

'Strengthen international solidarity against all forms of fascism'

written by Struggle - La Lucha
May 10, 2019



Participants of the International Anti-Fascist Forum visited Saur-Mogila, site of strategic battles for the liberation on Donbass during World War II and again in 2014 during the war with Ukraine.

Photo by Stanislav Retinsky / KPDPR

Resolution of the International Anti-Fascist Forum

Donetsk, May 10, 2019

In February 2014, a coup d'état took place in Ukraine. Nationalist forces came to power, for whom fascism became their state ideology.

The residents of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine did not recognize the new government and its ideology.

On April 7, 2014, a congress of representatives of territorial communities, political parties and public organizations of the Donetsk region proclaimed the Act on the Establishment of the Donetsk People's Republic and adopted the Declaration of Sovereignty.

On April 14, 2014, the illegitimate Kiev regime launched a full-scale war against the people of Donbass, who had chosen the path of self-determination. The war led to thousands of civilian casualties in the region and large-scale destruction of production facilities and infrastructure.

The people's republics of Donbass have been living in incessant hostilities for more than five years. Systematic violations of the truce by the Ukrainian side indicate that Kiev and the Western imperialists behind it are not interested in a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

With the aggravation of the general crisis of world capitalism, the bourgeoisie applies the most stringent measures in the struggle against the working people, up to and including the use of fascist methods. Denying the masses even the minimum legal guarantees of protest against capitalist exploitation, the workers' right to fight for their economic and political interests, the bourgeoisie proceeds to openly suppress the protest movement by armed force.

It is necessary to resist all attempts to rehabilitate fascism. It is also necessary to prevent its political and ideological revenge in the modern world!

Only together will we, the working people of the whole world, be able to counter the

fascist threat.

The participants in the International Anti-Fascist Forum call upon the workers of all countries:

- to strengthen international solidarity in the fight against all forms of fascism;
- for all progressive forces of the world to cooperate in support of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics;
- for the recognition of the will of the people of Donbass to create peaceful people's republics;
- for the creation of an international tribunal to bring to justice the military and political criminals of Ukraine.

We, the participants in the International Anti-Fascist Forum, demand:

- from the Ukrainian authorities – to stop the war in Donbass, to begin negotiations with the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics on the establishment of peaceful relations;
- from the European Union and the United States – to stop funding the military spending of the Ukrainian government and supplying arms to it;
- from the governments and parliaments of all states – to recognize the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics as sovereign states, being guided by the U.N. Charter, the basic principles of international law, the right of peoples to self-determination, respecting the will of the people of Donbass confirmed in a national referendum; to establish a peaceful, friendly and mutually beneficial relationship with them.

No to the war in Donbass! Yes to the self-determination of the DPR and the LPR!

Long live international anti-fascist solidarity!

Signers:

1. Communist Party of the Donetsk People's Republic (KPDPR)
2. Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain (PCPE)
3. New Communist Party of Britain (NCP)
4. Socialist Labor Party of Croatia
5. French Communist Party (City Committee of the PCP Riez, City Committee of the PCF Venissieux, Regional Committee of PCF Pas de Calais)
6. Tatyana Desyatova, Coordinator of the Interbrigade of the Moscow Communist Party City Committee
7. Renate Koppé, member of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party (DKP)
8. Okay Desprem, Turkish journalist and writer, representative of the Labor Party (EMEP)
9. Solidarity with Novorossia and Anti-fascists of Ukraine (USA)
10. Struggle for Socialism - La Lucha por el Socialismo (USA)
11. Anti-fascist organization "Save Donbass" (Greece)
12. "Anti-Nazi Donbass" Committee (Rome, Italy)
13. "Anti-Fascist Ukraine" Committee (Bologna, Italy)
14. Donbass Association (Sweden)

The resolution is [available in several languages](#).



'Voice of Donbass residents must be heard'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 10, 2019

Activists anywhere in the world would quickly recognize Svetlana Licht and Denis Levin, if not by their names, then by their character. They are the kind of extraordinary worker-organizers who exist wherever a fierce struggle rages: courageous, determined, and able to adapt and continue their revolutionary work no matter how challenging the circumstances.

In early 2014, Licht and Levin were members of the Marxist organization Borotba (Struggle) in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine. Forced to leave the city after the U.S.-backed Maidan coup unleashed fascist terror on the streets, they travelled to Kharkov, Ukraine's second-largest city, and helped to organize the anti-fascist protest movement there.

Weeks after the massacre of nearly 50 anti-fascists in Odessa on May 2, 2014, armed



neo-Nazis attempted to kidnap Levin after a rally. Quick action by Licht and the intervention of protesters and passersby managed to drive them off.

The duo then went to Licht's native city of Donetsk, capital of the recently declared Donetsk People's Republic. They lived through some of the worst days of the Ukrainian military siege of the Donbass region in the summer of 2014 before going to Simferopol, Crimea, where several Borotba members and other Ukrainian political exiles sought refuge.

Licht and Levin returned to Donetsk in 2015, where they have been organizing ever since. Struggle-La Lucha spoke to the communist organizers in conjunction with the fifth anniversary of the coup and the beginning of the war.

Struggle - La Lucha: It's been five years since you were forced to leave Kiev after the Maidan coup. As activists in political exile, what is your situation today?

Denis Levin: We were forced to live in Crimea for a year and a half just because we didn't have work in Donetsk. In many ways, the majority of people who fled Donbass in 2014 left not only because of the war, but also for economic reasons caused by the war. We returned to Donetsk at the end of 2015. For more than a year, I've been working as a welder for the Donetsk heating network, in one of the most bombed districts of Donetsk — the Kievsky district.

Being a refugee isn't easy, mainly because of the frequent problems with documents. If you flee from political persecution, from neo-Nazi threats to your life and health, you have no way to put your documents in order. But the hardest part isn't even

that. The most difficult thing for a political refugee, or even for a person who is apolitical but who fled from the war, is separation from loved ones. I haven't seen my mother, brothers and sister for five years, because I can't go to Ukraine, like many other political emigrants.

Many Borotba members can only afford to communicate with their relatives who remain in Ukraine through the internet. It's very difficult, especially if your relatives have any problems with their health or welfare. In addition, because of problems with documents, not everyone has the opportunity to go to Russia to arrange their lives there, or to try to find a better paying job.

Svetlana Licht: When we returned to Donetsk in 2015, it wasn't easy for us. The war and blockade by Ukraine hit the economy of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics hard; it was difficult to find work, especially work that could ensure a decent life. For some time I worked as a translator, translating articles from English, but the fees for such work are not very high.

I'm still glad that we returned to my hometown. I'm glad we no longer have to think about where to earn money to give to the landlord as soon as possible so that we will not be evicted from rental housing.

I think there is no point in despair, because my situation with Denis is better than that of many Donetsk residents. After all, thousands of people lost their homes, health, relatives and friends. Thousands of people are forced to live in terrible conditions because of the war, because the hostilities do not stop, even when we don't hear the explosions. In these circumstances it's very difficult to restore the housing stock, to rebuild destroyed schools and hospitals. That's why you should not give up — it will only please our enemies!

I think that the lives of political refugees from Ukraine are no different from the lives of people who, for example, are fleeing conscription into the army, or from the lives

of migrant workers who have never been interested in politics. Everyone has to survive in very cramped conditions, often without official documents, separated from family and friends.

SLL: What are your political activities now?

Denis: I can't say that our activities are particularly political, but rather enlightening. We continue to study philosophy and history in our philosophical circle. We began to make friends and communicate more with members of the Komsomol [Communist Youth League] of the DPR, to help them in their organizational work.

We began to produce political statements more often, because it's important to us that the position of the left of Donbass on anti-fascism, the attitude to the war, the status of women, the political blockade and everything that happens in the world, be heard. There are no comrades left in Ukraine who fully share our views on what is happening. There are different groups of people with left-wing views who agree with us in some ways, but not in others. Of course, it is dangerous for them to speak frankly about what we can say openly. It's necessary to be in solidarity with such people.

