Climate crisis demands
SYSTEM CHANGE

Millions took part in the historic, youth-led, global climate strike on Sept. 20. At least 5,000 actions were held in 163 countries, kicking off a week of civil disobedience, news conferences, organizing events and more to combat the growing capitalist climate crisis.

From the PHILIPPINES to AFGHANISTAN, from SOUTH AFRICA to PUERTO RICO, oppressed people living on the front lines of climate change and imperialist wars led the way and set the tone.

In the U.S., the largest protest took place in New York, where 250,000 marched from Foley Square to Battery Park — the majority of them multinational high school students. The pressure for mass walkouts from public schools was so great that city officials gave the youth permission to skip classes that day, trying to blunt the impact of a mass strike.

The mood in Manhattan’s streets was militant and passionately anti-capitalist. “System change, not climate change” was a slogan seen on many of the thousands of handcrafted protest signs calling out the profit system and big business for their culpability in the growing environmental catastrophe. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Amazon.com were also slammed hard: “The wrong ICE is melting, the wrong Amazon is burning.”

A banner from Struggle-La Lucha, “The Pentagon: world’s biggest polluter. Shut it down!” was very popular, as was a second banner from the Socialist Unity Party declaring, “No more blood for Big Oil profits — U.S. hands off Iran and Venezuela.” Many young people as well as older marchers stopped to have their photos taken with the banners, snapped up newspapers and fliers, and expressed their support for the anti-war, anti-imperialist demands.

Unions also joined the massive demonstration, including 1199SEIU, the New York State Nurses Association, the United Federation of Teachers and the Communication Workers.

Speakers at Battery Park conveyed a strongly anti-colonial, pro-Indigenous message, with young people from many nationalities speaking. Many climate strikers stayed through the hot afternoon to hear Greta Thunberg, the 16-year-old activist whose one-person climate strike outside the Swedish Parliament helped inspire the global movement.

Thunberg has both inspired millions of young people to take to the streets, and become a reviled figure for climate change deniers like Donald Trump and big capitalists, who fear the revolution.

The national strike by 49,000 United Auto Workers (UAW) workers against General Motors that started on September 15, 2019, is the biggest strike in the country since a two-day walkout against GM by the UAW in 2007.

Workers are angry that even though the company has made record profits — $35 billion in the last three years — it won’t give an inch when it comes to workers’ demand for equal pay for all auto workers.

Central to this strike is GM’s multitiered employment structure that ensures new hires are paid poverty wages — roughly half the rate of more senior workers. Additionally, about 7 percent of GM’s workforce are so-called temporary workers who lack the rights and benefits of the permanent workforce.

Temp workers often do the same work as traditional employees, are paid less, entitled to fewer benefits and are easier to fire. A former GM temp worker, now in a skilled trades apprenticeship program, told Michigan’s public radio station last week that being a temp was one of the worst times of her life. “They have a way of pitting you against a permanent employee where you feel like, if you go the extra mile, if you work a little bit more than your union brother or sister, that will give you an opportunity to eventually get hired on full time and that’s not the case.”

Additionally, the UAW and GM are negotiating over pay and benefits, and, crucially, whether thousands of workers might become or remain laid off due to factory closings.
Long live the memory of Robert Mugabe!

By Stephen Millies

New York — Almost 200 people came to Harlem’s All Souls Episcopal Church on Sept. 30 to take part in a memorial service for late Robert Gabriel Mugabe. The memorial meeting for the former president of Zimbabwe, who died on Sept. 6, was organized by the December 12th Movement.

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

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

The resulting white settler regime was called Rhodesia. When Africans protested in the 1960s, police dogs were used against them like they were used against civil rights demonstrators in Birmingham, Ala. After that, some were absorbed by Rhodesia’s leader, the white farm owner Ian Smith. Among them was Robert Mugabe, who was jailed for 11 years. Smith refused to let Mugabe attend his child’s funeral.

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

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

Land and freedom

Baba Zaidi helped start the memorial and liberations were performed by Camille Yarbrough. Members of the audience shouted out names of African liberators.

