

RED FIRE

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WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!



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US/EU/AUST: HANDS OFF VENEZUELA! FOR WORKERS' POWER IN LATIN AMERICA

(Since this article was written, the US coup attempt in Venezuela appears to have stalled. However, the US seems to have been behind the sabotage of Venezuela's electricity grid during March, causing widespread blackouts. Workers internationally still need to be on guard against further attempts to undermine or overthrow the government of Venezuela. At the same time, left-wing opposition to the Maduro/PSUV government needs to be built within Venezuela, as a first step towards real socialism internationally.)

By Paul Nave

23-02-2019 – Self-declared “President” of Venezuela, the right-wing Juan Guaido, has called on the actual President Nicolas Maduro to step down – or else. Or else what? The Venezuelan military remains on the side of the Venezuelan government, and the governments of Russia and China – the only powers with the material ability to counter US imperialism – have recognised Maduro as President, and have denounced what amounts

to a brazen attempt at violent regime change. Juan Guaido at this stage appears to have little chance of his coup – more or less obviously in collaboration with Washington – doing anything but floundering.

RED FIRE is the publication of the Workers League.

The Workers League is an organisation which seeks to build a vanguard party for working people, which can lead the struggle for socialism and a world without war.

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Unfortunately, there are ways in which this barely concealed US led (yet another) Latin American coup can “succeed”. Juan Guaido has set a deadline of February 23 for the Maduro government to allow “humanitarian” aid into the country.¹ The arrival and stockpiling of aid packages on the Colombian border with Venezuela is a re-hash of a trick used many times by the US ruling class when attempting regime change in Latin America. Deliver the aid, entice people to collect it, and use the cover of “aid” for a stock standard invasion. This time, Juan Guaido is calling for one million of his right-wing supporters to act as chaperones for the aid,² who will likely act as human shields guarding the entry of US or Colombian troops. Even those with little political awareness can see the trap being laid.

Tripwire for World War III

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-politics-guaido/venezuelas-guaido-says-humanitarian-aid-will-arrive-on-feb-23-idUSKCN1Q1277> (18-02-19)

²

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/02/18/world/social-issues-world/venezuelas-juan-guaido-calls-million-volunteers-aid-standoff-maduro/#.XG1wWbhx2Uk> (18-02-19)

Working people the world over must be aware that we can ill afford to allow the Venezuelan government to be overthrown by US imperialism, with its backing from the European Union (EU) and lackey medium sized imperialists such as Australia. Whatever its shortcomings, the “Bolivarian Revolution” in Venezuela over 20 years has built a form of resistance to the onslaught of Western led “globalisation”. Even though the forces of Western capital give scant regard to the sovereignty of a nation which retains a shred of independence, it is vital that this principle be defended by workers. What is more, if the US Empire is not staved off at this point, it could set off a wider war across the Americas, setting the scene for what many believed was impossible 20 years ago – World War III.

Workers must not be cowed, however. Out of crisis emerges great opportunity. And whatever military power the Venezuelan right-wing opposition can count on, it cannot be won with arms alone. A political struggle must ensue, and it is one in which Venezuelan and international workers must prevail.

US President Donald Trump in his recent State of the Union address won stormy applause from Republicans and Democrats when he claimed that “America will never be a socialist country”. With the US working class in desperation, enduring economic hardships seemingly without end, Mr Trump and the housebroken Democrats should not be so confident. All the prerequisites for a socialist revolution in the US are there – but what is missing is genuine leadership of US workers. Arguably the foremost working class leader in world history – V.I. Lenin – understood more than most that the working class will not struggle to overthrow capitalism *except* under the leadership of revolutionary Marxists. This applies not only to the US, but also in the EU and Australia – and it is also the case in Venezuela.

Chavismo has run its course

No matter how many times the US ruling class, and the right-wing Venezuelan opposition it collaborates with, decry “socialism” in Venezuela; the reality is that the first steps towards it have not been taken. “Chavismo” – the movement named after Hugo Chavez when elected in 1998 – was always a political project which explicitly rejected the key lessons of 20th century socialism. That is, it rejected the need for a Marxist vanguard party to lead the workers in a struggle for state power. From the distortions of Marxism which conservative and bureaucratic leadership of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe brought about, the Chavistas drew the wrong conclusion that, therefore, the need for “the dictatorship of the proletariat” – a workers’ republic representing the working class in power – is obsolete. But today reality is starkly demonstrating that what is obsolete is Chavismo itself, or “Socialism of the 21st Century”. This was always a liberal vulgarisation of socialism, and an overt break with the first tenets of Marxism.

Chavismo under Chavez, or now under Maduro, was never about confrontation, let alone a contest, with Venezuelan capitalists. It was always an attempt to **placate and pacify** them. Maduro has bent over backwards to keep on reasonable terms with the Venezuelan capitalists, and by extension, with US imperialism itself. One result of this was leaving the banks in the hands of their private owners, and hence an inability to control hyperinflation – now likely to be running at 1 000 000 %.³ Needless to say, this drives up prices, especially of vital goods like food, fuel and medicine, to a level which is unaffordable for most Venezuelans. There are many examples of Venezuelan businesses hoarding goods to make them scarce, which pushes up prices. This can then be blamed on the government. In 2017, President Maduro accused bakeries of refusing to make bread, hoarding the flour to make more profitable

brownies and cookies.⁴ The absence of bread hits the poor – the base of support for Maduro – the hardest.

Steve Ellner claims that the economic problems in Venezuela have a three-fold source.⁵ Firstly, the nosediving oil prices, which have declined precipitously since 2014. Secondly, the impact of US sanctions on Venezuela – which have even included sanctions on Cilia Flores, the wife of President Maduro. And thirdly, the mistaken policies of the Maduro government. Venezuela has the world’s largest proven oil reserves, and the oil prices never sank before 2014. US sanctions also inevitably take their toll. But it is not simply a case of the “mistaken policies” of the Maduro government. The whole approach and framework of the false theory of “Socialism of the 21st Century” is at fault. Capitalism cannot be reformed, even with the majority of electoral support, expressed many times over 20 years.