There are also a large number of left-liberals and even those who consider themselves Marxists, socialists and feminists who are categorically against our views and even support the war against the residents of Donbass. They are most often heard. We want to counter this. We demand they listen to the voice of the people in Donetsk.

Sveta: It's also important for me that our [Aurora Women's Club](#) takes an active part in all this work. The post-Soviet left movement is in a crisis because women are often not involved in organizing and developing programmatic documents.

Perhaps someone will think that I am wrong, but it seems to me that in the conditions we live in, organizing a Marxist circle, organizing a women's movement — this is already an important political step. The organization of systematic activity itself is an important experience for those who have never participated in anything like this. And we have a majority of people like this, both in the Marxist circle and in Aurora.

Now we are transforming everything in order to spread our ideas and involve as many people as possible in our activities. We try to speak in plain language and make our events, statements and discussions publicly accessible and understandable. Because many modern leftists speak bird language [in specialized terms not understood by most people], do not know how to answer difficult questions easily and quickly, while the right-wingers are faster to attract supporters with their primitive rhetoric.

SLL: How would you compare the situation of women and girls in Donetsk to what existed before the coup in 2014?

Sveta: If we consider the situation of women historically, then, like any other industrial region in the Soviet Union, the Donbass was a place of comprehensive emancipation of women. Industrialization and the restoration of industry after World War II required a huge number of skilled workers, and in this sense Soviet society did not look backward.

The problem is that many of the phenomena of domestic sexism were not overcome (for both objective and subjective reasons), and this eventually led to a serious conservative rollback after the fall of the Soviet Union in all former republics. This is particularly striking in Central Asia, where insufficient industrial development (and, accordingly, emancipation) led not only to extreme forms of nationalism and fundamentalism, but also patriarchy. But one cannot deny that in Russia or Ukraine, even in relatively developed economically and industrially regions, there has been

conservative backsliding, including in our country.

Obviously, the social and economic situation of Donetsk has been aggravated by the war and its consequences. But it seems to me that we should not despair, and we have hope. Many girls are now going to learn the industrial professions that we really need.

There are those who see their future only as housewives, because it offers hope for a more peaceful and stable life. There are those who don't even see any alternative to traditional roles of women and never thought about it. But the development of information technology isn't standing still. Girls themselves learn about many aspects and history of the women's movement through the internet, but the difficulty is that this happens on an individual basis. This is another reason why we created Aurora.

We have another problem. First World and Third Wave feminism — mainstream bourgeois feminism — is very distant and therefore incomprehensible to Donbass workers, so we've returned to the origins of our Marxist feminism, which can explain in understandable language the reasons for oppression and exploitation, especially oppression and exploitation of women. A critical study of modern trends makes it possible to enrich old-school Marxism.

I think Aurora has a great future and we have many challenges, so now we need to concentrate on using all our strength to effectively organize and implement our plans. We have no budget or sponsors, as many Ukrainian women's organizations do. But unlike in Ukraine, no one interferes with us, except for the war and economic blockade, which means that with a realistic approach, we'll be able to create a completely new, viable movement.

End of part 1



Ukraine: Borotba cautions on Zelensky, urges people to take streets May 1

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 10, 2019

On April 21, TV comedian Vladimir Zelensky won a stunning upset in Ukraine's presidential runoff election, a country where the U.S. helped to engineer an ultraright coup five years ago. Zelensky's victory over incumbent president and oligarch Petro Poroshenko was driven by popular disgust with the rise of the neofascist right, rampant privatization and austerity, and the brutal war against the Donbass republics of Donetsk and Lugansk.



The following analysis of the elections — and what comes next — was issued by Borotba (Struggle), a revolutionary Marxist organization banned in Ukraine since

2014, which continues to organize inside and outside the country. The statement was translated by Struggle-La Lucha's Greg Butterfield.

Political statement of the Borotba Union Council

April 23: The defeat of Poroshenko's regime in the April 21 elections was the logical outcome of a government based on neoliberal reforms and stunning nationalist propaganda. The people of Ukraine expressed their distrust of corrupt officials hiding behind patriotic rhetoric.

President Poroshenko built his campaign on interference in church affairs, trying to establish one state religion, with militaristic rhetoric, as well as with nationalist slogans in matters of language.

The pre-election slogan "Army, language, faith" found support from only 25 percent of voters. It should be noted that the result was the most crushing defeat of an incumbent president in the history of Ukraine. Even this modest result was achieved only by creating a society of fear, in the context of prohibition of left-wing political organizations, control over the media and the use of dirty political tricks.

All this gives the people of Ukraine optimism and confidence in the future.

Unfortunately, despite some improvement in the public atmosphere, Ukraine will have difficult times ahead. President-elect Vladimir Zelensky is only a comedian and actor in the views of ordinary people; but in fact he is a multimillionaire, one of the richest producers and an owner of offshore companies. He is a close friend and business partner of the oligarch Igor Kolomoisky, who is now in disgrace.

Zelensky is a compromise figure among some of the largest Ukrainian bourgeoisie. The oligarchs have long dreamed of a so-called "technical" president, who will have limited powers, against the background of strengthening the role of parliament. The oligarchs, fearing the strengthening of any one among them over the others, want to

make the parliamentary republic a kind of “Club for the Elect” which will establish a balance of interests.

There is a danger that, relying on colossal popular support and the expectation of change, President Zelensky will begin to carry out the most unpopular neoliberal reforms, for example, the sale of agricultural land, privatization of the gas transmission system and the privatization of state enterprises.

In this situation, there are no political forces and parties in the country that can resist the neoliberal course. The Communist Party and Borotba are in fact in a position of illegality.

In an atmosphere of renewal, many expect from President Zelensky the democratization of the political situation in the country, in particular:

- disarming of nationalist gangs and private armies;
- release of all political prisoners;
- de-Nazification of law enforcement agencies and the army;
- legalization of opposition organizations and parties outlawed by the previous leadership of the country.

Time will tell whether the new president will meet the expectations of the millions. However, despite the ban on the Borotba Union, despite intimidation by the special services and the threat of neo-Nazis, we will continue to fight for a free, socialist Ukraine!

We call on all honest people not to be silent!

We call on everyone who wants change to unite in autonomous groups and communicate!

We call on all those who are tired of nationalist propaganda to take to the streets on

May 1 under red flags!



Background to Sudan crisis: Who gets blame for deaths in Darfur?

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Protests continue in Sudan since a military junta overthrew the longtime al-Bashir government in early April. This article, originally published in 2007, provides important background on the role of imperialism in Sudan and the North African region.

A close look at the crisis in Sudan shows that the imperialist powers and especially the U.S. have active responsibility for the social turmoil and passive responsibility for an ecological disaster that is tantamount to genocide.

Yet on May 29, President George W. Bush, in trying to promote U.N. sanctions against Sudan, accused the Khartoum government of the “bombing, rape and murder of innocent civilians” and said, “The world has a responsibility to put an end to it.”

This charge against Sudan comes from the commander-in-chief of an armed force that is carrying out genocide, rape, murder and bombing in numbers far outweighing what even the U.S. State Department alleges were committed by the Sudanese government. Currently millions of civilians have been either tortured or murdered directly by the U.S. military in Iraq, Afghanistan and U.S. occupied Guantánamo.

In contrast to this direct U.S. role are the charges against Khartoum: that a proxy grouping working at the behest of the Sudanese government is engaged in the violence.

Bush went further in regards to the violence on the part of the Sudan government: “My administration has called these actions by their rightful name: genocide.”

The prime motivation for U.S. intervention into Sudan has everything to do with that country’s rich resources and oil reserves rivaling those of Saudi Arabia.

Bush, speaking on behalf of the U.S. ruling class, with its oil, financial and military interests in Africa and Western Asia, was ready to give any excuse that would allow the U.S. access to the old and newly discovered oil wealth in the region. He would like as much as possible to put an international cover on U.S. designs for the region. Charges of genocide help force the U.N. to do as it finally did in Iraq and in the

Balkans: help facilitate U.S. occupation there.

This is not the first time the Bush administration has tried to promote the charge of genocide against Sudan.