The famous photographer Kwame Brathwaite created an album for the Rev. Frank Morales of All Souls welcomed the audience to the church. New York State Assemblyperson Charles Barron and New York City Councilperson Inez Barron saluted Robert Mugabe. Lamell Brathwaite was introduced and the audience to the church.

The Rev. Cortly D. Witherspoon, a longtime advocate of civil rights in Baltimore, energized the crowd with his message. “I had to come here and bring my son because when trouble and tribulations come, the people of Baltimore support Unity Party. An injury to one is an injury to all. "Donald Trump has attempted to Long live the memory of Robert Mugabe!

By Emma Rose

Hundreds of anti-racist protesters gathered in Baltimore on Sept. 12 anticipating the arrival of Donald Trump, to say no to racism, white supremacy, bigotry, war and climate change. Protesters chanted “Trump is the real rat!” and “Immigrants are welcome here.”

The protest and rally was organized by the Peoples Power Assembly, ICE Out of Baltimore, Youth Against War and Racism and the Prisoners Solidarity Committee. It was part of a series of actions to oppose the Republican Party retreat, including a climate change protest, a labor sing-along and an LGBTQ2S dance on the promenade.

Protesters began gathering at 4 p.m. in Columbus Park, the closest available assembly point to the Marriott Hotel at Eastern Avenue and Pratt Street, site of the GOP retreat. Enormous, small group of right-wing Trump supporters attempted to stake hundreds of crosses in the area where the protest was called. They claimed that they were doing it to keep children off the grassy area. Protest organizers had arrived much earlier and prevented them from erecting the crosses.

When Trump finally arrived by helicopter after 6 p.m., he was taken by motorcade to the Marriott. He scarcely noticed protesters in the lightening-fast caravan to screams and shouts of “Rats out of Baltimore!” and “Shame, shame!” There was also a giant Trump-rat balloon and tons of signs and banners on display.

The rally was opened by co-chairs Andre Powell, Miranda Bachman and Emilia Duno, who represented the Peoples Power Assembly, Youth Against War and Racism and ICE Out of Baltimore respectively. They began by denouncing the park’s statue of Christopher Columbus and called for removing this monument to genocide and racism against Indigenous people.

The group purposely set up their rally and protest as far away from the statue as possible to distance themselves from everything it stands for. They also urged people to support removing Columbus Day with Indigenous People’s Day.

Maria Cella was the first speaker. This activist recently moved to Baltimore from San Diego, where she helped organize caravans to assist refugees stranded in Tijuana, Mexico.

Sharon Black, an organizer with the Peoples Power Assembly and a representative of Strengthen-La Lucha newspaper and Partido Socialista por la Unidad/Socialist Unity Party, announced, “We called this demonstration because the people need solidarity and unity. We have to stand in solidarity because it’s our weapon against racism and white supremacy.

“Trump called Baltimore ‘rat-infested’ and hide the reality of who dirty stroyed Baltimore City. I have lived here for 20 years. I know what’s happened to our city. The same banks that support Trump are the ones that are responsible for the foreclosure crisis, which was one of the biggest crises that struck majority-Black cities like Baltimore and Detroit. It’s really about taking the wealth out of the Black community,” she said.

At the rally, Ali Afridi, the Sommerfield, representing the Prisoners Solidarity Committee, declared to an enthusiastic crowd: “Does Donald Trump care about Freddie Gray? Does he care about Eric Garner? Does he care about Sandra Bland? Does he care about George Floyd? No, no, no!

“Does he cares about himself and his profit margins, and his big bank and business buddies like Steve Mnuchin and Mike Pompeo?”

The Rev. Cortly D. Witherspoon, a longtime advocate of civil rights in Baltimore City, energized the crowd with his message. “I had to come here and bring my son because when trouble and tribulations come, the people of Baltimore support Unity Party. An injury to one is an injury to all. “Donald Trump has attempted to spew racism and division. A people united will never, ever be defeated. We won’t allow ourselves to be divided,” Witherspoon vowed.

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Biden’s crimes in Ukraine – and Trump’s

By Greg Butlerfield

As U.S. President Donald Trump gave a bellicose speech to the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 24, attacking Iran, Venezuela, China, and workers and oppressed people all over the world, Democratic Party Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced the beginning of an impeachment inquiry against Trump. However, the impeachment process is not about Trump’s numerous violations of international law, such as casting aside the U.S.-Russia nuclear deal, abetting the seizure of Venezuela’s overseas assets and its Embassies in Washington, or tightening the illegal blockade of Cuba.