Unity of the “people” ?

So called “Socialism of the 21st Century”, as practiced by Chavez and the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), is at best left-leaning social-democracy. It has never made a political break with capitalism, and hence its impending downfall – perhaps at the hands of the invading US Empire. It is not possible to “unite the people” in Venezuela, or in the US, or Australia, or any country where capitalism rules. Capitalism means the division of society into the two great classes involved in production – capital and labour. For labour to release itself from under the heel of capital, and thus liberate all of society, the working class must take power in its own name. This cannot be done in the name of Chavismo, or Bolivarianism, or “the people” – for all of these attempt to “unite” classes with irreconcilable interests. Socialism is above all the working class in power, and this can only be

³ <https://www.newsweek.com/venezuela-inflation-hits-833997-course-1-million-2019-1207509> (20-02-19)

⁴ <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2017/04/07/522912791/venezuelas-bread-wars-with-food-scarce-government-accuses-bakers-of-hoarding> (20-02-19)

⁵ <https://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/14334> (20-02-19)

achieved **by splitting, not uniting**, with the middle and upper classes, and especially the ruling class.

Labor must oppose Trump coup in Venezuela

Pip Hinman & Federico Fuentes, February 7, 2019
Issue 1208 // Australia



Bill Shorten has committed Labor to lining up with those countries threatening military intervention in Venezuela to support Trump's handpicked president Juan Guaidó.

Above: Graphic above from *Green Left Weekly*, the newspaper of the Socialist Alliance (SA). SA call on the Labor Party to join a campaign against imperialist war, seeking “unity” across class lines. They also refer to the US led coup on Venezuela as a “Trump coup” – which ignores the fact that the Democrats almost universally support violent regime change in Venezuela, tied as they are to US imperialism. Rather, workers can only effectively oppose imperialist war by breaking with the Labor Party on these shores, and with the Democrats in the US. Image from GLW #1208.

Yet this is not the strategy of the PSUV in Venezuela, and nor can it be. Their approach is to mobilise their own supporters, while at the same time cutting deals and making concessions to the political right-wing and the Venezuelan capitalists. The political intent is that of a united front with the capitalist class. Not only is the bourgeoisie entirely uninterested in such an alliance, these attempts further confuse and disorient the working class, and drive them away from the most essential first step – a political break with private capital and the reformist illusions of the PSUV. A political unification with the ruling class is always a recipe for stagnation and demoralisation, as workers wait interminably for signs of things improving.

If “unity” of all people in Venezuela is a mistaken strategy, it is doubly so internationally, including here in Australia. The Socialist Alliance (SA) has largely organised political solidarity with the Venezuelan Bolivarian process for years. It is again doing so, but again with the politics of “unity”, and this time including unity with the Labor Party. In its newspaper *Green Left Weekly*, SA call for the Australian Labor Party (ALP) to oppose the US led coup in Venezuela. They write: “The Labor leadership must reverse its decision to recognise Juan Guaidó. It must also demand the coalition government pressure the US to lift its sanctions on Venezuela and rule out any military intervention.”⁶

Here the strategy is one where SA seeks to improve the policy of the ALP, so it can work together with the ALP, supposedly against an imperialist war. Yet the ALP represents one wing of the Australian ruling class – the same ruling class represented by PM Morrison and the Liberal Party. By extension, it seeks to lead the Venezuelan solidarity movement into a united front with the very ruling class which has loyally served the US ruling class in war since Korea in the 1950s. Working people can only lose through being politically subordinated, once again, to the major political parties and thus to Australian imperialism.

The Communist Party of Australia (CPA), alongside SA, retails the line of the reformist government of Venezuela, in calling for a “peaceful political solution to the crisis based on the principles of self-determination and non-interference in the affairs of a sovereign nation.”⁷ In other words, the CPA calls for “dialogue” and “negotiations”, when the actions of US imperialism have clearly indicated that it will only accept the abolition of the Venezuelan government. Workers can hardly be empowered by staid calls on their own governments, and the US government, to come to what could only be a temporary agreement.

⁶ <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/labor-must-oppose-trump-coup-venezuela> (20-02-19)

⁷ <https://www.cpa.org.au/guardian/2019/1857/02-editorial.html> (20-02-19)

Workers to Power

Workers in Australia should note that while joint work with SA on the question of the current defence of Venezuela can be carried out, such co-operation is NOT possible when it comes to the question of Syria, Iran or Sudan. SA calls for “Hands Off Venezuela”, but for eight years strongly opposed both the demand “Hands Off Syria” and the organisation Hands Off Syria – as they vociferously backed US led regime change against the Syrian Arab Republic⁸. Likewise for Iran⁹ and Sudan¹⁰, SA again loudly advocate US led regime change - while simultaneously opposing US led regime change in Venezuela!

The CPA, in addition, is also an organisation that working people CANNOT be allies with on the question of Iran – where they concur with the Tudeh Party of Iran that the Iranian government represents a medieval dictatorship!!¹¹ The US state department would approve. Nor can the CPA be an ally on Sudan, where it joins with SA to once again call for political power to be usurped and handed to a US backed opposition.¹² When it comes to Venezuela today, the CPA and SA are also only half correct. Granted, they call for the defeat of the US backed coup attempt, the non-recognition of coup leader Juan Guaido, and the lifting of US sanctions on Venezuela. Yet they also politically defend President Maduro and the PSUV – a reformist (and still capitalist) government which in practice attempts to *conciliate* US imperialism. What is required is the mobilisation of workers in Venezuela and across Latin America to confront and defeat US imperialism – ***through efforts to organise workers to take state power into their own hands***. A workers’ state is the key mechanism

⁸ <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/idlib-not-end-story> (21-02-19)

⁹ <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/iranian-workers-protests-confront-regime-crisis> (21-02-19)

¹⁰ <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/sudan-uprising-peoples-revolution> (21-02-19)

¹¹ <https://www.cpa.org.au/guardian/2017/1806/09-greetings-tudeh.html> (21-02-19)

¹² <http://cpa.org.au/guardian/2019/1856/14-sudans.html> (21-02-19)

through which imperialism can be temporarily staved off until workers internationally are able to bring down “their own” capitalism.