When former Secretary of State Colin Powell was used to level the “genocide” charge, a U.N. commission in 2005 investigating alleged atrocities said the Sudan government was not guilty of genocide. Many in the international community agreed with this U.N. commission.

What the U.N. did recently say last month about the crisis in Sudan, however, helps point the finger of genocide right back at the U.S. and other imperialist countries.

This June, the U.N. published an 18-month study by the U.N. Environmental Program (UNEP) that blamed environmental factors as the root causes of the violence in Sudan. It warned that inaction will spread violence well beyond Sudan’s borders.

The U.N. report found that the desert in northern Sudan has advanced southwards by 60 miles over the past 40 years and that rainfall in the area has dropped by 16-30 percent.

“It [the U.N. report] illustrates and demonstrates what is increasingly becoming a global concern,” said Achim Steiner, UNEP’s executive director. “It doesn’t take a genius to work out that as the desert moves southwards, there is a physical limit to what systems can sustain, and so you get one group displacing another.” (British Guardian)

The U.N. study also found that there could be a drop of up to 70 percent in crop yields, devastating areas from Senegal to Sudan.

Before rebel groupings attacked government forces in 2003, sparking the current

civil war in Sudan, the rains had diminished and the desert was growing by over a mile per year.

Why didn't the government of Sudan do more to avert this environmental crisis? One thing is for sure — British, French and U.S. interference in the affairs of Sudan had an extremely draining effect on its resources and ability to develop economically, let alone defend itself from natural disaster. Sanctions, such as those Bush is promoting, have been one of the means used to drain Sudan.

Sudan's colonial legacy

Sudan's problems can be traced to its colonial past. After 1916, when Britain militarily gained full control over the Sudan as its colony, British rule depended on creating conflict and dividing the Muslim north from the Christian or animist south. It left isolated and unnourished what were then thought to be unprofitable regions like Darfur.

In another words, the British Empire did not allow the creation of an infrastructure facilitating government assistance to the region. Like Darfur today, these regions contained people who were all Muslim and possibly harder to divide.

Despite current claims to the contrary by U.S.-based propagandists, who want to promote the idea that this is a war between "white Arabs and Black Christians," all the people in the Darfur region were and are people who look alike in terms of their dark skin and features. They are all Muslim.

The poverty and inequities facing Darfur have roots in the British Empire, as do the civil wars between the South and North of Sudan, whose combatants have migrated also to the Darfur region.

The more recent history of intervention by imperialist forces, especially the U.S., into Sudan should make everyone see through Bush's hypocritical talk.

The current situation with this spread of war from the South of Sudan to the Darfur region was exacerbated greatly by U.S. military and financial support of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in southern Sudan. The SPLA was the nucleus for the Sudanese Liberation Army now fighting in Darfur. Fueled by U.S. dollars, that war in the South helped drain Sudan's economy and discouraged the development of its oil resources.

The U.S. call for sanctions during a natural crisis has precedent. The senior Bush administration called for sanctions in March 1990, at exactly the same time a drought crisis occurred. Later, former President Bill Clinton pushed additional sanctions and went further by bombing Sudan in August 1998 and destroying its primary pharmaceutical plant.

The current sanctions by Bush Jr. hit 31 Sudanese companies, mainly companies that build and maintain Sudan's vital infrastructure, including agriculture and transportation and the development of its oil resources, which could help provide money to avert the effects of the drought.

The U.S.-led U.N. sanctions against Iraq starting in 1990 are estimated to have killed 1.5 million people, including a half-million children. What effect sanctions will have on one of the poorest countries in the world is yet to be seen.

In the 1990s, while U.S. aid fueled the civil war in the South of Sudan, many Christian and other religious charities also sent their dollars to support rebel forces against the Sudanese government.

Likewise, today, the Bush-endorsed Save Darfur Coalition, a grouping led by Christian and Zionist organizations with some Hollywood and even African-American members, supports U.S. military intervention in Darfur. In spite of the overwhelming evidence that U.S. sanctions seriously damage developing countries, these groups encourage sanctions against Sudan.

Is there a better solution for Sudan? The U.N. commissioned another report by the U.N. Millennium Project, which calculated that extreme poverty could be ended in the entire continent of Africa with \$189 billion. The supplemental appropriations passed by the U.S. Congress in May for the Iraq and Afghanistan occupations would cover most of that cost.

When the last G8 summit ended in Germany, the leaders of the imperialist NATO powers — including Britain and the U.S. — all agreed that climate problems on the African continent affecting Sudan existed and would continue to devastate more of the continent. Yet, they came up with no solutions.

Given that the U.S. and other imperialist countries continue to fuel the fire of natural disaster in Sudan while sitting on the very means to solve the situation, one could consider this a passive act of genocide against African people.



Prisoners of the Empire: Free Julian

Assange and Chelsea Manning!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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On April 11, British police dragged [WikiLeaks](#) founder Julian Assange out of the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, where he had lived and worked for nearly seven years, after the turncoat government of President Lenín Moreno revoked his political asylum.

A “bail jumping” charge used to arrest Assange was merely a pretext for the U.S.-ordered assault.

“The U.K. has no sovereignty! The U.K. must resist this attempt by the Trump administration!” Assange yelled out as he was removed from the embassy. [Only one TV camera was present](#) for the arrest — from the Russian RT news service. British and U.S. media, many of whom used WikiLeaks revelations when it suited them to do so, stayed conspicuously away.

As soon as Assange was in custody, the U.S. Justice Department unsealed its indictment of Assange and requested his extradition. The Trump administration charged him with helping Army whistleblower Chelsea Manning, who downloaded damning evidence of U.S. war crimes in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantánamo, and made it public through WikiLeaks.

The charges listed in the extradition request carry a maximum prison term of five years. But it is widely believed that once Assange is on U.S. soil, he will be charged with additional crimes under the Espionage Act — which carries punishments up to and including the death penalty. Legally, Britain could not extradite Assange if it knew he might face capital punishment.

[James Goodale](#), an attorney for the New York Times during the 1971 Pentagon

Papers case, called the indictment “a snare and a delusion” by the U.S. government to divert attention from what is really an attack on all journalists.

Meanwhile, Assange is being held in London’s maximum security Belmarsh Prison, [known as “Britain’s Guantánamo”](#) for its role following the Sept. 11, 2001, attack in New York. The overcrowded prison includes more than 100 people being held “indefinitely,” [according to a 2018 commission](#) that investigated conditions inside the facility.

Daily protests are being held outside Belmarsh demanding Assange’s release and no extradition to the U.S. Protests have also been held at U.S., British and Ecuadorian sites worldwide.

Exposing imperialist crimes

While the corporate media and Washington officials promote the lie that Assange [“hacked” Pentagon computers](#), the actual indictment only spells out that he helped Manning cover her digital tracks to avoid detection — something covered by the First Amendment right of journalists to protect their sources.

Manning, the heroic trans veteran who spent seven years in military prison under President Obama, was [thrown back in jail](#) in March when she refused to testify before a grand jury that was fishing for material to use against Assange. This was the tipoff that an attack on the WikiLeaks founder was fast approaching.

Manning spent [almost a month in solitary confinement](#) before protests finally won her release into the general population at the Truesdale Detention Center in Virginia on April 4. But she is still jailed and could be held up to 18 months.

For more than a decade, WikiLeaks has been a vital source for exposing U.S. and Western imperialist crimes against the peoples of the world and here at home. To give just one example, a leaked [Pentagon guidebook on “unconventional warfare”](#)

published by the site exposed some of the ways U.S.-dominated international bodies like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are used in these operations.

Just days after his detention, [Assange received](#) the European Parliament group European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) 2019 Award for Journalists, Whistleblowers and Defenders of the Right to Information.

WikiLeaks also published leaked emails from Hillary Clinton's 2016 election campaign that showed how Clinton's team conspired to steal primary election victories from Bernie Sanders. Enraged Democratic Party leaders tried to tie these exposures to the now-debunked "Russiagate" conspiracy theory and the Mueller investigation of President Donald Trump's alleged collaboration with the Russian government.