Nor does it have to do with the mass violation of human rights at the Mexican border or the imprisonment of refugees in concentration camps. It’s not about his policies encouraging environmental destruction.

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

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

Later, it was reported that the Trump administration had put a temporary hold on almost $300 million in military aid to Kiev prior to the call. The military aid was later released. Trump says there was no connection between the call and his “review” of the aid.

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

The official explanation, as reported by the Guardian, is that “It is illegal for a political campaign to accept ‘a thing of value’ from a foreign government. Democrats say an“review” of the aid. Trump says there was no connection between the call and his “review” of the aid. Trump says there was no connection between the call and his “review” of the aid.

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

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

The austerity preacher

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

He also warned the assembled politicians not to forget that they were carrying out austerity measures on the backs of the workers if they wanted to keep their “economic ties to the West.”

Biden’s role

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

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

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

This included privatization of Ukraine’s rich farmland and its takeover by Monsanto and other Western agribusiness corporations pushing GMOs—one of many provisions demanded by the International Monetary Fund for a $15 billion bailout—and the introduction of fracking. Biden’s son, Hunter Biden, was directly involved in the latter as an executive of gas production company Burisma Holdings, along with other capitalists with close ties to the Obama administration.

The corruption charges which Trump reportedly wanted Ukraine to investigate have to do with Joe Biden’s role getting money of Ukrainian Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin, who was supposed to investigate violations of international law, particularly those Shokin was investigating was Burisma Holdings.

At a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, Joe Biden is reported to have used the threat of withdrawing a billion dollar line of credit to get Zelensky to conduct as legal and unassailable, even if they admit an appearance of “impropriety.”

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Climate strikers demand system change

Continued from page 1

...any potential that message could unleash. Her intensity and uncompromising demands that governments and politicians acknowledge the scientific reality of climate change and the urgent need for action to save lives was on full display at the U.N. Climate Action Summit, where she hurled the charge of “How dare you!” at the assembled politicians. ... including the Climate Strike. Organized by the group Amazon Employees for Climate Justice, Amazon.com workers walked out of their offices at the Seattle headquarters to demand that bil...
How the U.S. war machine poisons the world

By Scott Scheffer

For years, Pentagon officials have been discussing, assessing and reporting on climate change. They consider its implications for imperialist military tactics and strategy. They cite the possibilities of mass migration caused by drought and food shortages. They stress the need to prepare to deal with possible mass uprisings. They’ve written reports that assess the vulnerability of their military installations to extreme weather events — drought, flooding, wildfires, etc.

But like the proverbial elephant in the room, that everyone pretends not to notice, one pertinent fact gets omitted from every discussion, report or study by the top military brass: that the U.S. military itself is by far the single worst polluter in the world.

Many studies over the last decade rate countries based on how much their economies contribute to the rising amount of carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere. In 2016, the U.S. was rated the third largest polluter behind Saudi Arabia and Australia, emitting 15 metric tons per capita.

But greenhouse gases take decades or even centuries to dissipate. Historical records kept by the World Resources Institute show that since 1850, the U.S. and Europe are responsible for nearly two-thirds of the heat-trapping contaminants currently in our atmosphere.

But many contemporary studies exclude some or all of the emissions caused by armed forces.

How bad is the pollution from the U.S. military? The information is not easy to get. The authors of a study called “U.S. Military Pollution,” published in The Ecologist.org, point to the efforts of the U.S. Department of Defense to conceal information and resist any restrictions:

“It’s no coincidence that U.S. military emissions tend to be overlooked in climate change studies. It’s very difficult to get consistent data from the army and across U.S. government departments. In fact, the United States insisted on an exemption for reporting military emissions in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. This loophole was closed by the Paris Accord, but with the Trump administration due to withdraw from the accord in 2020, this gap will return.

“Our study is based on data retrieved from an impressive Freedom of Information Act requests.”

It isn’t only CO2 emissions. Mint Press News reported that the Defense Department is responsible for more toxic waste than the five largest U.S.-based chemical companies combined.

