in Colombia have been threatened with death. Fifty percent of them are women.

It's time to say "Enough!" to terror and impunity. We join all those who express solidarity with the social movement of Colombia.

No more deaths! #NiUnMuertoMas



People's SONA: Class clarity is crucial for solidarity with people of Philippines

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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In the Philippines, the State of the Nation Address, popularly abbreviated as SONA, is traditionally held on the fourth Monday of every July. This year, it will be Monday, July 22, on which day President Rodrigo Duterte will stand before a joint session of Congress and report to the people of the Philippines and to the people of the world what he wants us to believe about what's going on in his country.

If Duterte's previous three SONAs are any indication, we should expect to hear about the rousing success of his "war on drugs." He will conveniently leave out any mention of the mounting death tolls, the use of police, military and mercenary forces used to carry them out, and the U.S. tax dollars being used to fund them. He will certainly not mention that drug abuse has not lessened.

We should expect to hear about the growing strength of the Philippines economy. We should not expect, however, to hear how this growth is calculated or measured. Any report that claims the economy of the Philippines is expanding simply does not account for the growing poverty, landlessness, contractualization or forced migration.

The peasant class of the Philippines is forced to till land that does not belong to it to produce food that it will not get to eat. And the working class is forced into unemployment because of the import-dependent economy. This means that everyday goods must be bought from overseas, even though the raw materials used to make them are produced right there in the Philippines, which leads to superprofits for the giant monopolies.

Because there is such a small industrial economy, the lack of jobs forces Filipino workers out of the Philippines so they can send home remittances to support their families.

In other words, Duterte will continue to regurgitate the lies fed to him by the U.S.-backed government of landlords and comprador capitalists — the facilitators for the imperialists.

The people's response

Luckily, the people of the Philippines will not take this sitting down. All across the Philippines and the world, fighters for national liberation will respond with the People's State of the Nation Address, or PSONA. This is where we should expect to hear everything Duterte will not say — about the pain and grief of losing a loved one to Duterte's "drug war," about the migrant workers longing to be reunited with their families, about the razing of Indigenous communities.

But the PSONA will not be just about the problems — it will also be about solutions.

The Philippines movement for national liberation has a clearly articulated plan for fixing the main problems in the Philippines. This includes genuine land reform — redistributing land to the landless — and national industrialization — developing heavy industry in order to curtail dependence on imports.

There are two demands for the short term as well: 1) Stop the killings, and 2) oust Duterte from the presidency. The call for Duterte's ouster demands special attention, from seasoned activists to budding anti-imperialists alike. It is something the anti-war movement in the U.S. needs to get right and analyze with absolute clarity in order to build a movement that properly strikes at the heart of imperialism.

Specifically, we must pay attention to the class character of this call for Duterte's ouster — what class forces are demanding it? What class interests does it serve? Of course, most who know about the situation in the Philippines know that this demand was raised by the oppressed classes of the Philippines, in the service of the oppressed classes of the Philippines. So what is confusing about this?

Class analysis: Getting it right

A clear way to illustrate the importance of class character is to compare the calls for Duterte's ouster with the calls for the ouster of the president of Bolivarian Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro. Who wants Maduro gone? Which forces do they rely on to try to make it happen?

People who follow Struggle-La Lucha newspaper surely know about the [U.S. government's takeover of the Venezuelan Embassy](#) in Washington, D.C. What class forces carried that out? On the orders of the U.S. State Department — the same department that has carried out massacres and right-wing coups and funded death squads in Africa, Asia and Latin America — the Secret Service, the DC Metro Police and the Federal Police stormed the embassy and arrested the embassy protectors. In

this case, the armed goons of the ruling capitalist class carried out the embassy takeover.

And most people know that the calls to overthrow the Bolivarian government of Venezuela began long before that, starting with the election of Hugo Chávez two decades ago. Of course, this resulted in a failed coup in 2002. The corporate media — the mouthpieces of the U.S. elite — shouted much louder about the coup than the people of Venezuela did. The ruling class cheered for Chávez's overthrow.