Since Assange's arrest, Wall Street hacks like Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York [continue pushing the lie](#) that he is a "Russian agent." [Hillary Clinton](#), who as secretary of state oversaw murderous regime change operations from Libya to Honduras, said that Assange must "answer for what he has done."

While campaigning for president, Trump was happy to use WikiLeaks' revelations for his own political gain. But that changed the moment he assumed power and his own regime's crimes might be exposed. Trump's CIA director, [Mike Pompeo](#), declared WikiLeaks an enemy of the U.S. "akin to a hostile foreign intelligence service," and the administration turned up the heat on Ecuador to hand over Assange.

Expressing the united contempt of the Trump regime and the Republican and Democratic establishment, Democratic [Sen. Joe Manchin told CNN](#) that Assange is "our property and we can get the facts and truth from him."

Manchin's arrogant statement revealed more than he intended. He and the capitalist

class he represents believe that not only Assange but all workers and oppressed people are their “property” and that it is their right to withhold the truth about their crimes from the people.



Worldwide solidarity

Assange's arrest and the threat of extradition have prompted protests and solidarity from progressive and revolutionary organizations worldwide, as well as whistleblowers, independent journalists, artists and political prisoners.

The people of Ecuador were especially outraged by the Moreno government's capitulation to U.S. imperialism. On April 16-17, protesters fought [running battles with police](#) in the streets of Quito as they denounced the handover of Assange.

[Former President Rafael Correa](#), a close ally of Venezuela and Cuba who granted asylum to Assange, declared Moreno “the greatest traitor in Ecuadorian and Latin American history. Moreno is a corrupt man, but what he has done is a crime that humanity will never forget.”

Alicia Castro, former Argentinian ambassador to Britain, wrote a statement called ["My Friend Julian Assange."](#) Castro explained, "Unlike other platforms, WikiLeaks does not reveal information related to a certain political affiliation, but publishes the information it receives, once it is accurately deciphered and checked, and without revealing the source. It has published more than 10 million classified documents revealing the secrets that once belonged to a small elite linked to the military-industrial complex."

Cuban 5 hero [Gerardo Hernández](#), who spent 16 years in U.S. prisons for defending his socialist homeland from right-wing terrorists, told Trabajadores newspaper: "I think what is happening to Assange is a shame. We live in a world where people spread lies, half-truths, fake news. Assange and his group disclosed factual information that exposed the global interests of the powers that be, and now they are punishing him for it. His crime is finding the truth and revealing it."

Hernández, now a deputy of the Cuban National Assembly, said his own experience taught him the dangers that Assange faces if he is extradited to the U.S. "We witnessed how they were always trying to distort the truth as a way of demonizing us."

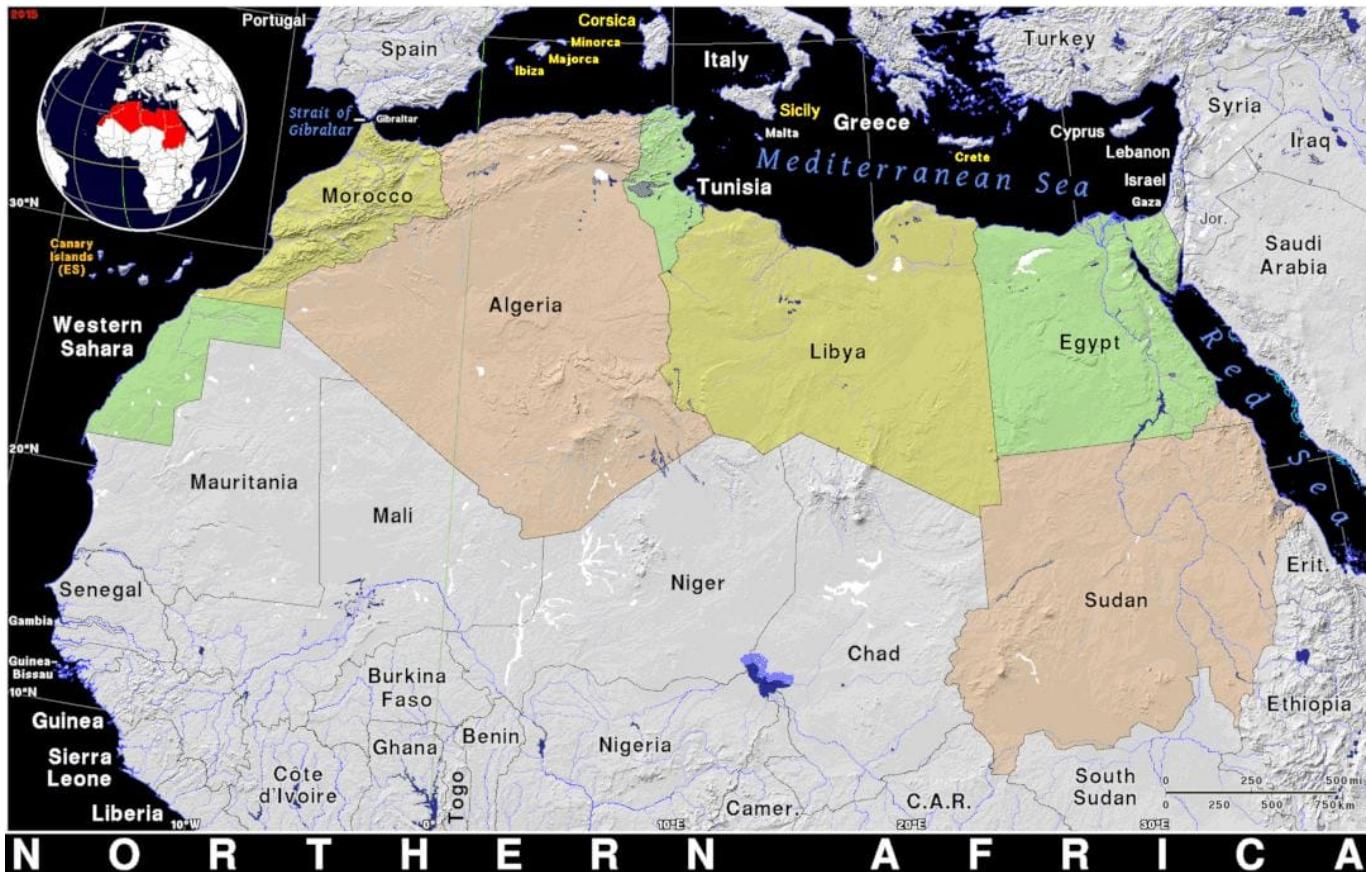
British singer-songwriter [Roger Waters](#) explained that Washington and London want to hush up "matters of torture or incarceration of innocent people. And also, what they're doing — Trump and the rest of them, and Theresa May — is to try to frighten would-be Julian Assanges who may provide this incredibly important service for the rest of us in the future."

It will take a hard fight to stop Julian Assange's extradition and win freedom for him and Chelsea Manning, just as today the hard fight to liberate Mumia Abu-Jamal and other truth-telling political prisoners continues. It will be crucial to reach out to the workers of this country and confront them with the question: "Do you have the right to know what Trump, Clinton and their ilk do in your name?"



Understanding gov't overturns in North Africa: What is imperialism's role?

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In early April, longstanding governments were toppled by protest movements and military coups in the North African countries of Algeria and Sudan.

The contradictions of these governments are real. That must be acknowledged. What must also be acknowledged is that, even if it seems apparent in the corporate media that the protests are a genuine reflection of anger and frustration by the people, it doesn't answer important questions like: Which class forces are the primary engines of these events? How much influence is coming from the United States and other Western imperialist powers?

Even many progressive media outlets and left organizations reported uncritically on these events, despite the fact that both countries have been frequent targets of Western aggression and "regime change" threats.

Which begs other questions like: What is Washington's role? Do these changes benefit the oppressed workers of the region, or shift the balance of power further in favor of the U.S. and other imperialist countries? Is there an increased danger of Western intervention, military or otherwise?