Such an approach, however, is anathema to the PSUV in Venezuela, and also to SA and the CPA on these shores. While in Venezuela the PSUV practice a “united broad front” with the Venezuelan business class, in Australia SA and the CPA practice a “united broad front” with the ALP, i.e. the “liberal” wing of the ruling class. In both cases, workers are thus tied politically to a coalition with the bourgeoisie – a recipe for complete disaster. In order for workers to either defend themselves against capitalist austerity, or against a US led coup, workers must know exactly who their enemies are and who are their allies. To the extent that the Venezuelan government and military defend the country against US-led overthrow, workers should not stand in the way, and even assist. At the same time, not one bar of political support can be offered to the PSUV. In fact, workers in Venezuela desperately need to forge the Marxist vanguard party which can begin the task of winning the most class-conscious Chavistas to the perspective of uniting the workers, rather than the “people”. This is the missing link that workers internationally are crying out for.



WORKERS LEAGUE

LETTERS, COMMENTS....

Revisionism and the Toxic Culture of the Left

by Sam Bullock

In my years in the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) as well as Trotskyist parties, I have seen a toxic culture develop which does not allow criticism and critical thinking. This culture does not allow the rank and file membership to hold the leadership to account. Nor does it allow rights to those members who have a disability.

The CPA's members should engage with critical thinking before supporting Union bureaucrats who live in silver castles. The CPA also has intellectual leaders who talk to members like they are pre-schoolers. The CPA also practices ableism, where those known to have autism are subjected to bullying from the CPA leadership. It is in fact not communist to not allow criticism from members who are unemployed. They also framed one member for working within the Australia-DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) Friendship and Cultural Society. This member was forced by the CPA Brisbane Branch leadership to quit when he was at that time the President of the Branch. The Australian left and the working class needs to avoid such destructive behaviour.

Why the Left in Australia has Abandoned Marxist-Leninist Ideology

By Sam Bullock

While the revisionist left ask questions about revisionist ideology, it is a fact that Lenin made clear in "Two Tactics of Social Democracy" – the working class cannot collaborate with the ruling class. Yet, all parties on the left, from Trotskyists to the Communist Party of Australia, collaborate with the ruling class which results in pacifying the working class. Euro-Communism is not a class struggle ideology, and is similar in effect to anarchism. The backing of the Union bureaucracy disarms the left also, as this ideology strongly supports capitalism and "our own" ruling class.

Some on the left say that they are communist, yet support US imperialism when it goes to war. We cannot achieve socialism through "peaceful co-existence" with imperialism. Rather than class collaboration through

parliament we need proletarian revolution. The examples of the Communist Parties in Europe, such as Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy show that in practice they are only social-democratic.

Socialism ultimately comes from an armed insurgency led by the working class, with the objective of seizing state power. This is what occurred in Cuba, China, Vietnam and the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea). They did not collaborate with the class enemy. This is in stark contrast to Union bureaucrats in this country, who live in luxury and are only concerned about highly skilled workers. They have no social conscience about those who are unemployed.

The publication of **RED FIRE** involves considerable expense, but it is a task which is willingly undertaken to advance the struggle for socialism.

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SUDAN: US FUELS DEADLY SUBVERSION



Above: Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir (left) becomes the first Arab leader to visit Syria and Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad since the beginning of the US led war for regime change. Image from Sputnik International.

By Kurt Unmack

10-02-2019: In the horn of Africa, some Sudanese people move onto the streets to protest against the price of bread. The demonstrations soon force a response from the government, which moves to prevent them from spreading. The demonstrators call for the overthrow of the state. For the left internationally, on the surface it appears to be a straight forward case – we back the people who are demanding bread – or do we? In Africa in 2019, things are not at all what they seem.

After the experience of Libya, Syria, Ukraine and now Venezuela, working people need to be alert to any suspected regime change effort by the US Empire. And in Sudan currently, all the hallmarks of yet another attempt to overthrow yet another “regime” which is independent of Washington are

there. How can we determine this? One giveaway is the fact that the demand for cheaper bread almost immediately became a call for regime change. This is usually a tell-tale sign that imperialism is fomenting yet another hybrid war for the overturn of a state. Another sign is that the protestors immediately moved to burn down offices of the ruling National Congress Party, headed by President Omar Al-Bashir¹³, and set fire to some government vehicles. Suffice to say that demanding cheaper bread at the same time as knee-jerk pyromania is more than a little suspicious.

Sudan pivots to Russia, Syria

¹³ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/sudan-bread-price-protests-rebellion-government-khartoum-a8697986.html> (03-02-19)

Another sign that the current protests in Sudan are not the genuine article is the fact that they broke out immediately after Al-Bashir met with Syria's President Bashar Al-Assad in Damascus on December 16. What is more, President Bashir was flown from the Sudanese capital Khartoum to Damascus in Russian military aircraft.¹⁴ This visit made Bashir the first Arabic leader of a country to visit Al-Assad in eight years – during the time of the West's proxy war for regime change against Syria. Al-Bashir's visit to President Assad seemed to be intended to mark a public display of reality in Syria – the war for regime change waged by the US government is over, and Syria will, for now, remain independent. It also seemed to be an intentional display of the re-alignment of Bashir's government away from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf monarchies, and towards Russia and Syria. Workers can be thankful for small mercies such as this. The Sudanese government's participation in the Saudi led war on Yemen is almost unforgivable. Bashir's government reportedly sent four attack aircraft and up to 10 000 troops to take part in the attempted suppression of the Houthis defending Yemen.¹⁵ The war on Yemen was a spin-off of the failed regime change war against Syria, and Al-Bashir's participation in this war against fellow Arabs should be condemned, despite an apparent need now to defend Sudan against US led regime change.