Pentagon’s environmental racism

The military is guilty of leaving toxic waste in various forms contaminating drinking water with perchlorates and other components of jet fuel; the horrors of depleted uranium, used in Iraq and other countries attacked by the imperialist military, that has radiated the ground and air, causing cancer rates to spike; nuclear tests that displaced entire populations and destroyed islands in the Bikini Atoll and destroyed Indigenous lands in Nevada; mining for uranium that poisoned Navajo lands in the Black Hills; the mass destruction of the island of Viques in Puerto Rico — the list goes on and on.

Of the 1,500 Superfund sites — areas so contaminated that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates their cleanup and directs funds toward their cleanup — more than 900 are the consequence of U.S. military activity. Many are abandoned military bases.

Since its initiation in the 1980s, the Superfund program has only claimed success in cleaning up about 15 to 20 percent of contaminated sites.

But the Pentagon is also the single largest consumer of oil. If it were converted to countries showing the volume of CO2 they send into the atmosphere, it would be listed somewhere around the 50th worst more than 124 countries.

A June 2019 Brown University study calculates that between 2001 and 2017, all branches of the U.S. military emitted 1.2 billion metric tons of greenhouse gases. That amount included 400 million metric tons from the U.S. wars against Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria, as well as attacks in Pakistan.

In an article on Pentagon pollution posted on ClimateAndCapitalism.com, H. Patricia Hynes describes consumption of fuel by the airforce alone: “The U.S. Air Force (USAF) is the single largest consumer of jet fuel in the world.

“Fathom, if you can, the astronomical fuel usage of USAF fighter planes: the F-4 Phantom Fighter burns more than 1,600 gallons of jet fuel per hour and peaks at 14,400 gallons per hour at supersonic speeds. The B-52 Stratotruiser, with eight jet engines, guzzles 500 gallons per minute; ten minutes of flight uses as much fuel as the average driver does in one year of driving!

“A quarter of the world’s jet fuel feeds the USAF fleet of flying killing machines; in 2006, they consumed as much fuel as U.S. planes did during the Second World War (1941-1945) — an astounding 2.6 billion gallons,” Hynes reported.

Since the first U.S. attack on Iraq in 1990, the majority of U.S. military activity has remained in the Arab world to maintain control over oil markets. According to PressTV, U.S. troops are stationed in 14 countries in the Middle East and North Africa, there is a huge U.S. base in Qatar, the Fifth Fleet is stationed in Bahrain, and there is a U.S. military airport in Oman. We can now add Al-‘Tafn in Syria, illegally occupied by the U.S. There may also be illegal bases in occupied Palestine.

It may seem ironic that the oil-guzzling U.S. military has killed, by some estimates, over 500,000 people since the first Gulf War, and destroyed the infrastructure and poisoned the land in several countries in order to maintain control of oil markets. In this era of capitalism in the stage of imperialism, the drive for profit isn’t guided by logic and knows no bounds.

The horror wrought by U.S. imperialism and its military domination will only end with the abolition of both. H

The revolutionary role of Black art & artists

By Rebecka Jackson-Moeser

As part of an ongoing “The Black Aesthetic” community forum series, I interviewed Aleshea Harris at the Harriet Tubman Center in Los Angeles on Sept. 19.

Harris is an accomplished writer in theater and film and her odic and mellifluous style harks back to the radical, lyrical essays that fill “The Black Aesthetic.” Her personal and professional work as a director draws a direct parallel to the struggles that Black artists and Black communities still struggle with.

This series was meant to highlight the intrinsic revolutionary nature of Black art and artists in a world supported by white supremacy and the need for the continued support of Black artists as a voice of all the oppressed. The interview was closed with questions and input from the audience which furthered the conversation about the pervasive nature of oppression in art and the future of the artists’ role as leaders in revolutionary struggles.

Aleshea Harris (left) in conversation with Rebecka Jackson-Moeser.

“The Black Aesthetic” was a seminal text that was composed of a series of essays from the most prominent Black writers, musicians, artists and poets. It included definitions and explorations of what Black art was and was becoming, with lengthy critiques on society, racism and art as a whole. Many of the artists I have chosen to interview from this series were training or working at the time of its publication and were influenced by its contributors in their own professional careers. Others are younger artists who are now grappling with many of the same issues from 1971.