Asking these questions does not deny a people's right to self-determination, but it must be determined if these protests are a reflection of that pursuit or an attempt by bourgeois forces at denying self-determination in favor of imperialism.

A second Arab Spring?

Corporate media, [including the Washington Post](#), have asked if the protests in Sudan and Algeria herald the beginning of a second "Arab Spring." But the events commonly grouped under that term were very contradictory.

In Egypt and Tunisia, the Arab Spring described genuine popular uprisings against repressive regimes aligned with global imperialism and the Israeli settler state.

But in Syria and Libya, the same slogan served as a cover for counterrevolutionary, pro-imperialist movements, in which Washington and its allies intervened to overthrow governments resistant to U.S. domination.

It should be clear that when the Post, the New York Times, the Guardian, CNN and their like wish for a new Arab Spring, it is the latter version they're banking on.

Even as events unfold in Sudan and Algeria, a war between rival armies to dominate Libya's capital, Tripoli, [is intensifying](#) — nearly eight years since NATO's destruction of the country's central government. The U.S. now has [three military bases in Libya](#).

There are many examples of so-called "color revolutions" — from Yugoslavia in 2000 to Ukraine in 2014 to the ongoing counterrevolutionary attempts in Venezuela today — in which anti-people forces, aided by the U.S., promote an image of popular

rebellion to lay the groundwork for an imperialist takeover of a country's wealth, labor and resources.

These movements rely on misdirecting popular anger over the suffering caused by Western economic warfare into destroying governments that, to one degree or another, have resisted U.S. domination.

It's important for revolutionary Marxists to look at these movements critically in their historical development. It would be wrong to assume without investigation that a seemingly popular uprising against oppression and injustice is false. But it's equally wrong to assume without investigation that it is completely progressive — especially when it is praised by the same politicians and media who never fail to denounce fightback movements of workers and oppressed people here at home.

Algeria

The protest movement in Algeria began on Feb. 22, when ailing President Abdelaziz Boutefilka announced plans to run for a fifth term. Underlying the current unrest is high unemployment for college-educated young people, forcing many professionals to emigrate in search of work.

Algeria is one of the world's major oil producers and is third in the world among natural gas producers. It [ranks number 16](#) in the world in proven oil reserves. State-owned oil company Sonatrach is the largest company in Africa. Algeria's oil and gas were nationalized after the country's hard-won independence from France, led by the National Liberation Front (FLN).

Control of its oil wealth allowed Algeria to maintain a degree of independence in its relationship to world imperialism. For example, the FLN-led government, along with Syria, voted against the Arab League's endorsement of NATO's "no-fly zone" over Libya in March 2011.

As [Reuters noted](#) on April 3, “[Algeria] has almost no foreign debt burden but its hard currency reserves have halved to \$70 billion since 2014 due to a slide in volatile oil and gas prices.” Falling oil prices have increased the vulnerability of several countries targeted by the U.S., including Venezuela, Iran and Russia.

President Boutefilka resigned on April 2 after the FLN and Algerian military withdrew support for his administration under pressure from the protest movement. A caretaker government headed by Interim President Abdelkader Bensalah has [called new elections](#) for July 4.

[Reuters reported](#) that on April 12, following Boutefilka’s resignation, Chevron said it had bought Anadarko Petroleum Corp, which is the biggest foreign firm in terms of oil output in Algeria. This was followed by an announcement by the Algerian state oil firm Sonatrach that it has opened partnership talks with Chevron.

Protests have continued, with some forces [demanding the removal](#) of FLN loyalists from government and military posts.

Sudan

In 1989, a coup led by Omar al-Bashir deposed a military dictatorship subordinate to Washington and formed an alliance with Iran. Sudan has been in the gun sights of U.S. imperialism ever since.

By some estimates, before the country’s division in 2011, Sudan may have oil reserves equal to Saudi Arabia — the country with the second-largest proven oil reserves. Sudan also has large deposits of natural gas, high-purity uranium and copper. China has long been Sudan’s [top trading partner](#), helping the country develop its oil and gas infrastructure even while the country was under attack by the West.

President Bill Clinton bombed the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum in

1998. The George W. Bush administration, aided by U.S.-based fundamentalist Christian groups, inflamed a civil war between the predominantly Christian south and the Muslim north. This policy continued under Barack Obama.

Washington gave weapons and money to rebel groups in southern Sudan while carrying out a sophisticated campaign to demonize President al-Bashir's government, using charges of genocide in the country's Darfur region. Hollywood stars and pro-imperialist "human rights" groups collaborated to build public opinion for Western-led intervention.

As a result, the imperialist-controlled International Criminal Court in The Hague indicted al-Bashir for crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide. The ICC has outstanding "arrest warrants" for al-Bashir.

In 2005, Washington succeeded in dispatching a 10,000-strong United Nations "peacekeeping" force to Sudan. This occupation provided the basis for South Sudan to declare independence in 2011. South Sudan took with it the bulk of Sudan's oil reserves, precipitating an economic crisis that helped spark today's protest movement.

It was in this context that al-Bashir's government attempted to make an accommodation with the U.S., most notably by breaking off its longtime relations with Iran and sending troops to participate in the U.S.-Saudi war against Yemen. "Sudan has at least 3,000 ground troops and several fighter jets fighting in Yemen as part of the Saudi-led alliance," [reported Reuters](#) in 2018. "Dozens of Sudanese soldiers have been killed on key coastal battlefronts."

Al-Bashir's attempt to reach an accommodation with the West wasn't unique. For the sake of survival, both Muammar Gaddafi in Libya and Bashar al-Assad in Syria made similar efforts in the early 2000s. That didn't save either country or its leaders from attack, since the U.S. "has no permanent friends, only permanent interests."

Protesters and military

A Jan. 24 [New York Times article](#), “On Sudan’s Streets, Young Professionals Protest Against an Autocrat,” drew an interesting connection between the current protest movement and imperialist efforts to break up and dominate the country:

“Demonstrations that started on Dec. 19 as a howl against soaring bread prices in the city of Atbara have snowballed into a nationwide movement, driven by daily protests calling for the president’s ouster. They hope to succeed where international efforts failed; Mr. Bashir’s autocratic rule has endured despite American missile attacks, war crimes indictments, international condemnation, economic sanctions, and a momentous 2011 split that led to the creation of South Sudan.

“‘Just fall, that is all!’ cry protesters who mass in the streets of Khartoum nearly every day, often in an effort to reach the National Assembly building on the banks of the Nile. The security forces beat them back with tear gas and live gunfire. ...

“The revolt, which has spread from Khartoum to 35 cities in 15 of Sudan’s 18 provinces, is led by disgruntled young professionals from the classes that were long tolerant of Mr. Bashir’s iron-fisted rule. Speaking by phone, a dozen protesters, weary of economic decay and international isolation, said they hoped the government’s panicky reaction signaled that Mr. Bashir’s rule was grinding toward its end.”

[Mint Press News reports](#) that the National Endowment for Democracy and the U.S. Agency for International Development began major funding for “democracy promotion” in Sudan starting in 2011 — a strategy used in many U.S.-backed “color revolutions.” Also of note, given recent events in Venezuela, is that Sudan [suffered a complete electricity outage](#) just days before the military coup.

A military junta deposed President al-Bashir on April 11, placing him under house

arrest at an undisclosed location. Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Awad Mohamed Ahmed Ibn Auf announced the formation of a transitional military council to rule the country during a two-year transition to civilian rule. The next day [he resigned](#), appointing Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan as his successor.

Leaders of the protest movement reportedly thought Ibn Auf was too close to al-Bashir's inner circle, but that al-Burhan was someone they could work with. He had previously made overtures to the protesters.

Al-Akhbar, a Lebanese Marxist publication, [reported on April 15](#) that al-Burhan and his deputy have close ties to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco and other regional monarchies strongly opposed to Iran.

"It appeared striking that the first to meet with [al-Burhan] was the U.S. charge d'affaires in Khartoum, Stephen Kotsis," Al-Akhbar said. "This increasing 'identity' raises many questions about what dialogue between the military junta and representatives of the protesters can lead to." Al-Burhan was quick to reassure Saudi Arabia that Sudan would continue to participate in the anti-Yemen military coalition.