Bashir's tilt away from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf monarchies such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and towards Syria and Russia is to be welcomed, if only to counter the nefarious ends of US imperialist pressure on Sudan. Despite the US government recently lifting crippling sanctions on Sudan, President Bashir claims – not without foundation – that the US seeks the balkanisation of Sudan into five parts. Bashir stated that Sudan sought Russian made S-300 anti-missile protection systems and SU-35s (advanced Russian fighter jets)

¹⁴ <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20181219-why-did-sudans-president-visit-bashar-al-assad-in-syria/> (03-02-19)

¹⁵ <https://southfront.org/sudanese-forces-in-yemeni-war/> (05-02-19)

in order to protect themselves from a US onslaught seeking to shatter the country.¹⁶ In contrast to the decision to assist the war on Yemen, this decision is a rational one. The US was transparently behind the moves to separate South Sudan from Sudan in 2011, when it backed the “Christian” south against the “Muslim” north.¹⁷ What is more, this campaign, which inevitably led to further war, was backed by Hollywood celebrities including Don Cheadle, Mark Wahlberg and the notorious US imperialist adjunct George Clooney.¹⁸ George Clooney would go on to make moves to produce a film glorifying the Al-Qaeda outfit “The White Helmets” in Syria, which made fake videos falsely portraying them as “rescuers”.¹⁹ Even with Hollywood's backing, the US Empire and their Al-Qaeda proxies were defeated in Syria with the assistance of Russian air power – particularly the SU-35. Hence, Bashir's desire for a stock of these jets for Sudan.

New Silk Road

As is now customary, US ruling class designs in Africa are consistently overhauled in an attempt to ward off the assistance offered by Red China. Any means which can disrupt trade, investment, healthcare or infrastructure development assistance offered by the world's largest socialist power to African countries, will be considered or carried out by Washington. This includes all measures up to and including the stoking of fratricidal wars. All of this is under the watchful eye of AFRICOM – the US Empire's strategic command for the African continent. And AFRICOM takes a dim view of China's New Silk Road (One Belt One Road – OBOR), which seeks to link Africa and Asia to Europe through mutually beneficial construction

¹⁶

<https://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/11/25/543483/Sudan-US-sanctions-Bashir> (05-02-19)

¹⁷

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/07/us-played-key-role-in-southern-sudans-long-journey-to-independence/241660/> (05-02-19)

¹⁸ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14050504> (05-02-19)

¹⁹ <http://www.handsoffsyriasydney.com/articles/white-helmets-black-hearts/> (05-02-19)

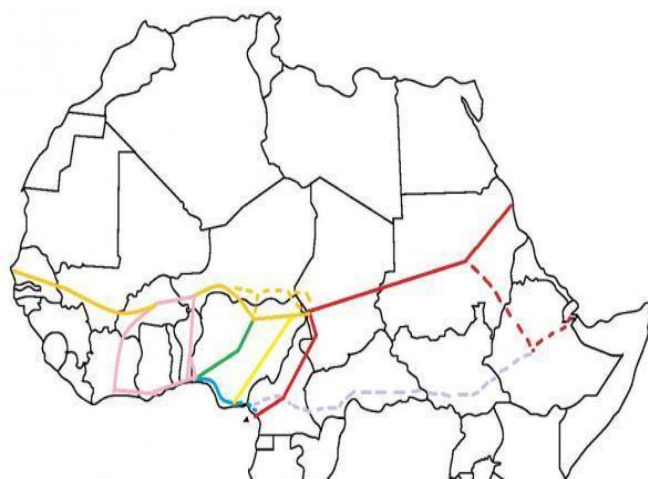
of roads, ports and railways. Heaven forbid that African countries should accept development assistance from the predominantly planned and collectivised Chinese economy! Given that Sudan is a strategic hub of the African section of the New Silk Road, it follows that Sudan is thus a prime target for a hybrid political/psychological/diplomatic war.

To give just one example, in 2017 it was announced that China would build a railway connecting the strategic Port Sudan on the edge of the Red Sea to the Chadian capital N'Djamena. This will allow surrounding Eastern African countries such as Cameroon and Nigeria a link to the sea port at Port Sudan – a link to Europe and Asia.²⁰ The US ruling class, from their point of view, simply cannot stand by and allow any African country to develop, or at the least, not through Washington. China, with its economy operating on a fundamentally different basis to predatory imperialism, has nothing to fear and everything to gain from the rise of African countries out of Third World status. The US economy, based on private profit – cannot tolerate any competition whatsoever. The Chinese economy, which does not operate primarily on private profit, but according to its Five Year Plans, welcomes trading partners, cultural exchanges, and friendly political alliances. Hence – the US covert war for regime change in just about all of Africa. Today Sudan, tomorrow Nigeria, and on and on it goes.

US admits one of their own behind the “protests”

Sometimes the hand of the US deep state reveals itself, and in this case, its involvement in the regime change protests in Sudan. The “Voice of America” – US state department propaganda pumped around the world – admitted in a recent article that Rudwan Dawod helped organise the recent protests in Sudan.²¹ Mr Dawod, the article

states, is a Sudanese-American politician. He lives sometimes in Oregon in the US, and sometimes in Khartoum. He heads up the transparently dubious “Sudan of the Future” campaign, and when in Khartoum he is employed by “Sudan Sunrise” - an openly US funded NGO.²² Mr Dawod has previously been arrested by Sudanese authorities, apparently on suspicion of spying for both the US and South Sudan. Given his employment by a US backed NGO, such suspicions have more than reasonable grounds. US backed NGOs are planted around the globe, endlessly plotting regime change on behalf of their benefactors, in Russia, China and Iran. The addition of Sudan to this list would surprise no one.