As many of these issues have been exacerbated rather than addressed, what, if anything, is the Black aesthetic of 2019?

The next talk will be in San Diego with Dr. Niyi Coker on Oct. 19.

It will be held at the Malcolm X Library, 5148 Market St., at 3 p.m.
Cuba resists economic strangulation

By Cheryl LaBash

A Sept. 16 Business Insider headline alerted readers: “Grocery stores would run out of food in just 3 days if long-haul truckers stopped working.” Scary thought? But what if they stopped working because they had no fuel — and they had no fuel because a powerful neighbor had blocked oil and gasoline deliveries? Isn’t that what Cuba is facing today? On Sept. 24, the U.S. Department of the Treasury doubled down on its economic war against the Republic of Cuba by blocking four shipping lines in and out of Cuba and the Panamanian ports of Colon and Panama — countries outside of the United States — and four tanker ships that deliver fuel to Cuba.

The Treasury Department press release used heavily coded wording to assert the source of the oil shipments is Venezuela, another independent, sovereign country suffering from Washington-instigated coup plots and U.S. economic, political and even threatened military assaults.

On the same day, at the United Nations, the U.S. representative again and again lauded defense of sovereignty as a supreme goal while shamelessly undermining and assailing Cuba’s sovereign right to trade without extraterritorial interference.

Why Cuba buys oil from Venezuela

Cuba and Venezuela initiated the Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America-Trade Treaty of the Americas (ALBA-TCP) in 2004 as a political, economic, and social alliance in defense of independence, self-determination and the identity of peoples comprising it.

An offshoot of the ALBA-TCP cooperative association is PetroCaribe, a program to “provide low-interest oil sales to nearby countries facing expensive imports” from imperialist-dominated oil monopolies.

Can Cuba buy oil from the United States? No, by U.S. law, Cuba can only buy food and medicine from the U.S. Even those purchases are often impossible because international banks are fearful of being fined for conducting legal financial transactions.

What about other Western Hemisphere oil producers? Mexico, Brazil and Colombia all depend on business relationships with the U.S. Even if they had the will to sell oil to Cuba, their partnership with U.S. multinational corporations prevents it.

Cuba’s oil deliveries will continue to arrive. Because of the unilateral U.S. economic, financial and commercial blockade, the fuel will cost more, taking resources from other needs of the Cuban people.

Behind U.S. government slanders

Big Oil wants to keep prices high and seeks to control Venezuela’s oil and other natural resources to keep it that way. But for Venezuela, promoting a solidarity economy by providing low-cost oil to small neighbors, and giving voices and inclusion to the Indigenous, Afro-descendants, workers, women and poor farmers, is important.

By building and providing 2.8 million homes so the poorest Venezuela families have dignity, while in the U.S. developers gentrify cities and force working families to live on the street, Venezuela shows another world is possible.

Working with Cuba’s advanced medical capabilities and development brings Cuban doctors to Venezuelans who had never had health care, and builds medical schools to train more doctors. It includes partnering with Cuba to restore sight to nearly 50,000 people through Operation Milagro surgeries.

It means teaching everyone to read. Illiteracy was eliminated in 2005, as certified by UNESCO.

Venezuela’s oil profits partnered with Cuba’s medical and education al strength have helped millions of people lead better lives.

The corporate press uses code words like “dictator,” “corruption” and “tyrant” to hide these truths that can be very appealing to working people and oppressed nations inside the U.S., where, for many, life is not so good and getting worse.

The union adage “an injury to one is an injury to all” and “solidarity” live in Cuba and Venezuela. But in the U.S., schools teach self-market ing and individual achievement, plus the false wonders of a “free market” where wealth and benefits go to the already wealthy.

The climate catastrophe threatening all life on earth moved hundreds of thousands of youth into the streets on Sept. 20. Many already understand that the profit-before people capitalist system perpetuates climate deniers and blocks changes that are needed now, not later. International cooperation and socialism, where humanity is the priority, are becoming a realistic and necessary alternative in the eyes and hearts of many.