At this writing, the Sudan Professionals Association and its Alliance for Freedom and Change continue their sit-in surrounding the military headquarters in Khartoum, calling for an immediate handover of government control to civilian forces.

The [demands](#) advanced by the SPA and AFC do not touch on class and social questions that address the economic crisis of the Sudanese workers and peasants, such as demanding a moratorium on debt service to Western banks or reparations for imperialism's long war against Sudan. Instead they are based on generalities like civilian rule, ending corruption, dismantling al-Bashir's National Congress Party and seizing its assets.

“The ongoing demonstration comes as the transitional military council continues to arrest former regime officials,” CNN reported on April 15. “Among them are Bashir, his former interior minister Abdelrahim Mohamed Hussein, and former head of the ruling party Ahmed Haroun, who will be charged with corruption and the death of protesters.” So far the military has [rejected calls](#) to turn over al-Bashir to the ICC.

Straddle fence between basic classes

The contradictory nature of governments like those in Algeria, Sudan and Syria is not well understood, even in the communist and socialist movement. These governments emerged from anti-imperialist struggles of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, when there was tremendous mass pressure to find a path to independence from imperialism, but a workers’ party fighting for socialist revolution was either absent or repressed.

Discussing this phenomenon in relation to the Saddam Hussein government of Iraq in 1991, Marxist leader [Sam Marcy explained](#): “The problem in the Middle East from the viewpoint of socialism is that in all the political overturns, all the struggles to rid the region of imperialism, none went beyond the level of the February Revolution in Russia. The most profound revolution, that in Egypt led by Nasser, shows the limits of what can be achieved if the revolution stops at the bourgeois-democratic level. ...

“These progressive, anti-imperialist revolutions were unable to achieve a transition to a socialist revolution, one that overturns the basic relations of property between the working class and peasants on the one side, and the bourgeoisie on the other, between oppressors and oppressed. ...

“Mere nationalization of industry, even of oil, does not in itself lay the basis for socialism. The nationalization retains within itself the growth of the bourgeoisie. While the level of economic well being can be on a much higher level than in a non-oil-producing country, the retention of the bourgeoisie leads to gross social

inequality. ...

"A characteristic feature of such a regime is that it straddles the fence between the working class and peasants on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie. The severe pressure of imperialism has produced the phenomenon of military rule and a number of coups d'etat.

"In the struggle against imperialism, it leans heavily on the workers and peasants as its fundamental social support. At the same time, the pressure of bourgeois social forces continually pushes it in an adverse direction."

It's important to understand the dual character of these governments — a phenomenon known to Marxists as "bonapartism" — because it helps to answer a crucial question. Absent a working-class upsurge with a revolutionary socialist perspective, what does the destruction of these anti-imperialist regimes lead to: liberation — or unbridled imperialist domination?

As events in North Africa continue to rapidly unfold, it is crucial for anti-war and anti-imperialist activists in the U.S. and Europe to expose the past and current crimes of the imperialists, and be vigilant to oppose any moves by the ruling classes here to further intervene through military force, sanctions, seizure of resources and other means that deepen the oppression of the region's peoples.



Protests demand justice for farmers killed by police death squads in the Philippines

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 10, 2019

A protest outside the Philippine Consulate on New York City's Fifth Avenue on April 10 demanded justice for 14 farmers killed on March 30. The massacre by the Philippine National Police was in Negros Oriental province.

The NYC action was part of a Global Day of Action against this atrocity.

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte's death squads have killed thousands of peasants, workers and pro-democracy activists. As the Campaign For Human Rights Philippines wrote in their statement:

"More than 60 peasant leaders in Negros alone, 205 from across the country, have already been killed under the Duterte regime. Must those who till the land to feed a

nation be slaughtered in the night like sick cows? Must those who have suffered from long years of neglect and who struggle for land and lasting peace be meted with death like the worst criminals?

["The International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines says no!"](#)

Behind Duterte is U.S. imperialism, which killed at least a million Filipinos in the dirty war following the U.S. invasion in 1898. Trump's secretary of state, Mike Pompeo — a virtual employee of the billionaire Koch brothers — conferred with Duterte in February.

There's a revolution developing in the Philippines. Peasants want the land that they've tilled for generations. Workers are demanding jobs and union rights.

Millions of people in the Philippines want an end to the U.S.-backed Duterte regime. The U.S. labor movement and all progressive people should support this just struggle.



Don't justify war and sanctions

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 10, 2019

In March alone, the U.S. State Department listed eight additional sanctions against Venezuela, further adding to the denial of that country's use of assets or its ability to receive international loans. Before the latest measure added on March 19, U.S. sanctions already cost Venezuela \$30 million per day.

Should sanctions be considered an act of war? Since 1990, according to United Nations and nongovernmental organization (NGO) data and well-researched scientific studies, it's estimated that at least 4 million people have died from the U.S. "war on terror" in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan alone. The majority of those deaths didn't come from direct killings, but rather from denial of necessities like clean water, medicine and food.

That denial is caused by U.S. and Western European use of international sanctions — utilizing their control over the United Nations.

U.S.-led U.N. sanctions share some telling similarities. For one, they are racist and genocidal in nature — disproportionately targeting non-European countries and those least able to endure the denial of basic needs, especially African countries.

The [Consolidated List](#) of individuals and entities subject to sanctions by the U.N. Security Council exposes the fact that, although peoples on the continent of Africa make up 17 percent of the world population, they represent 64 percent of the countries affected by U.N. sanctions.

Meanwhile, in Venezuela, [57 percent of the population](#) are of Indigenous or African ancestry.

Imperialist sanctions are also justified in similar ways. They are supposedly made to rid people of government leaders engaging in corruption, violence and denial of democratic rights. Of course, their sovereignty must go as well.

The bottom line is that sanctions are an integral part of the declared and undeclared wars of U.S. imperialism, passed on from one administration to the next — whether Democratic or Republican. Their purpose is to bring about poverty, illness, starvation and desperation, targeting the people to weaken resistance to economic and military occupation.

Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan: true toll of sanctions

In 2015, Physicians for Social Responsibility published probably the most thorough and scientific report to date on the effects of U.S. war, [“Body Count: Casualty Figures after 10 Years of the ‘War on Terror’ — Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan.”](#)

It states: “This investigation comes to the conclusion that the war has, directly or indirectly, killed around 1 million people in Iraq, 220,000 in Afghanistan and 80,000 in Pakistan, i.e., a total of around 1.3 million. Not included in this figure are further war zones such as Yemen. The figure is approximately 10 times greater than that which the public, experts and decision makers are aware of and propagated by the media and major NGOs.

“And this is only a conservative estimate. The total number of deaths in the three countries named above could also be in excess of 2 million, whereas a figure below 1 million is extremely unlikely.”

Other investigations, primarily using U.N. data, complete the analysis from the start of the U.S. war on Iraq in 1991 (the “Persian Gulf War”) and expose the deadly and purposeful effect of sanctions.

Graham Vanbergen, in a September 2015 article published by [Global Research](#) and

TruePublica, writes: “Undisputed U.N. figures show that 1.7 million Iraqi civilians died due to the West’s brutal sanctions regime, half of whom were children. ...

“The mass death was seemingly intended. Among items banned by the U.N. sanctions were chemicals and equipment essential for Iraq’s national water treatment system. A secret U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) document discovered by professor Thomas Nagy of the School of Business at George Washington University amounted, he said, to ‘an early blueprint for genocide against the people of Iraq.’”

Citing additional reports from the National Academy of Sciences and data from the U.N. Population Division, Vanbergen concludes: “According to the figures explored here, total deaths from Western intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan since the 1990s — from direct killings and the longer-term impact of war-imposed deprivation — likely constitute around 4 million (2 million in Iraq from 1991-2003, plus 2 million from the ‘war on terror’).”