Above: Map of the North of Africa highlighting the road and railway projects slated to be built by China as part of its New Silk Road initiative. The Cameroon-Chad-Sudan railway would be a crucial link between east and west Africa, assisting the development of all of these countries and the region. The US Empire has a clear motive to foment unrest in Sudan in order to attempt to de-rail (literally) such projects. Image from Global Research

No one, that is, apart from the imperial left in Australia. Leading from behind on this score, is the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). The CPA should be well aware of the role of Red China in Africa, and the desperate measures of the US Empire and its de facto permanent AFRICOM occupation force. However, the CPA gives *carte blanche* endorsement to the Sudanese Communist

²⁰ <https://www.globalresearch.ca/sudan-is-indispensable-to-chinas-silk-road-vision-for-africa/5619886> (06-02-19)

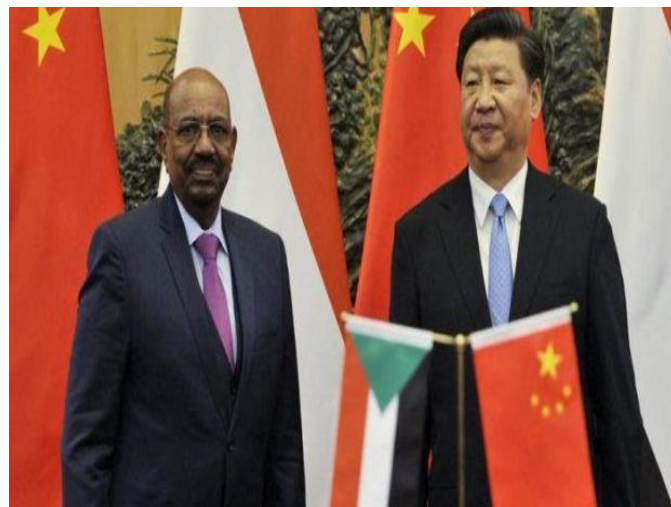
²¹ <https://www.voanews.com/a/sudanese-american-politician-who-organized-protests-goes-missing/4749567.html> (06-02-19)

²² <http://en.rfi.fr/africa/20120814-US-concerned-over-re-arrest-of-aid-worker-in-sudan> (06-02-19)

Party (SCP), and blindly assumes that the actions of this party align with its name. Over a century has passed since Karl Marx wrote that just as we do not judge an individual on what he thinks of himself, we also do not judge political parties on the basis of what they claim to be. If the Sudanese Communist Party claims to be “communist” while calling for the overthrow of the Sudanese “regime” at the same time as US backed NGOs operating in Sudan are helping to organise this, it follows that, at least on this issue, the Sudanese Communist Party is barely left-wing, let alone “communist”. By retailing the Sudanese Communist Party’s calls for what can only at this stage be US backed regime change,²³ the CPA adds to its membership ledger of the imperial left.

Always eager to be the first in line to call for regime change in a country targeted by US imperialism, the Socialist Alliance (SA) has leapt into the fray. Seemingly SA has drawn no lessons from its strident backing of the US led wars for regime change against Libya and Syria, and has even deepened the errors. Its newspaper *Green Left Weekly* is replete with articles urging the overthrow of Sudan, seemingly oblivious to the fact that the contrived protests in Sudan do not appear to have gained anything other than token support across the East African country, which has a population of 40 million people. The photos of the “mass rallies” in Sudan are the classical narrow angle photo, which only shows a section of a small crowd, falsely implying a huge attendance. Even aside from this, basic Marxists should know just by the title of the declaration of the opposition parties, that this is an orchestrated pro-Western coup, with some backing from domestic conservative forces. The “Declaration of Freedom and Change”²⁴ sounds wonderful for the well paid technical staff of the Sudanese Professionals Association, but will do nothing for poor and

working class Sudanese. In fact, US backed regime change in Sudan, which blocked off development assistance offered by China, will be disastrous for them.



Above: Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir (left) meets with Chinese President Xi Jinping, marking 60 years of diplomatic relations between Sudan and the People’s Republic of China. Sudan was one of the first countries, and one of the first African countries, to recognise the Chinese workers’ state which emerged out of the triumph of their revolution in 1949. Today, with the enormous economic rise of the PRC, the US ruling class looks on with horror at the co-operation between Africa and China. This leads to ongoing attempts by them to disrupt Africa/China trade and investment. Image from Sudan Daily

“Freedom and Change” cannot be won through the US Empire

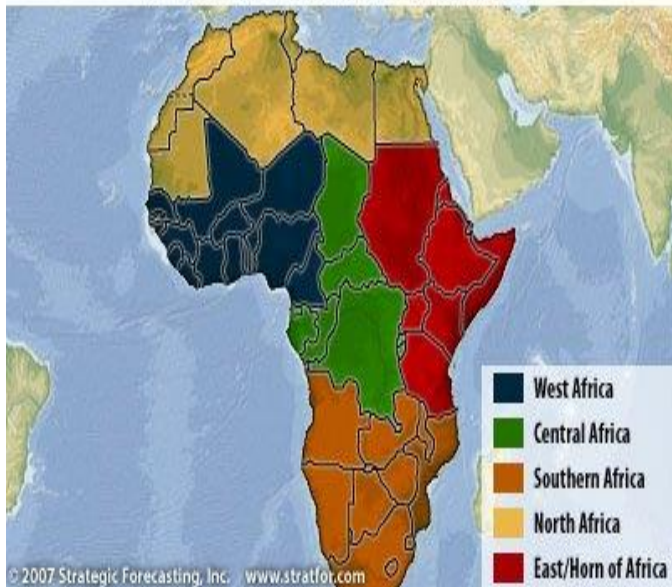
This is not to deny socio-economic and political problems for the working class of Sudan. Similar issues exist in all countries, but especially in African countries which are still prevented from developing as one consequence of the history of European colonialism. If US and European imperialism did not exist at all, if there was no military, political, financial or diplomatic interference in Sudan, or in Africa as a whole, from the ruling classes of the United Kingdom (former colonial ruler) and the United States, there is a small possibility that workers internationally could come behind political movements in Sudan – even ones aimed at forming a new government. But this

²³ <http://www.cpa.org.au/guardian/2019/1854/04-sudanese.html> (09-02-19)

²⁴ <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/can-sudanese-people-bring-down-dictator> (09-02-19)

fantasy world does not exist. Imperialism – the expansionary needs of financial capital from the First World “great” powers – has created the political problems in Africa, and it will remain until it is overthrown – principally by workers in “their own” centres.

AFRICOM REGIONAL INTERESTS



Above: The US military’s AFRICOM (Africa Command) divides Africa into its’ own interests. This is open modern day imperialism, with US troops operating in many African countries, not content with the NATO led destruction of Libya in 2011. Working people have a direct interest in resisting US imperialism in Africa and internationally. Image from InformAfrica.com.