It is an eerily similar situation with the presidency that Maduro inherited. The Venezuelan capitalists, for fear of their industries being nationalized and missing out on profits, actively sabotaged the Venezuelan economy and blamed it on "socialism." But who were the loudest doomsayers, calling for the downfall of President Maduro?

One of them was none other than Marco Rubio, U.S. senator from Florida, son of rich Cubans who fled the Cuban Revolution for fear of losing their privileged lifestyles. Rubio had tweeted Maduro's name [380 times as of March 2019](#). As for Florida, the state he represents in the U.S. Senate? Seventeen.

Rubio uses his platform to call Maduro an "illegitimate tyrant" and position himself as champion of the Venezuelan people. At the same time, he uses his Senate position to support sanctions on Cuba and Venezuela, which hurt (guess who?) the Cuban and Venezuelan people.

Rubio, supposed champion of the people, pushed for legislation that would lower the corporate income tax rate for the richest business owners from 38 percent to 25 percent, while doing away with food stamps and Earned Income Tax Credits, both of which benefit low- to moderate-income workers. Turns out a bourgeois stooge cannot help but be a bourgeois stooge.

But Rubio is only one of many corporate talking heads clamoring for the overthrow of President Maduro. And what interesting timing it is that Venezuela and Iran are under attack, [when oil profits are dropping](#).

Clarity makes the difference

In this context, we can see how important it is to understand the class character of a movement or demand. It is also important for the anti-war movement in the U.S. to understand that many anti-war, anti-imperialist activists come to consciousness after they learn of the lies the U.S. told about “evil dictators” — lies about Fidel Castro, Muammar Gaddafi or Mao Zedong. So when a studied anti-imperialist hears a demand to oust a particular leader of a country oppressed by imperialism, alarms go off. After all, does overturning an individual really change a system?

But the Filipino people are not naive on this point. They do not fool themselves that ousting Duterte will overturn the class rule of the landlords and comprador capitalists. But they also know that the movement for national liberation cannot grow while Duterte uses his “war on drugs” to justify mass murders of activists, workers and peasants. Additionally, ousting Duterte would be a huge victory for the movement, earning the confidence of the masses, and making the landlords and imperialists tremble in their boots.

This is why class analysis is so crucial for anti-imperialists in the United States. Not being able to analyze the class character of a given movement or demand can lead to serious confusion about whether to support it or not. If we were fooled by the ruling-class demands for Maduro’s ouster, we would become cheerleaders for imperialism. If we were too hesitant to support the calls for Duterte’s ouster, we would miss out on the chance to gain allies by showing solidarity with the Filipino masses, and possibly contributing to a material victory.

To avoid serious errors like these, we need to take seriously the role of political

education in the anti-imperialist movement. Even as we persistently and consistently raise our positions in public via demonstrations, rallies and other mass actions, we have to also be providing thorough and comprehensive political education. We must view political education as one way that we arm the movement and give it teeth.

Historical materialism, dialectical materialism, class analysis — these are all weapons, and they empower dedicated anti-imperialist fighters to provide clarity and direction on any new political crisis. If we are able to grasp these weapons firmly, we will never lose sight of our goals — to smash imperialism and capitalism, to build socialism and to provide the material basis for self-determination for the peoples of the world.

Armed with the confidence that Duterte's ouster is a genuine demand of the oppressed classes of the Philippines, anti-imperialists should support this call and find any way possible to contribute to its realization. We should start by being on the lookout for the organizing of PSONAs in our cities and towns, or even by organizing them independently. The People's State of the Nation Address is a powerful way not only to counter ruling class lies, but to educate the masses on the truth.

Details on PSONA events:

Washington, D.C. (7/22)

11 a.m. rally at the White House; 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW; then march to the Philippine Embassy

12:30 p.m. rally at the Philippine Embassy; 1600 Massachusetts Ave. NW

New York, N.Y. (7/22)

6 p.m. rally at the Philippine Consulate; 556 5th Ave.

Houston, Texas

(7/21) 2 p.m. Community Forum; Location TBA

(7/22) 6 p.m. Vigil at the Philippine Consulate; 9990 Richmond Ave.