Zimbabwe: punishing land reform

And the horror of sanctions continues with the Trump administration’s extension of sanctions on Zimbabwe, announced March 4. Why? Because apparently Zimbabwe is an “unusual and extraordinary threat.” Trump did this despite South African President Cyril Ramaphosa requesting he not extend sanctions and allow the country to recover.

Zimbabwe’s economy has been sabotaged by U.S. and British sanctions since 2001 to punish its government for acknowledging the will of the people to take back land stolen by the minority white population that previously benefited from decades of colonialism and apartheid rule. The Zimbabwean Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA), a bi-partisan bill supported by Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden, attempted to cut off international loans and institute other economic sanctions.

When Zimbabwe, formerly called Rhodesia, achieved its true independence in 1980, this lay the basis for the most democratic form of government up to that point, as witnessed by the redistribution of land, mostly to the poorest sectors, and contributed to the support and popularity of elected President Robert Mugabe.

In a November 2018 article in [African Arguments](#), Tendai Murisa and Shantha Bloemen report: “18 years since the land seizures, the landscape in Zimbabwe has dramatically changed. Instead of 6,000 commercial farmers controlling 70 percent of valuable farmland, there are an estimated 200,000 new small-scale farmers. In 2018, the country experienced its largest tobacco harvest ever. This new reality on the ground is accepted by most Zimbabweans, both white and black.”

It’s also telling that Trump’s extension of ZIDERA includes new provisions, passed by Congress last July, demanding a reversal of the land reform with “reparations” amounting to \$30 billion to be paid to white farmers.

Murisa and Bloemen continue: “As South Africa and Namibia currently debate how to address historical injustices around land, Zimbabwe’s harsh treatment could be seen as a threat for what not to do.

“Adding weight to these suspicions, President Trump tweeted his concerns about South Africa’s land reform process shortly after signing ZIDERA into law. He is reported to have been informed by fringe white farmer lobbies in South Africa, who have growing alliances with white supremacist groups in the U.S.”

Yemen: an embarrassment of war and sanctions

Despite the fact that 18 million people are expected to starve as a result of the U.S.-Saudi war against Yemen, Washington, the European Union and the U.N. continue sanctions against that country.

Supposedly, these measures are meant to stop al-Qaida. However, the arms embargo

and asset freeze are directed primarily against the forces that are actually fighting al-Qaida — and also fighting the U.S.-Saudi alliance. The [Associated Press](#) reported on Aug. 6 that al-Qaida, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. have been working together against the Ansar Allah (otherwise known as Houthis).

The horrendous starvation estimates received wide attention that demanded a reaction from U.S. politicians, who designed a deceptive bill lauded as ending U.S. involvement in the war against Yemen. In fact, on April 4, the House of Representatives [passed the bill](#) introduced by Sen. Bernie Sanders that would invoke the War Powers Act.

Unfortunately, and deliberately, one of the bill's biggest loopholes allows military actions to continue due to the presence of al-Qaida in the area. Since the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are actually working with al-Qaida, it's business as usual, by design — even if President Trump doesn't veto the bill.

Venezuela: don't justify sanctions and war

Today's version of endless wars started in Iraq. That nightmare of sanctions and war was justified by false U.S. government assertions that Saddam Hussein had "weapons of mass destruction," bolstered by the corporate media and even individuals and organizations on the left who, uncritical and unprincipled, would rather go with the State Department narrative to avoid any accusations of siding with dictators or terrorists.

These are similar to the "critical" voices that echo Washington's attacks against Venezuela's Bolivarian government regarding "flawed" elections. Never mind that all observers of the elections, from trade union officials to social justice organization leaders, lauded the process.

A recurring argument used by "left" critics and even some so-called socialists, and

thus justifying the ire of the U.S., is that opposition candidate Henrique Capriles Radonski was disqualified from running in the 2018 Venezuelan presidential election.

They say that while Capriles was accused of illegally fomenting violence by encouraging a right-wing crowd to storm the Cuban Embassy and threatening diplomats with violence during the 2002 coup attempt against then-President Hugo Chávez, he was “cleared” of all charges.

Actually, there is video evidence showing Capriles — then mayor of Baruta, a wealthy district of Caracas — climbing the walls of the embassy, leading the attack. Capriles tried to force Cuban diplomats to turn over the vice president and other government officials to the crowd. The Cuban diplomats refused, and fortunately, massive demonstrations of the Venezuelan people in support of Chávez ended the U.S.-encouraged coup.

Capriles’ organization had previously received hundreds of thousands of dollars from the U.S.-sponsored National Endowment for Democracy and the International Republican Institute.

So, was he cleared of those charges? No. He did commit those acts. However, he benefited from an amnesty by President Chávez in 2007 for all of those who participated in the coup attempt, which granted him a pardon.

Does that mean the Venezuelan people don’t have the right to decide that he may be unqualified to run for president, being a known violent traitor and agent of U.S. imperialism?

The movement to build solidarity with the Venezuelan people, or the people of Zimbabwe, Iran, Yemen, People’s Korea, Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan, or anywhere else that the nightmare of U.S. war and sanctions is occurring, will not benefit from

repeating the lies of the U.S. State Department to justify its means of mass murder.

What's needed is to expose the truth that facilitates building a united movement to defeat the greatest threat to humanity today: U.S. imperialism!



Donetsk Communist Party secretary: 'Donbass exists in a state of neither war nor peace'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 10, 2019

In February 2014, a U.S.-backed coup overthrew the elected government of Ukraine and installed a far-right regime representing Western imperialist interests, local oligarchs and neo-Nazis. The new government launched a war against the rebellious Donbass mining region in mid-April 2014, which to date has cost at least 13,000 lives. People in Donbass declared independence, creating the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (DPR and LPR).

As part of a series of interviews marking five years of the anti-fascist struggle in Ukraine and Donbass, Struggle-La Lucha spoke with Stanislav Retinsky, secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Donetsk People's Republic (KPDPR) and an editor of the party's publication, [Forward](#).

Struggle-La Lucha: It's been five years since the beginning of Ukraine's war against Donbass. What role did the communists of Donetsk play in the early days of the anti-fascist resistance and the independence struggle?

Stanislav Retinsky: The communists did a lot to create the Donetsk People's Republic. For example, Boris Litvinov, who was then the first secretary of the Kirovsky District Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, and now the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Donetsk People's Republic, authored the Act and Declaration of Independence of the DPR. Anatoly Khmeleva, the first secretary of the Slavyansk City Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, and now the second secretary of the Central Committee of the KPDPR, took part in the battles for Slavyansk.

Election commissions were created with the active participation of the communists, thanks to the presence of party organizations throughout the Donbass region, facilitating the referendum held on May 11, 2014 [when the vast majority of voters supported independence from Ukraine - SLL]. More than 20 of the 98 deputies in the first Supreme Council of the DPR were communists.

Today a significant part of our work is aimed at international recognition of the DPR. This can be achieved, in particular, through the establishment of international party relations. And the Communist Party has made significant strides in this direction. In addition to the United States, we were able to establish contacts with communists in more than 15 countries of the European Union, Latin America (Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua), Asia (Vietnam, India, North Korea) and, of course, the former USSR.

Throughout these five years, the Communist Party has worked in difficult conditions, but today its position has deteriorated markedly. The revocation of the registration certificate issued by the Central Election Committee in 2014 means the KPDPR is prohibited from appearing on the ballot. The Communists of the Donetsk People's Republic intend to seek the repeal of the CEC decision in court.

SLL: I understand you've recently written a book. What's it about?

SR: The book is called "Donbass in the World Confrontation: A Class Approach." It presents a Marxist viewpoint on the conflict in the Donbass. Contrary to the well-established view that this is a struggle for the interests of the "Russian world," I give a different interpretation of what is happening.

In my opinion, the Donbass is part of the anti-imperialist front (at least until the death of the first head of the DPR, Alexander Zakharchenko), along with Syria, Venezuela and other regions. Ultimately, they are all resisting U.S. imperialism. The book not only describes the situation in the Donbass, but on the basis of this, explains the tactics of the Communist Party, which were developed taking into account the experience of previous generations of communists.