IF there was political movement in Sudan which was clearly leading a struggle for socialism, for workers’ power, and IF this movement was led by parties or a party which made its call for a workers’ government in Sudan and throughout Africa, and IF this movement made it crystal clear that it opposed the interference of US imperialism *in toto*, THEN workers internationally could look at engaging with such a movement in a supportive manner. IF any of these characteristics were present, or anything even leaning in such a direction, it MAY be worth looking at a position of critical support for such a movement. Marxism, as Lenin stressed repeatedly, is the concrete analysis

of concrete conditions. Leftists have to analyse each set of circumstances on a case by case basis.

The contrived political protests in Sudan today do not meet ANY of even the most basic pre-conditions that would lead to an offering of even the slightest critical support. Not only does the US state department admit that one of its citizens was organising the protests, part of the Sudanese “opposition” admits it has met with high level US consular staff. For example, the opposition Sudan Call alliance met with US Ambassador Steven Koutsis, at their request, in London in September 2018, to “discuss their position on the peace talks and democratic process”.²⁵ After the experience of the regime wars on Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and attempts at regime change in Ukraine and Iran, amongst others, one can imagine how the US state department views a “democratic process” !!

Working people in Sudan have an interest in opposing, not backing, US imperialist plans for their country. While maintaining their political independence, state and non-state development assistance offered on good terms from socialist China should be welcomed, and even leveraged against the aims of AFRICOM. Socialists internationally should seek to expose the role of the US Empire in Africa, while extending efforts to forge genuine Marxist vanguard parties – the key element of true internationalism.



²⁵ <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article66325> (10-02-19)

INVASION DAY 2019: WHICH WAY FORWARD?



Above: Part of the march on Invasion Day (January 26) in Brisbane 2019. Image from www.abc.net.au

By Adam Baker

26-01-2019 – As we move deeper into the 21st century, the general condition of the Aboriginal people, the original inhabitants and custodians of the continent which was later named Australia, remains precarious. A terrible reminder was the news that there were five Aboriginal youth suicides in the first weeks of the new year, and a sixth was being treated in hospital after another attempt. Three were in Western Australia, in Perth, Port Hedland and Warmun, and one each from Adelaide and Townsville. Aboriginal children attempt suicide at five times the rate of non-indigenous children, and crushing poverty remains the largest driver of

such tragic outcomes.²⁶ Homelessness, lack of healthcare, education and basic infrastructure for remote indigenous communities remains a critical problem, which no Australian government has even bothered to seriously address. Where Aboriginal people live in large urban areas, the systematic discrimination they face in housing, education and employment is a constant reminder of an oppression not faced by non-indigenous people and migrants who have made Australia their home.

In recent years, there has been a change the date of the marking of January 26 as Australia's national

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<https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2019/01/15/indigenous-youth-suicide-crisis-point> (20-01-19)

day, due to the offensive nature of celebrating the founding of the nation on the very day which, in 1788, marked the beginning of a war by British colonialists against the Aboriginal people. The movement to “Change the Date” had gained significant support amongst Australian people, with one poll showing that a slight majority – 56% would favour changing the date of Australia Day - **provided** there was a day which could be marked as Australia’s national day. The same poll had an overwhelming 84% of respondents stating it was important that Australia did have some day of commemoration and celebration.²⁷ As if to deliberately wind back this sentiment, Liberal Party Prime Minister Scott Morrison has weighed in on the side of reaction, with an edict that local councils must hold citizenship ceremonies on January 26. Not only this, but he has attempted to ban the wearing of thongs and board shorts at such ceremonies.²⁸ Apart from the clothing, this move is yet another express insult to indigenous people, and an attempt to derail the generally progressive steps behind the “Change the Date” movement. Labor Party Opposition Leader Bill Shorten has unsurprisingly joined with the Liberal Party in stating that January 26 will remain Australia Day with Labor on the government benches in Canberra.²⁹

Abolish Australia Day?

Last year, the indigenous group Warriors of Aboriginal Resistance (WAR), put forward the demand “Abolish Australia Day”, counterposed to the demand “Change the Date”. WAR play a tremendous organizational role, facilitating and enabling rallies and other events which drive the movement for Indigenous rights forward. However, we would argue that the tactics of WAR on this

issue are mistaken, and could lead to the groundswell of support behind “Change the Date” being nobbled, and risks alienating and turning away large numbers of people who would otherwise enthusiastically march side by side with Indigenous people. Without such mass support, the struggle for indigenous rights could become more difficult, and battles which could have been won may need to be fought again.



Above: In 1967 the majority of Australians voted to include Aboriginal people in the census. Both indigenous and non-indigenous people took up this cause, leading to its success. The material and underlying causes of Aboriginal oppression remained, but the struggle for Aboriginal rights gained from these efforts. Image from www.commongrace.org.au

In one sense WAR are correct to imply that changing the date of Australia Day does not change the adverse material circumstances facing indigenous people. In one sense it will allow Australian nationalism to take place on another day of the year. But a mass movement which successfully changed the date of Australia’s national day would also be likely to enable a **strengthening** of the movement for justice for Aboriginal people, which would thereby engender more momentum behind the more far-reaching demands that are also necessary – such as a Treaty and genuine land rights. For example, a move by the Aboriginal rights movement now to abolish the result of the 1967 referendum would scarcely garner any support – and it is unlikely that any

²⁷ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-18/australia-day-debate-more-than-half-dont-mind-changing-the-date/9337500> (20-01-19)

²⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/jan/13/scott-morrison-forces-councils-to-hold-citizenship-ceremonies-on-australia-day> (20-01-19)

²⁹ <https://www.pedestrian.tv/news/bill-shorten-australia-day-january-26/> (20-01-19)

would argue that doing so would advance the Aboriginal justice movement today. In 1967, a referendum was passed which proposed to include Aboriginal people in the census, and to allow the federal government to make laws for Aboriginal people.³⁰ The passing of this referendum was imperfect, and not really radical, in that it did not enable full equality for Aboriginal and non-indigenous people. However, it was a major boost for the further development of the Aboriginal rights movement – Aboriginals were officially recognised as people! Arguably, it later enabled the movement for Aboriginal land rights to launch on the back of this victory.

