

Struggle for unity: the secret of Cuba's success

written by Struggle - La Lucha
April 14, 2019



Cheryl LaBash. SLL photo by Greg Butterfield

Talk given by Cheryl LaBash at the “Unity for Socialism and Revolution” conference in Los Angeles on March 16.

The U.S. blockade was imposed on Cuba in 1960, just after the revolution, to try and starve the people of Cuba into submission, into selling their sovereignty and going back to capitalism. But the Cuban people have been absolutely resolute. They've refused.

They've beaten back military attacks. They've withstood virtual starvation. They found a way to develop medicines, so that the blockade doesn't impact the health

care of the people of Cuba.

I think everybody knows someone who has diabetes. It's very common. We know people who've had amputations because of it. Cuba has a medicine and a treatment that prevents 70 percent of diabetic foot amputations. But it's not used here in the U.S.

Cuba has a vaccine that very successfully treats lung cancer. It prevents the growth of the tumor and extends the life and the quality of life for people who have lung cancer. It's being studied in Buffalo, N.Y., at the Roswell Park Institute. But again, it's not available to people in the U.S., at least not yet.

We have an internationalist responsibility to fight against the blockade. It's the same kind of blockade that U.S. imperialism is putting on Venezuela. It's the same kind of unilateral sanctions put on Syria and Iran. The U.S. government uses the fact that the dollar is the international currency for trade to damage the economies of people who want to have sovereignty in their own countries.

There's a question I think that we all have, because we're here fighting for unity, for socialism, for revolution in this country. How is it that Cuba has survived? How have they held up over these past 60 years? What's the secret?

The Cubans will tell you that the secret is unity. Finding what you can agree on in principle, and putting secondary issues aside.

Cuba just approved a new constitution. The new constitution updates the one written in 1976 to reflect the development of Cuban society. And part of the discussion on that constitution was about changing the definition of a marriage, from between a man and a woman to between two people. Marriage in Cuba doesn't carry any special material benefit like it does in the U.S. where, for example, an unmarried partner can be prevented from visiting a loved one in a hospital.

Now, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people have equal rights in Cuba. The socialist medical system even includes gender-reassignment surgery free of charge.

By upending capitalist relations that thrive and profit from prejudice and divisions, Cuba has advanced in 60 short years. Cuba's educational campaign in unions, among educators, has lifted consciousness. The slogan for Cuba's national celebration of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia — to be celebrated for the 12th year — is "I'm included!"

The concept is "everybody in, nobody out." Have everyone come together. Nobody is excluded. Not because of skin tone, gender, gender identity, sexuality or anything else. And that's what they've been working on. That kind of unity has been the key to the Cuban Revolution being able to withstand the tremendous hardships imposed by the U.S. economic, financial and commercial blockade.

It's something that's not easy to do, especially here in the U.S., where often organizations define themselves by their differences with others. It's okay to have differences. But we need to find what we agree on and find a way to work together. That's a priority. Every issue that's been raised here is everyone's issue.

To a large extent, I think that's what this conference is about: Talking about it, figuring it out and moving forward with that idea that we're going to find what we can agree on and go forward on that. And what we can't agree on, we'll wait and deal with that another day.

On to building a revolutionary working-class country where the most oppressed are the leaders!



Socialistas se unen por Venezuela y lanzan nuevo partido

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Los Ángeles

Durante un fin de semana repleto de eventos en esta extensa metrópolis del sur de California, mucha gente salió a las calles por la Venezuela bolivariana, asistieron a una conferencia informativa sobre el socialismo; y activistas revolucionarixs de todo Estados Unidos lanzaron una nueva organización para unir a lxs trabajadores y oprimidos en la lucha contra el capitalismo: el Partido Socialist Unity.

‘¿De quién son las calles? ¡Nuestras!’