Solidarity and unity are Cuba’s secret weapons. Solidarity is Venezuela’s shield against the multiple U.S.-inspired coup attempts this year alone. Both of these sovereign and independent countries are resisting the economic war waged by the huge U.S. economic bully who is cruelly attempting to starve people into embracing capitalism. We have only to look at Haiti and Puerto Rico to see the real “wonders” promised by capitalist exploitation.

On Nov. 6 and 7, Cuba’s resolution to end the U.S. blockade will come before the United Nations General Assembly. The people of the world will vote to #UnblockCuba as they have annually since 1992. It is up to us in the U.S. to #UnblockCuba. Plan now to come to New York or organize in your community. Together we can do it.

Amazon fires

‘Justice for workers and the environment are the same struggle’

By Scott Scheffer

About 30 people turned out to a Sept. 7 public forum focusing on the fires blazing in the Amazon forest in Brazil. The event was held at the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice In Los Angeles and was co-sponsored by the People’s Power Assembly-Los Angeles and the American Indian Movement of Southern California.

Two AAM SoCaL leaders, Gray Wolf and Brenda Gutierrez, spoke eloquently about the historical AIM, the battles at Standing Rock and about Indigenous peoples’ struggles throughout the world. Each of them expressed their solidarity with the Indigenous peoples who reside in the Amazon and face being forced out by the right-wing drive to exploit the resources of the forest.

Brazilian activist Jefferson Azevedo of the Socialist Unity Party pointed the finger of blame at the capitalist system itself. He spoke about the dominance of the agricultural, meat and mineral corporations that have found a willing partner in right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro.

But their dominance and the reckless destruction of the Amazon didn’t begin with Bolsonaro, Azevedo do pointed out. Although deforestation slowed when former president and current political prisoner Lula Da Silva was elected, and during the first term of progressive President Dilma Rousseff, it picked up again under pressure from the same forces in Rousseff’s second term.

Azevedo attributed the sweeping attacks on progressive politics in Brazil to this same group of rich and powerful capitalists. “Former President Dilma Rousseff being thrown out of office, Lula being imprisoned, the election of Bolsonaro — none of it would have happened were it not for the dominance in Brazilian politics of these right-wing millionaires.”

“This explains Bolsonaro’s silence when it comes to the fire that is consuming one of the greatest wonders of this planet and the habitat of a wide variety of living species.”

Azevedo ended his talk on a hopeful note: “Capitalist greed dominates today, but is digging its own grave. Thousands of Brazilians are protesting against Bolsonaro now, in spite of the history of right-wing violence against working-class and progressive movements.”

“Protests over environmental issues have been rare in Brazil, but now people see that this is an issue that affects workers, and that justice for workers and environmental justice are the same struggle.”
U.S. hands off the Colombian and Venezuelan people!

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro issued an “orange alert” to the National Bolivarian Armed Forces on Sept. 3. The alert means the Bolivarian military must remain on standby for possible aggression from neighboring Colombia after President Iván Duque said during an event marking the ninth anniversary of the Bolivarian Military University, “The government of Colombia... not extends to maneuver a false flag operation to attack Venezuela and start a military conflict against our country.”

Duque is a close ally of the United States in its effort to overthrow President Maduro and quash the Venezuelan people’s political aspirations. Earlier this year, Colombia provided the staging ground for the United States’ alleged “humanitarian aid” effort by Washington and its puppet, the self-proclaimed “interim president” of Venezuela, Juan Guaidó, as part of a failed coup attempt.

In a televised speech Sept. 9, Maduro added: “We have evidence of conspiracies being hatched in Colombia to send terrorist groups to attack civilian and military targets.” He denounced Colombia’s efforts to get its military officials to defect and the targeting of Venezuela’s radar, air defense and logistical systems.

Maduro also ordered a military exercise called “Peace and Sovereignty” from Sept. 10 to Sept. 28. The exercises will be held in the northern states of Amazonas, Tachira and Zulia, which share a border with Colombia.

The latest threats from Colombia—the recipient of billions of dollars in U.S. military aid—come as the Trump regime continues to tighten the blockade of Venezuela and its close ally, socialist Cuba.