Aboriginal nationalism versus white nationalism?

It is understandable that WAR spurn Australian identity, and even Australian citizenship, given the genocidal intent of the actual war which was waged against indigenous people by the colonial settler state, and continues in the form of ongoing and systemic racism. WAR thus adopt Aboriginal nationalism as their credo, in opposition to Australian nationalism, or even white nationalism. Yet a separatist Aboriginal nationalism necessarily excludes the most important potential ally of the indigenous people – non-indigenous and migrant workers, who, while not experiencing the oppression of Aboriginal people, are nonetheless oppressed by the capitalism upheld by the very same colonial settler state. Non-indigenous and migrant workers have no option but to accept the Australian nationality, because it is imposed upon them. But this does not of course mean that they will automatically go on to adopt Australian nationalism or white nationalism. The development of working class politics – of which the Aboriginal struggle for justice is a component part – is the key to countering the development of harmful Australian or white nationalism. The degree to which working people of all resident nationalities struggle together with pro-working

class indigenous people will condition the degree to which white nationalism can decisively be buried. More to the point, sustained efforts towards the overthrow of production for private profit, and the initiation of socialism through the construction of working class state power, is what will finally defeat poisonous Australian and white nationalism.

NOT YOUNG! NOT FREE!



DECOLONISE NOW!

Above: Working people can certainly agree that Australia is not young in the sense that Aboriginal people have inhabited the continent for around 60 000 years. And all of the oppressed in capitalist Australia are certainly not free. The demand to “decolonise”, however, may exclude non-indigenous allies.

Australian capitalism was founded on the dispossession of the Aboriginal people. Of this there is no doubt. WAR would no doubt agree with this fundamental proposition. However, WAR does not then go on to advocate socialism as a solution. WAR talks of combatting white nationalism, and allying with refugees, asylum seekers, homeless people, disabled people, Queers, Transgender people and non-white migrants to do so. But they fall short of seeking to ally themselves with the multiracial working class for the purpose of toppling the rule of capital, i.e. they do not aim for socialism. Building progressive movements – including the Aboriginal rights movement, as needed as they are, will only go so far. What is

³⁰

<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/australian-1967-referendum> (20-01-19)

required for the ending the double oppression of indigenous people and the class oppression of non-indigenous people is the building of a multiracial vanguard workers' party which leads a successful struggle for a workers' republic.

In a Facebook post, WAR refer to the recent Nazi rally at St Kilda beach in Melbourne, in which ultra-right wing groups targeted African-Australians for harassment and unjust treatment. They claim that the "white Nazi rallies are only able to happen because white liberalism paved the way".³¹ In this, WAR are only half correct. Liberalism, both black and white, paves the way for the potential rise of fascism. Nazism and/or fascism can only come about where the left has yet to form a workers' party of sizeable influence, in response to the ongoing assaults against all of the oppressed by "free market" casino capitalism. If working people see no political alternative being offered to the virtually complete unanimity of the major parties, some workers will turn to the far right. Some will even embrace Nazism out of sheer desperation. Given the significant depression of the Western capitalist economies in Europe, the US and Australia since 2008, the problem of the absence of serious Marxist parties has reached a critical point. The growth of Nazism and the far right is one expression, the emergence of the "Yellow Vest" movement is another.

Prison abolition?

In addition to the "Abolish Australia Day" demand, WAR also put forward other demands working people can support. These include "Stop Black Deaths in Custody", "Stop Taking Our Kids" and "Aboriginal Sovereignty NOT Constitutional Recognition". At the same time, they also put forward the demand to "Shut Down Prisons".³² The demand for prison abolition is problematic, however. There is no disputing that the prisons are used to oppress indigenous people. One glance at

statistics indicating the grossly disproportionate rate of Aboriginal incarceration in Australia will demonstrate this in spades. Over the last 10 years, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people jailed has risen 88%, with indigenous people now thirteen (13) times more likely to end up in prison. Aboriginal women now make up a staggering 34% of all female prisoners, which represents a 148% increase since 1991.³³ These figures are some of the highest in the world.



Above: Some Aboriginal activists latch on to the demand for abolishing prisons. Aboriginal people and others are certainly harmed by incarceration, which does not provide any solutions. However, prisons are a part of a state apparatus, and can only be abolished with the coming of the classless society. Until such time, prisons will be a necessary evil of a class divided society. Image from Facebook.

Workers must be clear, though, that these are the prisons of the *capitalist* (Australian) state. They are the same prisons which are used to imprison impoverished non-indigenous working people who have gone astray largely due to the difficulties of living in a society of extreme inequality. Yet the catastrophically high indigenous incarceration rates indicate how the capitalist state uses racial oppression to keep working people divided, to prevent them from joining together to rise against their state. Prisons, like the courts, the police, the

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https://www.facebook.com/events/2199768573624040/?active_tab=discussion (20-01-19)

³² Ibid, 6.

³³ <http://caama.com.au/news/2018/law-council-of-australia> (20-01-19)

armed forces, the intelligence agencies and the civil service bureaucracy are the key apparatus of the class rule of capital, wielded against working people. Calling for the abolition (or “shut down”) of prisons is in practice a demand for the capitalist state to abolish itself. Working people know that injustices abound in prisons, but they are aware that in the struggle to overthrow capital’s enslavement of wage earners, some prisons may well be necessary. The state itself can only be “abolished” in a global classless society of superabundance – the higher stage of socialism. To reach that stage, the working class must first replace the capitalist state with its own workers’ state. Such a state will likely have a need for its own prisons, as well as its own courts, its own armed forces and so on. Yet these key sections of a workers’ state will only be used to hold down the remnants of the old order – those who, for example, imprisoned Aboriginal people wholesale.