El 16 de marzo fue un día de solidaridad internacional con el pueblo y el gobierno de Venezuela, quienes continúan resistiendo las sanciones económicas, el sabotaje político y las amenazas militares de Washington y sus aliados. Esa mañana, al menos 100 personas se reunieron en el Parque MacArthur en el corazón de un vecindario latinx para exigir “¡Manos Fuera de Venezuela!” Fue una protesta iniciada por Struggle for Socialism - La Lucha por el Socialismo - y patrocinada por una coalición de 17 organizaciones.

Mientras las familias de clase trabajadora entraban al parque o compraban a los muchos vendedores que bordeaban las calles, fueron recibidas por manifestantes que portaban pancartas y carteles brillantes que exigían ¡No guerra contra Venezuela: dinero para empleos, escuelas, atención médica y vivienda! y ¡Presidente Maduro: Te defenderemos!

Se entregaron hojas informativas en español e inglés a lxs transeúntes, describiendo el trabajo que ha realizado Venezuela bolivariana para sacar al pueblo de la pobreza y contrastando al presidente Nicolás Maduro, ex conductor de autobuses y organizador sindical, con el multimillonario supremacista blanco Donald Trump.

En Venezuela, “las masas mismas eligieron democráticamente a su líder,” declaró la Secretaria General de BAYAN USA, Nikole Cababa, en un mitin de apertura. “Pero,

lo que es más importante, han optado por oponerse a la intervención de los Estados Unidos.”

Gritando “¡No más sangre por petróleo!” y “¿De quién son las calles? ¡Nuestras!” lxs manifestantes tomaron los carriles de tránsito alrededor del parque mientras marchaban hacia la oficina del Centro Centroamericano de Recursos (CARECEN-LA) para un breve mitin de cierre.

Lizz Toledo de Atlanta le dijo a Struggle-La Lucha: “Queremos que Maduro y el pueblo de Venezuela sepan que estamos con ellos, y continuaremos luchando aquí, no solo por su sustento sino también por nuestro bienestar, porque tenemos el mismo enemigo.”

‘Reforcemos nuestra clase, no la derribemos’

Posteriormente, lxs organizadores invitaron a lxs manifestantes a asistir a la conferencia titulada “Unidad por el socialismo y la revolución.” Banderas de Venezuela, Cuba, Puerto Rico y Palestina decoraron el área de oradores, junto con la bandera roja de la URSS socialista, la bandera de liberación LGBTQ2S y otras. Voluntarixs sirvieron chili vegetariano casero.

La conferencia, organizada por Struggle-La Lucha, abordó los siguientes tópicos: “Luchando contra el capitalismo global,” “Luchando por el socialismo” y “Solidaridad global.” Zola Fish, orgullosa miembro de la Nación Choctaw de Oklahoma y del Comité de Defensa de Leonard Peltier en San Diego, abrió la conferencia recordando a todxs que se llevaba a cabo en tierras robadas a las naciones originarias. Fish dedicó la reunión a mujeres indígenas y la lucha por mujeres, niñas y personas de dos espíritus asesinadas y desaparecidas (MMIWG2S).

John Parker de Struggle-La Lucha marcó la pauta. Al revisar la actual crisis económica capitalista global y las guerras imperialistas, Parker declaró: “No puedes

llamarte socialista si ayudas a habilitar la guerra de los Estados Unidos. Si te llamas socialista, significa que estás luchando para acabar con el capitalismo, un sistema que se beneficia de la miseria y la guerra.

“Muchas de nuestras diferentes organizaciones se enfrentan a ataques por el estado,” continuó Parker, “y por instituciones y universidades estatales que intentan encontrar todo tipo de formas de negar la ciencia del socialismo y la clase que lo llevará a buen término. Intentan quitar la cuestión de clase de todas las demás preguntas y hacernos culpar a los demás, no a nuestro enemigo de clase.

“Destruir la unidad de nuestra clase trabajadora es un peligro para toda nuestra clase. Debemos reforzar nuestra clase, no derribarla. Debemos educar, no eliminar, a nuestra familia del pueblo trabajador.