Chicago, Ill. (7/22)

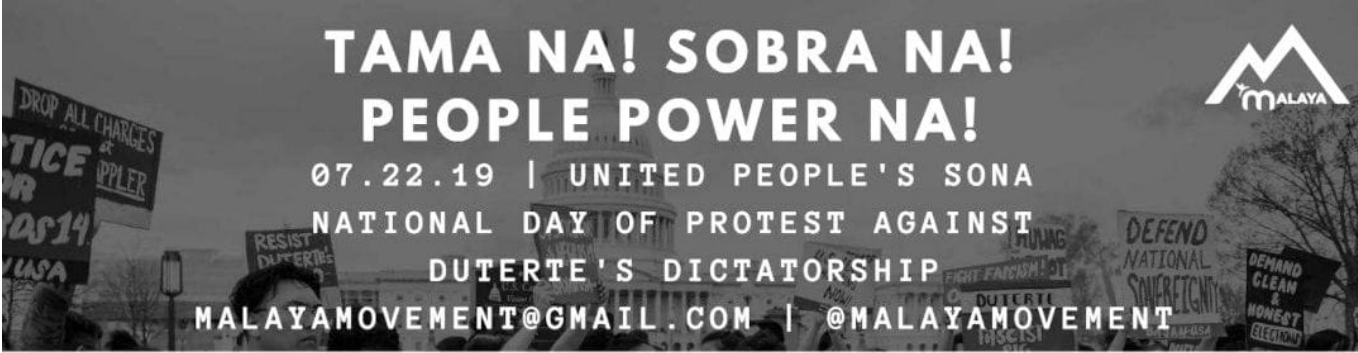
6 p.m. rally at the Philippine Consulate; 122 South Michigan Ave.

San Francisco, Calif. (7/22)

12 p.m. rally at the Philippine Consulate; 447 Sutter St.

Los Angeles, Calif. (7/22)

4 p.m. rally at the Philippine Consulate; 3435 Wilshire Blvd.



**TAMA NA! SOBRA NA!
PEOPLE POWER NA!**

07.22.19 | UNITED PEOPLE'S SONA
NATIONAL DAY OF PROTEST AGAINST
DUTERTE'S DICTATORSHIP
MALAYAMOVEMENT@GMAIL.COM | @MALAYAMOVEMENT

WASHINGTON D.C.
11:00 AM RALLY @WHITE HOUSE(MEET
@PENNSYLVANIA AVE NW)& MARCH TO
PHILIPPINE EMBASSY
12:30 AM RALLY @PHILIPPINE EMBASSY
(1600 MASSACHUSETTS AVE NW)

HOUSTON, TEXAS
2:00 PM 7/21 COMMUNITY FORUM
(LOCATION:TBA)
6:00 PM 7/22 VIGIL @PHILIPPINE CONSULATE
(9990 RICHMOND AVE, 77042)

NEW YORK, NY
6:00 PM RALLY @PHILIPPINE CONSULATE
(556 5TH AVE NY, NY 10036)

CHICAGO, IL
6:00 PM RALLY @PHILIPPINE CONSULATE
(122 SOUTH MICHIGAN AVE, 60603)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA
12:00 PM RALLY @PHILIPPINE CONSULATE
(447 SUTTER ST, 94108)

LOS ANGELES, CA
4:00 PM RALLY @PHILIPPINE CONSULATE
(3435 WILSHIRE BLVD, 90010)



Frame-up of Donbass and Russia: Asking hard questions about MH17 charges

written by Struggle - La Lucha
September 30, 2019

On June 19, the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) on the crash of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 (MH17) [issued international arrest warrants](#) for three Russian citizens and one Ukrainian citizen. The four were charged with shooting down the civilian airliner over the Donetsk People's Republic on July 17, 2014, causing the deaths of all 298 passengers.

The JIT, based in the Netherlands and comprised of investigators from Australia, Belgium, Malaysia, the Netherlands and Ukraine, also claimed that the Russian government was ultimately responsible for the tragedy.

All those indicted — Igor Girkin (better known as Igor Strelkov), Sergey Dubinskiy, Oleg Pulatov and Leonid Kharchenko — were participants in the anti-fascist militias

defending civilians in the Donbass mining region after the far-right government of Ukraine launched its “Anti-Terrorist Operation” in the spring of 2014.