Colombia government betrays peace accords

In this tense climate, on Aug. 29, a section of the Colombian political party Alternative Communal Revolution (APARC), including some of its former peace negotiators, announced their intention to resume armed struggle and reform the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People’s Army (FARC-EP).

All sectors of the Colombian left are committed to peace with social justice, including the faction that took up arms. Many are still committed to the 2016 peace process agreed in Havana although by all accounts the Colombian government has failed its commitments to it.

Since 2016, acts of terror by paramilitary death squads targeting demobilized guerrillas as well as labor activists, human rights defenders, Indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders, and opposition political figures have continued, with more than 700 people killed according to some sources. Even relatives of the demobilized guerrillas have been targeted.

The assassination of community leader María del Pilar Hurtado in the northern province of Córdoba sparked national demonstrations on July 26 demanding government compliance with the peace accords and an end to the killings.

Following the Aug. 29 announcement of the FARC-EP’s reconstitution, the U.S.-backed Duque regime accused Venezuela of providing aid and refuge to the insurgency. Venezuela rejected that accusation and pointed the finger of blame clearly at Duque’s regime for the breakdown of the peace accords.

“It is irresponsible that Iván Duque, with absolute impertinence... looks to displace his exclusive responsibility in the planned dismantling of the peace process,” stated an Aug. 30 Venezuelan Foreign Ministry communiqué.

On Sept. 11, the Organization of American States invoked the 1947 Inter-American Reciprocal Assistance Treaty (IRAT) mutual defense agreement against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, heightening the threat of U.S.-backed military regime change aggression.

Murder in Colombia: Made in USA

It’s been said that Colombia is the linchpin of U.S. military strategy in Latin America. This is demonstrat ed by the fact that Colombia recently became the first Latin American country to affiliate with NATO. Currently the U.S. maintains nine military bases in Colombia.

A July 18 article in Foreign Policy described U.S. efforts to pressure Colombia to buy 15 of the latest Lockheed Martin F-16 fighter jets, citing Washington’s “alarm” at the situation in Venezuela. Maj. Gen. Andrew Croft, commander of U.S. Air Forces Southern, said the sale would “be a great advancement for not only their capability to defend their sovereign air space” but would also increase Colombia’s ability to work with U.S. forces in the region.

As the Washington Office on Latin America reported in May 2017: “Since ‘Plan Colombia’ began with a large appropriation in 2000, the United States has given Colombia over $60 billion in assistance. Of this amount, about 70 percent went to Colombia’s military and police forces. Major initiatives included U.S.-backed military offenses against the guerrillas, forced eradication of more than 4 million acres of coca, the training of over 100,000 person nel, and the delivery or upgrade of over 100 helicopters.”

Ultimately, it’s up to the Colombian people to determine the best means to continue their long and heroic struggle for a New Colombia based on real peace with social justice, free of U.S. military occupation and exploitation of giant transnational monopolies that exploit the labor, land and other resources that rightly belong to the people.

In this struggle, the people of Colombia, Venezuela and the whole region will need to rely upon and strengthen one another in the anti-imperialist spirit of Simón Bolívar, the 19th century liberation hero who sought to unite the peoples of South America. In that spirit, the 2010 Community of Latin America and Caribbean States, along with the 2004, Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America—People’s Trade Treaty and Petro-Caribe were created, showing the way forward to create a zone of peace.

For the anti-war and anti-imperialist movement in the U.S., our focus, our message and our actions must clearly be: U.S. and Colombia hands off Venezuela, U.S. out of Colombia and all of Latin America!”

PEOPLES TRAVEL ADVISORY FOR COLOMBIA

The Colombian government has launched many campaigns to change the image of the country and present itself as a safe and fun place for all the family, indeed, a tourist paradise. That is a lie. Given that one of the worst human rights crises is in Colombia, COLOMBIA IS DANGEROUS.

For the more than 730 human rights defenders and social leaders who have been murdered since the implementation of the Peace Accord in 2016. They are being killed at a rate of one victim every 39 hours. The assassins are military and paramilitary trots that act with impunity.

For the ex-insurgents who have laid down their weapons in order to participate in the peace who, since the implementation of the accord, have lost more than 138 persons murdered by enemies of the peace.