“No toleramos la misoginia ni el fanatismo anti-LGBTQ2S, no toleramos el racismo y no toleramos ninguna ideología que enfrenta a un sector de nuestra clase contra otro,” concluyó Parker. “Ninguna opresión debe ser enfrentada contra otra por el beneficio del oportunismo sin principios.”

“No se necesita una invitación a la revolución”

Otrxs oradores abordaron la lucha por los derechos de lxs migrantes y las caravanas de refugiadx centroamericanos en la frontera, las huelgas magisteriales en Los Ángeles y otras partes del país, la lucha contra el terror policial y en solidaridad con lxs prisioneros, la lucha contra la destrucción del medio ambiente por parte del capitalismo y otros temas.

Gloria Verdieu de San Diego ofreció una charla inspiradora sobre la vida y la lucha del prisionero político Mumia Abu-Jamal. Otro sandieguino, Benjamín Prado de Unión del Barrio, habló sobre el trabajo de esta organización que representa a la comunidad chicano-mexicana en California: “Nuestra lucha es organizar a nuestro

pueblo, recuperar nuestra tierra y construir una sociedad socialista en sostenibilidad con la Madre Tierra.”

La revolucionaria puertorriqueña Berta Joubert-Ceci describió la toma de control de la economía de la nación isleña por parte de una junta de control financiero impuesta por Estados Unidos como un “experimento de laboratorio [para] un nuevo tipo de dictadura y modelo económico.” Hablando por teleconferencia, Mahtowin Munroe de United American Indians de Nueva Inglaterra habló sobre la importancia de las luchas indígenas y la descolonización en la lucha por el socialismo. El activista laboral Andre Powell enfatizó la importancia de tener una comprensión marxista de la lucha de lesbianas, gays, bisexuales, transgéneros, queer y dos espíritus.

Jesús Rodríguez, editor de la Tribuna del Orinoco y ex diplomático venezolano, habló brevemente por internet desde Caracas. El reciente ataque de Estados Unidos a la red eléctrica de Venezuela es comparable solo en gravedad al sabotaje del petróleo de 2002-2003, dijo. Lamentablemente, la presentación de Rodríguez se vio interrumpida por problemas de conexión derivados del sabotaje eléctrico.

Cheryl LaBash, de Struggle-La Lucha, describió que la clave del avance de los 60 años de resistencia de Cuba al imperialismo estadounidense es la unidad. Cuba se esfuerza por construir la unidad socialista entre lxs trabajadores, como lo demuestran las recientes discusiones en todo el país que condujeron a la votación sobre la adopción de su nueva constitución. Otrxs oradores hablaron sobre la solidaridad con el magisterio brasileño, Filipinas, China socialista, Corea Popular, Vietnam, y la lucha antifascista en Ucrania y Donbass.

La conferencia recibió varios saludos internacionales de organizaciones obreras y antiimperialistas desde Brasil hasta Alemania, Rusia y las repúblicas de Donbass.

Las maravillosas actuaciones culturales fueron un punto culminante, incluyendo a lxs poetas Irene Sánchez y Matt Sedillo, y el poeta y baterista de Conga Julio

Rodríguez quien interpretó “Invitación a la revolución”: “No necesitamos una invitación a la revolución.” Todxs son bienvenidos a trabajar por una solución.”

Lxs asistentes a la conferencia votaron por unanimidad enviar un mensaje de solidaridad a la exiliada palestina Rasmieh Odeh, cuya libertad para viajar y hablar en eventos políticos ha sido atacada por el gobierno alemán bajo la presión de Estados Unidos e Israel.

El evento concluyó con una presentación y discusión especial liderada por Clarence Thomas, líder jubilado del International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) y cofundador del movimiento Million Worker March, quien habló sobre sus experiencias en la lucha de la clase trabajadora, desde la huelga de 1968-1969 en el San Francisco State College dirigida por estudiantes negros, al boicot de la ILWU contra el apartheid de Sudáfrica.

“La naturaleza de una huelga es como una pequeña revolución,” dijo Thomas. “Lxs trabajadores están obligados a desarrollar estrategias y tácticas. Las huelgas, como las revoluciones, pueden llevar a derrotas y reveses. También pueden conducir a tremendas victorias.”