The work itself is [dedicated to Vsevolod Petrovsky](#) — a communist who died in the battle for the liberation of Debaltsevo in February 2015.

SLL: Last year, there were big changes in the leadership of the Donbass republics. The Minsk negotiations stalled long ago. Ukraine has concentrated large forces near the combat zone, but so far there hasn't been a new military offensive. How do you assess the political and military situation today?

SR: For the last four years, since the signing of the second Minsk agreements in February 2015, the Donetsk People's Republic has been in a state of "neither war nor peace." In other words, there is no full-scale war on the territory of Donbass, but

shelling by the Armed Forces of Ukraine continues to this day.

To properly assess the current political situation in the republic, we must remember that politics is a concentrated expression of economics. After the death of the first head of the DPR, Alexander Zakharchenko, significant changes took place.

The driving force in the confrontation in the Donbass was the petty bourgeoisie, which sought to win the market from big capital. Alexander Zakharchenko, who also came from the petty-bourgeois strata, led this movement. But to win back the market from the Ukrainian oligarchs, it was necessary to challenge the imperialist group that was behind them. Consequently, the first head of the DPR, whether he wanted to or not, was forced to lead an anti-imperialist struggle.

For a while, it was possible in the DPR to realize the petty-bourgeois ideal of preserving market relations, only without oligarchy. But without moving forward — that is, without moving towards socialism — a return to the exploitation of the working people by big capital is inevitable.

Now Sergey Kurchenko [a rising oligarch known as the “Gas King of Ukraine” – SLL] is trying to establish control over the market won from Rinat Akhmetov, the oligarch who formerly dominated the Donbass. He made repeated attempts to take control over the export of coal and metal from the DPR. Alexander Zakharchenko tried, at least, to limit these aspirations.

Today, by all appearances, the position of Sergey Kurchenko in the Donbass is noticeably stronger, and consequently, we can speak about the end of the period of anti-imperialist struggle.

SLL: Where does that leave the workers' and left movements in the DPR?

SR: One of the main problems of all the communist parties of the former Soviet Union is the lack of a strong connection with the proletariat. Donbass is no

exception.

The last time the local working class manifested itself politically as an independent force was in the late 1980s-early 1990s, when it opposed the Soviet government. Then, the local miners held mass rallies, speaking essentially for a change in property relations. And anti-Soviet views are still quite common among the workers.

Nevertheless, since the beginning of 2014, the Donetsk communists have been carrying out propaganda and organizational work in the proletarian milieu.

The DPR communists took part in organizing the largest demonstration of miners, which took place in Donetsk on May 28, 2014. About a thousand miners marched in protest against Ukraine's "anti-terrorist operation" in the Donbass. This happened two days after the bombing of the city by Kiev's fighter planes.

The fighting significantly increased the danger of an emergency situation in the mines and factories. A shell hitting a utility substation means inevitable death for the miners, so they took to the streets in protest.

In November 2015, in Khartsyzsk, with the participation of the local city committee of the Communist Party, a rally of workers of the pipe plant was held, opposing the closure of the enterprise, which at that time belonged to Rinat Akhmetov.

The chairperson of the Union of Transport Workers is the second secretary of the Communist Party, Anatoly Khmeleva. Under his leadership, the union has been able to repeatedly defend the interests of the drivers.

SLL: How does the economic blockade imposed by Ukraine and the Western powers affect the workers?

SR: Despite the fact that several dozen truces were signed in Minsk within the framework of the Contact Group, the Ukrainian side continues to bombard the

territory of the republics. Of course, this has a negative effect on the local economy.

Because of the blockade and the incessant shelling by Kiev, many enterprises either stand idle or operate at a low capacity. All this affects the people's standard of living. In the DPR, you can find a job, but it is usually low paid. Social benefits are at the same low level — they are several times lower than in Russia. At the same time, food prices in Donetsk are about the same as in Moscow.

However, in the DPR humanitarian aid is given to those in need, tariffs for utilities have not increased, and the price of public transportation remains low.

In early 2017, the economic blockade of Donbass sharpened greatly. Today, almost nothing passes from Ukraine to Donbass or from Donbass to Ukraine. Nevertheless, the products of the DPR and the LPR, in particular coal, are supplied to foreign markets. Raw materials from the republics reach European countries through the Russian ports in the Rostov region. Donbass coal is better and cheaper than North American, African or Australian.

SLL: What assistance can the international solidarity movement provide? How can workers and leftists in the U.S. help people in the Donbass republics?

SR: It's very important for the people's republics of Donbass that there is an alternative point of view presented at the international level. To do this, it's necessary to regularly hold various activities in support of the DPR and the LPR, report on the situation in the Donbass, and provide humanitarian assistance to children, the elderly and people with disabilities.

Only by joint efforts can we resist world imperialism, which must be answered with proletarian internationalism. And we, the communists of the DPR, are glad that a movement for solidarity with Donbass exists in the U.S. Thank you, comrades!



San Diego meeting: Filipino workers resist terror

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 10, 2019

San Diego labor unions welcomed Filipino labor leader Ed Cubelo of Kilusang Mayo Uno (the May First Movement) on March 28. Cubelo is on a national tour to report on conditions facing workers in the Philippines under the rule of U.S. ally President Rodrigo Duterte, whom he characterized as a fascist dictator. The meeting was held at the San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council.

Cubelo began his presentation and accompanying slide show with a map showing the location of the Philippine archipelago in the Pacific, followed by photos displaying the beauty and richness of the islands. He explained that while the Philippines has trillions of dollars of valuable minerals and other natural resources, none of this natural wealth benefits the people.

Cubelo provided up-to-date statistics: The Philippines has a workforce of 43 million, and workers are paid on average the equivalent of \$2 to \$3 per day — far below the

poverty level. Some 1.3 million workers lost their jobs in 2017, and an estimated 387,000 jobs have been lost so far in 2019.

Filipino workers are fighting for regularization of work, which means full-time employment with benefits for everyone, as opposed to Endo contract work, which is short-term employment that has been deemed illegal under the Philippines labor code. The Pepsi company recently laid off 1,000 workers to avoid regularization.

Cubelo showed a slide of people living in inhumane conditions, unable to afford a place to stay or food to eat. Some of them work many hours with no overtime pay or benefits.

But Filipino workers are fighting back. Huge demonstrations, walkouts and nationwide strikes are taking place all across the Philippines. Workers are organizing campaigns to end contractualization, for a national minimum wage, to abolish regional wage boards and for the right to organize. Workers are saying “Yes to Regularization.”

The workers are also demanding an end to anti-union repression, attacks on workers, harassment and illegal arrests of trade unionists, and to free all political prisoners.

President Duterte publicly declared the KMU “the legal front of a terrorist organization.” In fact, said Cubelo, it is Duterte’s administration that is the terrorist organization, with his goons, who form military death squads, killing people with no charges, trials or convictions.

KMU is the Philippines’ genuine, militant and anti-imperialist labor center that stands with the workers and peoples of the world in defending the right to strike, he said. The KMU supports the International Trade Union Confederation in upholding the right to strike.

When asked what workers here in the U.S. can do to help, Cubelo urged unionists to “support our workers’ school” by making a donation to fund the Paaralang Crispin Beltran (PCB) aka Crispin Beltran Workers’ School.

PCB is a workers’ school honoring the memory of one of the most respected labor leaders in the Philippines, Crispin “Ka Bel” Beltran. It was established to continue his legacy: to help the working class free itself from exploitation and poverty. The school aims to give that capacity to workers through education that will arm them in organizing and mobilizing their own ranks. The school is for contractual and nonunionized workers in Metro Manila. It is free of charge for all nonunionized workers.

The Filipino youth organization AnakBayan encouraged everyone to write to their local congressional representatives urging them to defend human rights in the Philippines by ending U.S. funding for the Philippine military and police. Those tax dollars should be redirected to fund social services, like education, health care and housing.

At the end of the meeting, everyone gathered for a group photo and chanted, “International worker solidarity!”

The meeting was organized and sponsored by the [Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance \(APALA\) San Diego](#), [AnakBayan San Diego](#) and Migrante San Diego.