For the indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities who constitute more than 40% of the victims of right-wing violence.

For the more than 6,100 indigenous children in the Department of La Guajira, who have died from hunger and thirst, and the Wayuú communities who do not have food security while foreign mines rob their water and the Colombian and US government ignore them to invest in militarization and use their territory to finance interference and prepare for war against Venezuela.

For the more 8 million forcibly internally displaced and the more than 5.5 million of Colombian refugees in Venezuela. The majority of these are rural families and social leaders displaced due to the threats and assaults against them by the military and paramilitaries, and from the dispossession of their territories to satisfy the greed of big landowners, narco-traffickers, and foreign corporations.

For info about responsible travel to Colombia visit COALITION FOR PEACE IN COLOMBIA

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STRUGGLE • LA LUCHA

Sept. 30, 2019 Page 7
El 3 de septiembre, el presidente de Venezuela Nicolás Maduro emitió una "alerta roja" a la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana. La alerta quiere decir que el ejército Bolivariano debe mantenerse en pie de guerra, y que los esfuerzos de Colombia para enviar un supuesto "ayuda humanitaria" para el escenario para un supuesto esfuerzo de "ayuda humanitaria" por parte de Washington y su títere, el presidente Iván Duque, sean considerados como un fracaso. Venezuela rechazó esa amenaza de agresión militar instigada por Estados Unidos para el cambio del régimen.

Asesinatos en Colombia: Creados en Estados Unidos

Se ha dicho que Colombia es el país clave de la estrategia militar de Estados Unidos en América Latina. Esto se demuestra por el hecho de que Colombia se convirtió en el primer país latinoamericano en afiliarse a la OTAN. Actualmente, Estados Unidos mantiene nueve bases militares en Colombia. Un artículo del 18 de julio en 'Foreign Policy' describió los esfuerzos de Estados Unidos para presionar a Colombia para que compre 15 de los últimos aviones de combate F-16 de la Lockheed Martin, citando la "alarma" de Washington sobre la situación en Venezuela. El mayor general Andrew Croft, comandante de la Fuerza Aérea Estadounidense del Sur, dijo que la venta "sería un gran avance no solo por su capacidad para defender su espacio aéreo soberano", sino que también aumentaría la capacidad de Colombia para trabajar con las fuerzas estadounidenses en la región. (foreignpolicy.com/2019/07/18)

Como la Oficina de Washington en Latinoamérica reportara en mayo 2017. "Desde que el ‘Plan Colombia’ comenzó con una gran asignación en 2000, Estados Unidos le ha dado a Colombia más de $10 mil millones en asistencia. De esta cantidad, alrededor del 70 por ciento se destinó a las fuerzas militares y policiales de Colombia. Las principales iniciativas incluyeron ofensivas militares respaldadas por los Estados Unidos contra la guerra, la erradicación de más de 4 millones de coca, la capacitación de más de 100,000 empleados y la entrega de actualización de más de 100 helicópteros". (https://www.wola.org)

En esta lucha, el pueblo colombiano ha desarrollado un camino a seguir para crear una nueva sociedad. Los maestros colombianos se declararon en huelga el 12 de septiembre para exigir que el gobierno cumpla con los acuerdos de paz. Al menos 10 maestros han sido asesinados desde que el presidente Iván Duque asumió el cargo.

El 11 de septiembre, la Organización de Estados Americanos invocó el Tratado Interamericano de Asistencia Recíproca [JRA, por sus siglas en inglés] de 1947 - un acuerdo de defensa mutua contra la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, que aumenta el amenaza de agresión militar instigada por Estados Unidos para el cambio del régimen.

En esta tenso clima el 29 de agosto, el presidente de Venezuela Nicolás Maduro emitió una "alerta roja" a la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana. La alerta quiere decir que el ejército Bolivariano debe mantenerse en pie de guerra, y que los esfuerzos de Colombia para enviar un supuesto "ayuda humanitaria" para el escenario para un supuesto esfuerzo de "ayuda humanitaria" por parte de Washington y su títere, el presidente Iván Duque, sean considerados como un fracaso. Venezuela rechazó esa amenaza de agresión militar instigada por Estados Unidos para el cambio del régimen.

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