Se funda el Partido Socialist Unity

El 17 de marzo, trabajadorxs de muchas partes de los EUA, incluidos negrxs, latinoamericanxs, asiáticxs y del Pacífico, indígenas, mujeres, géneros oprimidos y trabajadores LGBTQ2S, se reunieron para fundar una nueva organización en la lucha contra el capitalismo: el Partido Socialist Unity.

Juntos, el grupo ya publica un periódico quincenal, un sitio web y enlaces de noticias diarias más una transmisión de radio mensual. Encuentre archivos y más información en Struggle-La-Lucha.org. Síguenos en Facebook y Twitter. Si le gusta lo que estamos haciendo, por favor envíe una donación.



Defending socialist achievements in Asia

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 14, 2019

Talk given by Stephen Millies at the “Unity for Socialism and Revolution” conference in Los Angeles on March 16.

Seventy years ago — on Oct. 1, 1949 — Mao Zedong declared “China has stood up!”

The People’s Republic of China was born. A quarter of humanity had liberated itself from imperialist enslavement.

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 had opened the door to oppressed people. The socialist revolutions in East Asia — China, Korea, Vietnam and Laos — smashed through it.

This year also marks a very different and cruel anniversary. Thirty years ago, the wave of counterrevolutions began, terrible setbacks that overthrew the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and ultimately the Soviet Union.

This immense tragedy was a greater defeat for workers and oppressed people everywhere than Hitler's triumph over the German working class. The Ethiopian Revolution and the socialist government in South Yemen were swept away as well.

We still have five countries building socialism: the People's Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Cuba and Laos.

Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution has also declared independence from Wall Street. It's defeating the CIA's sabotage of its electrical system.

Over 1.5 billion people live in these countries. Those who are not willing to defend these revolutions against the Pentagon will be incapable of forging new victories.

Unity needed against the oppressor

More than ever, we need unity against the oppressor. Unity like the People's Republic of China offering to help rebuild Venezuela's electrical grid. Like the unity of Cuban medical volunteers helping people and saving lives in Venezuela and dozens of other countries.

We need the unity symbolized by Comrade Kim Jong Un traveling by train from socialist Korea through the People's Republic of China to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Trump had to meet Comrade Kim Jong Un in Hanoi, where U.S. planes had dropped napalm bombs. The U.S. empire killed millions of people but was ultimately defeated by the Vietnamese and Laotian people.

The happiest day in my life was when a Vietnamese tank broke down the gate of the U.S. Embassy in what is now Ho Chi Minh City.

A revolution is growing in the Philippines. Never forget that Jim Crow Yankee imperialism massacred at least a million Filipino people over a century ago. At the same time, over a hundred Black people were lynched every year in the U.S.

We look forward to the victory of the Filipino Revolution and send greetings to our Comrade Jose Maria Sison.

Even before 1776, U.S. merchants and shipowners in ports like Marblehead and Salem dreamed of the vast markets in China and the rest of Asia.

President Franklin Roosevelt got the U.S. ruling class to enter World War II with the promise of taking over China. That's what the so-called American Century was all about.

Wall Street barbarously dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They incinerated hundreds of thousands of Japanese working people and Korean slave laborers, as well as children.

But they weren't able to stop the Chinese Revolution. The slogan of the McCarthyite anti-communist witch hunt was, "Who lost China?"

They lost China to the Chinese people, led by their communist party. The answer of the capitalist class was to start the Korean War less than nine months later.

Millions of Korean people were killed by the U.S. war machine. One massacre after another was conducted by U.S. officers.

But Gen. Douglas MacArthur was humiliatingly driven back by the Korean people and their Chinese allies. Among those who gave their lives was Mao Anying, a son of Mao Zedong.

The Pentagon never got over its defeats at the hands of Asian people. A few days

ago, a CIA-organized gang brazenly attacked the embassy of People's Korea in Spain.