That war, which Ukraine continues to wage today with U.S.-NATO funds and weaponry, has claimed more than 10,000 lives.

Dutch prosecutor Fred Westerbeke said that, while the suspects did not actually fire the missile at MH17, they are “just as punishable as the person who committed the crime.” He claimed that the accused anti-fascists obtained a BUK surface-to-air missile “with the goal to shoot a plane.”

Not mentioned was the [murderous Ukrainian air attack](#) on the capital of Lugansk on June 3, 2014, which targeted government and civilian buildings and killed at least 8 people.

The trial of the four anti-fascists is scheduled to begin March 9, 2020, in the Netherlands. They are to be tried in absentia if they are not captured or do not surrender.

Malaysia says ‘no proof’

[Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad](#) immediately rejected the indictment, saying there was “no proof” of Russia’s involvement. Russia has flatly denied the charges.

“We are very unhappy because from the very beginning, it became a political issue on how to accuse Russia of the wrongdoing,” Mohamad told reporters. “Even before they examined the debris, they already said Russia [was responsible]. So it is very difficult for us to accept that.”

In a statement, the [People’s Militia of the Donetsk People’s Republic](#) declared: “In 2014, there were no BUK surface-to-air missile systems in service in the DPR army,

as there are no such systems in service now. The militia could not be involved in the Boeing crash in Donbass.”

The so-called “investigation” in 2014 was marred by Ukraine delaying investigators from reaching the crash site, despite repeated pleas and guarantees of safe passage from Donetsk officials. Later, when the Organization for Security and Co-operation



in Europe investigators finally reached the site, Ukrainian military forces shelled the area, forcing them to flee.

Many questions were raised at the time about who actually had access to weapons that could down a passenger plane, and why the plane was directed to fly over a war zone in the first place.

How long was Washington — the real power behind the JIT — waiting to pull the trigger on these charges over a plane crash that happened nearly five years ago?

On the same day, June 19, the Contact Group on the Minsk ceasefire agreements between the Donbass republics and Ukraine [met for the first time](#) since the election of new Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. At the meeting, Donetsk and Lugansk presented a proposal for direct negotiations with Kiev to ease the economic blockade.

Was this a way for the U.S. and its European allies to ensure that there is no possibility of a deal to end the war or ease the blockade of Donetsk and Lugansk, or lessen tensions between Ukraine and Russia?

The MH17 frame-up is also a convenient way to ratchet up the demonization of Russia to justify further military buildup in Europe and continued economic sanctions against Moscow.

It seems that the long-suffering families of the MH17 victims are being treated as pawns in the Western imperialists' propaganda campaign against Russia — and to allow Ukraine to continue killing civilians in Donbass.



New York action demands freedom for Moldovan activist

written by Struggle - La Lucha

September 30, 2019

On June 13, a delegation from the [Committee to Free Pavel Grigorchuk](#) brought a letter to the Moldovan Mission to the United Nations in New York, urging the release of the imprisoned anti-fascist activist and drawing attention to grave human rights violations at Detention Center PU-13 in Moldova's capital city, Chisinau.

The delegates attempted to deliver the letter, addressed to the new government of

Moldova, to Ambassador Victor Moraru, Moldova's permanent representative to the U.N. However, the staff at the mission refused to open the door to receive the letter. Delegates know they were expected — they were told so by a U.S. federal agent dispatched to monitor their visit.

Ambassador Moraru is an appointee of the old regime of the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM), dominated by oligarch Vlad Plahotniuc and long a recipient of U.S. support. This may explain his staff's refusal to accept the letter. In the end, delegates left an envelope containing the letter and the [International Appeal for Pavel Grigorchuk](#) outside the door of the mission.

Despite steady rain, the delegates stayed outside the mission. They held signs, distributed copies of the appeal to passersby, and chanted, "Plahotniuc says get back! We say fight back! Free Grigorchuk now!" and "Trump, Plahotniuc, you should know, your prison walls have got to go!"

They also called for freedom for U.S. political prisoners like Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier and Chelsea Manning.

The solidarity action received extensive coverage in the Moldovan media.