It was the CIA that organized a coup in Indonesia 50 years ago that killed over a million people, including hundreds of thousands of members of the communist party — the PKI.

Capitalism still predominant

Many changes have occurred in China and Vietnam. All the countries building socialism have been forced to deal with the capitalist world market.

Even Lenin and the Bolsheviks were forced to do so during the period of the New Economic Program. That's because capitalism is still the world's predominant mode of production.

Good communists and good revolutionaries can disagree on the class character of China. But all of us will fight in unity any U.S. attacks on the People's Republic of China.

Despite many backward steps, we don't believe a counterrevolution has triumphed in China.

Foreign capital and hundreds of Chinese billionaires exploit millions of Chinese workers. The rich in China may have all the limousines, but they don't control the People's Liberation Army.

It's because the 90-million-member strong Chinese Communist Party controls the commanding heights of the economy that industrial production has doubled in the last decade.

Even Forbes magazine admitted that Chinese wages have risen to match that of

many European countries.

Chinese mills poured over 900 million tons of steel last year, almost 11 times the U.S. total. And Chinese auto plants made over 28 million vehicles.

China has built more miles of high-speed rail than the rest of the world combined. The real green new deal is being carried out in China.

Meanwhile, the capitalist U.S., Western Europe and Japan have stagnated. Workers in all the developed capitalist countries have endured more and more austerity.

The capitalist media want us to blame China for this poverty. But it was GM that shut down nine of its 10 plants in Flint — not China.

China's impressive Belt and Road Initiative has given countries made poor by centuries of colonial enslavement an alternative to the robbers at the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

For 20 years, Zimbabwe has been under attack for taking back land that rightfully belongs to Africans. But China's trade and aid is helping Zimbabwe fight the credit and currency blockade imposed by the U.S. and Britain.

The threat of a new war in Asia is real. The U.S. rules the Pacific Ocean and views it like it's Lake Michigan. Hundreds of nuclear missiles are aimed at China and Korea.

Our job in the belly of the beast is to stop this war drive. U.S out of Asia!



50 years after Stonewall, the struggle for LGBTQ2S liberation continues

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 14, 2019

Talk given by Andre Powell at the “Unity for Socialism and Revolution” conference in Los Angeles on March 16.

This year marks 50 years since the Stonewall Rebellion. The rebellion was sparked by what would have been another routine raid on a gay bar in New York City. But the night of June 26, 1969, something different happened. The patrons of this bar — young transgenders, gay men and lesbians, Black, Latinx and white, pushed to the edge by endless police raids on their social gathering places — fought back in four nights of street battles.

This began the organizing of a tremendous movement inspired by the Black Liberation and Women’s Liberation movements, and taken note of by Black Panther

Party leader Huey Newton in August 1970. The rebellion is marked all over the world with celebrations of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirit pride.

Our community has made many achievements in beating back the institutional oppression from police and both federal and state governments. There has been a sea change in societal attitudes toward the LGBTQ2S community. Gay men have survived the brutal AIDS health crisis with tremendous support from our lesbian sisters, who themselves were battling their own health crisis with breast cancer.

Our community, however, remains under attack, as the right wing uses us as a rallying point. The attacks against the transgender community by laws and violence have reached alarming proportions.

In New York City, there are two Pride marches scheduled this year. The first is organized by Heritage of Pride, which in the last two decades has become so very commercialized by corporate sponsors and even features an LGBT police contingent. The second is called Reclaiming Pride and is led by more radical elements who opposed the corporate commercialization of the march and remind the community that Stonewall was a rebellion against police brutality.

A history of struggle

Stonewall marked the beginning of the modern LGBTQ2S rights movement. But it wasn't the first act of resistance.

In May 1897, Magnus Hirschfeld founded the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, a German organization specifically dedicated to gay emancipation. The committee's primary focus was the repeal of Paragraph 175, a provision of the German Criminal Code that criminalized homosexual acts between men.

Through its publications, along with public meetings and extensive speaking tours,

the committee sought to educate the general public on the issue of homosexuality while encouraging other gay people to join the struggle.

Hirschfield had amassed a tremendous amount of volumes of work and research on homosexuality over the years. These works were destroyed in the 1930s when Hitler and the Nazis came to power. In the Nazi concentration camps, Hitler exterminated an estimated 250,000 gays. They were forced to wear the pink triangle on their clothing to signify they were gay.

“The Gay Question: A Marxist Appraisal” was written by author Bob McCubbin and published in 1976, during the earliest years of the modern LGBTQ2S movement. (It was later republished under the title “The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression.”) It is the first and decades later remains the definitive historical materialist analysis of the development of LGBTQ2S oppression. This oppression is rooted in the development of class society.

The origin of LGBTQ2S oppression

Pre-class society reaches back many hundreds of thousands of years, when the early human societies were structured on a matrilineal basis and tribal organization centered around mothers and their children. Over time, the development of technology to the level where more material wealth could be produced than was immediately needed for the survival of the tribe brought a fundamental change in human relations.

It was on the basis of this surplus accumulation of material wealth that classes arose. Due to changes in material conditions, men at the top of the new societal hierarchy replaced the egalitarianism of communal society. The struggle against the matrilineal organization of society was over the question of the lineage of children. Private property-oriented men wanted their wealth to go to their own children. This guarantee could only come about by the establishment of patrilineal descent.

With this change, emotions and sexual feelings came under harsh social class scrutiny, with stringent sexual prohibitions. Sexuality in general assumed a negative social significance it never had before. Free expression of sexuality was no longer compatible with the new, rigid limits of the male-dominated family structure. This made homosexuality a social and political issue in class society in a way it had never been before.

But when we take a look at societies built on socialist principles, we see that they lay the basis for honoring and respecting the contributions of every individual. So the elimination of LGBTQ2S oppression, I firmly believe, will come about through the elimination of capitalism and its replacement with socialism, a system meant to value people as they are and to meet people's needs.

SLL photo by Greg Butterfield



‘U.S. export of fascist violence finds

its way home'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 14, 2019

Talk given by Greg Butterfield at the "Unity for Socialism and Revolution" conference in Los Angeles on March 16.

Last October, a few members of an armed white supremacist group called the Rise Above Movement were arrested in California. This group participated in the violence in Charlottesville that led up to the murder of Heather Heyer on August 12, 2017. According to their FBI rap sheet, these racist goons later received training from the fascist Azov Battalion of Ukraine.

What's most important to know about the Azov Battalion is that it is an official part of the National Guard under the Interior Ministry of Ukraine. It's a recognized part of the state. Azov is one of several neo-Nazi battalions that fight in Ukraine's war against the anti-fascist Donbass republics of Donetsk and Lugansk — a war that has cost more than 13,000 lives since 2014, according to the United Nations.

Azov is a particularly notorious branch of Ukraine's thriving fascist movement. The group openly uses neo-Nazi flags and symbols. Its members and supporters have attacked, and in some cases killed, anti-fascists, communists, Roma, Vietnamese and other minority nationalities, women and LGBTQ2S people, as well as members of rival fascist gangs.

The government that nurtures Azov came to power five years ago through a coup carried out with the aid of the U.S. government — much like the coup the U.S. is trying to carry out today in Venezuela. Back then a Democrat was in the White House, today a Republican is. Otherwise there's not much difference.

The U.S. Congress passed a measure that was supposed to block U.S. military aid

from reaching Azov. It's completely phony. Troops from the U.S. and other NATO countries routinely train and arm the fascist battalions alongside the regular army in Ukraine. Azov was formally integrated into the National Guard to skirt this toothless law.

When U.S. white supremacists get training from Ukrainian Nazis, it's not an isolated case of blowback. It's just one step removed from direct training by the Pentagon.

The truth is, fascists from all over Europe and the U.S. have flocked to Ukraine over the past five years, and many have not only received training, but have actually joined the war against Donbass as volunteers or paid mercenaries.

When Western anti-fascists volunteer to fight beside the Donbass republics, their governments treat them as terrorists. The neo-Nazis face no such persecution, because they are fighting on "right side," according to Washington and the European imperialists. It doesn't take much imagination to see what will happen if Trump succeeds in igniting armed conflict inside Venezuela.

The U.S. has carried out many coups and interventions against sovereign countries by unleashing fascists and similar ultraright forces. Many people know the example of Chile. More recently, there was Libya and Syria. In Syria, the imperialists failed, but at the cost of enormous destruction and human suffering that continues today.

The U.S. export of and support for fascist violence abroad, to maintain its empire of profits, inevitably finds its way back home. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said it best when talking about the Vietnam War: the bombs dropped on other countries also explode here.

There are many more examples, like the Defense Department's 1033 Program, which transfers billions of dollars in military hardware to local police departments free of charge, or the way racist cops that terrorize Black and Latinx communities

get training from U.S.-funded Israeli occupation forces schooled in the suppression of Palestinians.

Something essential has long been missing from the work of the anti-war, anti-imperialist left in this country, and this is a sustained effort to link the struggles of workers and communities in the U.S. with the struggle against wars, coups and sanctions. Let's resolve to change that, starting today — for the people Venezuela, Donbass, the Philippines and for ourselves too.



Socialists unite for Venezuela, launch new party

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 14, 2019

Los Angeles — During an event-packed weekend in this sprawling Southern California metropolis, people took to the streets for Bolivarian Venezuela, attended an informative conference on socialism, and revolutionary activists from across the U.S. launched a new organization to unite workers and oppressed people in the

struggle against capitalism: the Socialist Unity Party.

'Whose streets? Our streets!'

March 16 was a day of international solidarity with the people and government of Venezuela, who continue to resist economic sanctions, political sabotage and military threats from Washington and its allies. That morning, at least 100 people gathered at MacArthur Park in the heart of a Latinx neighborhood to demand "Hands Off Venezuela!" — a protest initiated by Struggle for Socialism-La Lucha por el Socialismo and sponsored by a coalition of 17 organizations.

As working-class families streamed into the park or shopped among the many vendors lining the streets, they were greeted by protesters carrying bright banners and signs demanding "No war on Venezuela — Money for jobs, schools, healthcare and housing," and "President Maduro: We've got your back!"

Fact sheets in Spanish and English were handed out to passersby, describing the work that Bolivarian Venezuela has done to lift people out of poverty and contrasting President Nicolas Maduro — a former bus operator and union organizer — with billionaire white supremacist Donald Trump.

In Venezuela, "The masses themselves democratically elected their leader," declared BAYAN USA General Secretary Nikole Cababa at an opening rally. "But more important, they have chosen to stand up against U.S. intervention."

Chanting "No blood for oil — again!" and "Whose streets? Our streets!" protesters seized traffic lanes around the park as they marched toward the office of the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN-LA) for a brief closing rally.

Lizz Toledo from Atlanta told Struggle-La Lucha: "We want Maduro and the people of Venezuela to know that we're with them, and we'll continue to fight here, not only for their livelihood but for our well-being, because we have the same enemy."

‘Build our class up, not tear it down’

Afterward, organizers invited protesters inside to attend the conference titled “Unity for Socialism and Revolution.” Flags of Venezuela, Cuba, Puerto Rico and Palestine decorated the speakers’ area, along with the red flag of the socialist USSR, the LGBTQ2S liberation flag and others. Volunteers dished up homemade vegetarian chili.

The conference, organized by Struggle-La Lucha, took up “Fighting Global Capitalism,” “Fighting for Socialism” and “Global Solidarity.” Zola Fish, proud member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee in San Diego, opened the conference by reminding everyone that it took place on stolen land. Fish dedicated the meeting to Indigenous women and the fight for Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S).

Struggle-La Lucha’s John Parker set the tone. Reviewing the ongoing global capitalist economic crisis and imperialist wars, Parker declared, “You can’t call yourself a socialist if you help enable U.S. war. If you call yourself a socialist, it means you’re fighting to end capitalism, a system that profits off misery and war.

“Many of our different organizations are faced with attacks from the state,” Parker continued, “and from state institutions and universities that try to find every kind of way to negate the science of socialism and the class that will bring it to fruition. They try to take the class question out of all other questions and have us blame each other, not our class enemy.

“Destroying the unity of our working class is a danger to all of our class. We must build our class up, not tear it down. We must educate, not eliminate, our family of working people.

“We don’t tolerate misogyny or anti-LGBTQ2S bigotry, we don’t tolerate racism, and we don’t tolerate any ideology that pits one sector of our class against another,” Parker concluded. “No oppression should be pitted against another for the sake of unprincipled opportunism.”

‘Don’t need an invitation to revolution’

Other speakers took up the struggles for migrant rights and the Central American refugee caravans at the border, the strikes by teachers in Los Angeles and other parts of the country, the struggle against police terror and in solidarity with prisoners, fighting capitalism’s destruction of the environment and other issues.

Gloria Verdieu of San Diego gave an inspiring talk on the life and struggle of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Another San Diegan, Benjamín Prado of Unión del Barrio, spoke about the work of this organization, which represents the Chicano-Mexicano community in California: “Our struggle is to organize our people, regain our land, and build a socialist society in sustainability with Mother Earth.”

Puerto Rican revolutionary Berta Joubert-Ceci described the takeover of the island nation’s economy by a U.S.-imposed financial control board as a “laboratory experiment [for] a new kind of dictatorship and economic model.” Speaking by teleconference, Mahtowin Munro of United American Indians of New England talked about the importance of Indigenous struggles and decolonization in the struggle for socialism. Labor activist Andre Powell emphasized the importance of having a Marxist understanding of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirit struggle.

Jesús Rodríguez, editor of Orinoco Tribune and former Venezuelan diplomat, spoke briefly by internet from Caracas. The recent U.S. attack on Venezuela’s electrical grid is comparable only to the oil sabotage of 2002-2003 in severity, he said. Unfortunately, Rodríguez’s presentation was cut short by connection problems

resulting from the electrical sabotage.

Struggle-La Lucha's Cheryl LaBash described the key to Cuba's 60 years of resistance to U.S. imperialism is moving forward through unity, as demonstrated by the recent country-wide discussions leading up to the vote adopting its new constitution. Other speakers took up solidarity with Brazilian teachers, the Philippines, socialist China, People's Korea and Vietnam, and the anti-fascist struggle in Ukraine and Donbass.

A number of international greetings were sent to the conference from workers' and anti-imperialist organizations from Brazil to Germany, Russia and the Donbass republics.

Wonderful cultural performances were a highlight, including poets Irene Sanchez and Matt Sedillo, and Conga Poet Julio Rodriguez, who performed "Invitation to the Revolution": "We don't need an invitation to the revolution. All are welcome to work for a solution."

Conference-goers voted unanimously to send a message of solidarity to exiled Palestinian activist Rasmeah Odeh, whose freedom to travel and speak at political events has come under attack by the German government through pressure from the U.S. and Israel.

The event concluded with a special presentation and discussion led by Clarence Thomas, a retired leader of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and co-founder of the Million Worker March movement, who spoke about his experiences in the working-class struggle, from the 1968-1969 San Francisco State College strike led by Black students to the ILWU's boycott of apartheid South Africa.



“The nature of a strike is like a small revolution,” Thomas said. “Workers are compelled to develop strategies and tactics. Strikes, like revolutions, can lead to defeats and setbacks. They can also lead to tremendous victories.”

Socialist Unity Party founded

On March 17, workers from many parts of the U.S. — including Black, Latinx, Asian/Pacific, Indigenous, women, oppressed genders and LGBTQ2S workers — met to found a new organization in the fight against capitalism: the Socialist Unity Party.

Together, the group already publishes a bi-weekly newspaper, its website and daily news links plus a monthly radio broadcast. Find archives and more information at Struggle-La-Lucha.org. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter. If you like what we are doing, please donate.

SLL photos by Greg Butterfield

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