Critical support for “Change the Date”

In the face of the reactionary determination of Liberal PM Scott Morrison and Labor Party “Opposition” leader Bill Shorten to enforce January 26 as Australia’s national day, we argue that workers should give *critical support* for the demand to “Change the Date”. This of course does not preclude raising and fighting for more far reaching demands such as: a Treaty, a program of public works specifically offering employment for Aboriginal people, the fullest possible autonomy for Aboriginal communities who desire it, and the full provision of government services (water, electricity, housing, healthcare etc) for those who do not. The “Change the Date” demand, ergo, does not even contradict the demand for “Aboriginal Sovereignty NOT Constitutional Recognition”. We can swing behind “Change the Date” while at the same time recognising that it does not go far enough.

Marxists maintain that nations emerged as a form of human community specifically relating to the rise and consolidation of commodity-capitalist

social relations. While there is no doubt that the Australian nation was and is founded on the brutal and horrific crimes of dispossession and war against the indigenous people, it does not follow that Aboriginal (or cultural) nationalism will therefore aid their emancipation. Nations are also an aggregation of irreconcilable classes, and the two major classes which are decisive are labour and capital. It is the rule of capital – private production based on private ownership of the means of production – which is the source of the oppression of both the working class AND the Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people can thus only be liberated alongside workers brought to political power.

This does not mean a simple merging of the Aboriginal struggle into the working class struggle for socialism. It does mean a struggle to form a multiracial Leninist vanguard party, combined of the most class conscious workers, pro-working class Aboriginals and migrants of all backgrounds – which can then champion Aboriginal rights as a component part of the international struggle against the capitalist imperialism which threatens the life of humanity itself. The revolutionary integration of the Aboriginal rights struggle with the workers’ cause will illuminate the path to reparative justice.



IRAN: WORKERS OR SEPARATISTS?



Above: Soldiers of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp (IRGC). Image from www.iranprimer.usip.org

By Leo Rose

16-02-2019 – When is a workers’ movement not actually a workers’ movement? When is a Union not actually a Union? A good indicator is when such “movements” spring up in a country directly targeted for regime change by the rapacious US Empire – the same one which pulled out all stops to overthrow an allied country using indescribable violence. We of course reference Syria, and its ally Iran. The Syrian Arab Republic remains, and for now has effectively defeated the US masters of war and its allies. This was achieved with the vital assistance of Russia, the Lebanese Hezbollah, and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Furious at having been blocked in what is usually a straight forward case of imperial overthrow, the US state now dramatically ramps up its vast array of tools for regime change in Iran. To say that a US led war on Iran – the

gateway between the Middle East and Asia - would be a catastrophe would be an understatement.

“Independent” Unions

The US state department is very well schooled in manipulating well-intentioned but misguided progressive youth and left-leaning workers into serving as foot soldiers for its regime change wars. Assisted by all manner of NGOs, “liberal” corporate media and ostensibly “left” parties, the US Empire effectively reversed the anti-war sentiment that came about through the war on Iraq in 2003. Although “successful” in Libya, they were blocked in Syria – which has only increased their desperation and consequent appetite for regime change in Iran. Of course the US state has been desperate for regime change in Iran since the Iranian people toppled the US backed Shah in

1979, and expelled all US “advisors”. But in 2019, the US state can ill afford to allow liberals to lie idle.

A useful method for the imperialists is to falsely claim to support the struggle of workers and Unions in a country they also label their number one enemy. As if the political operatives of world capitalism are the slightest bit concerned about the welfare of the working class! Yet they do, and unfortunately they draw in progressive minded folk and some left parties who should know a lot better.

The “independent” Union set up is a classical case. “Independent” Unions in Iran can only be dependent on external backing, in a similar way in which “independent” Unions in China or Vietnam or Cuba are highly likely to be a conduit for US state interference. This is not to deny specific issues for workers that exist for workers in those countries, but the price of the loss of independence from imperialism – the restoration of capitalism in China, Vietnam or Cuba – would set workers back 100 years. Iran, despite operating a capitalist economy, is independent of US, and therefore world, imperialism. Despite Iran’s market economy, there is extensive state direction, and the loss of this would send Iranian workers back to a stage before 1979. This is why workers in Iran and internationally must stridently defend Iran against all facets of US domination.

Falling at the first obligation

Some Australian left parties stumble at the primary obligation of anyone claiming to be a socialist or Marxist – clear opposition to US imperialism. The Socialist Alliance (SA), through its newspaper *Green Left Weekly* (GLW), recently published an extraordinary attack on the Iranian government, at the precise time when it is enduring enormous hardship as a result of, amongst other things, US sanctions. In a piece dated February 1, Minna Langeberg claims that “although US sanctions have worsened the economic situation, they are not the

cause: ***the cause is a religious fascist regime in a deep crisis of legitimacy.***”³⁴ The mind boggles!!



Above: Iran’s Supreme Leader the Ayatollah (at left). Despite theocratic leadership of the Iranian state, working people have a stake in defending Iran against the threats of US imperialism and its sanctions, which are aimed at reversing the course of the 1979 Iranian revolution. Image from www.voiceofthepeopletoday.com

To label Iran as “fascist”, at the same time as US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Advisor John Bolton are gunning for the overthrow of Iran, clearly marks where the Socialist Alliance stands. Whether they are aware of it or not, SA is unfortunately repeating its notorious role backing US led regime change in Syria. Regime change right now, in Iran, can only benefit the US ruling class. One cannot wish US imperialism out of existence. The only possibility that a political movement for a new government in Iran now could garner support from workers internationally would be one that: 1) Clearly maintained that it opposed the imperialism of the US and their allies in the UK, France etc, with the backing of Israel, and did so to a greater extent than the current Iranian government 2) Clearly stated that it stood for the defence of Iran and Syria and the region against Saudi Arabian and Zionist Israel, to a greater extent than the current Iranian government 3) Clearly stated that it was for the

³⁴ <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/iranian-workers-protests-confront-regime-crisis> (16-02-19)

complete liberation of women through working class emancipation. 4) Clearly maintained the equality of all religions and minorities within Iran to a greater extent than the current Iranian government 5) Clearly stated that the economy should be more publicly owned than is currently the case 6) Clearly maintained that it backs the workers throughout Iran, not just in a couple of areas known for anti-government sentiment, and so on.

If such a political movement existed in Iran today, or even one with even some or even one of the above characteristics, leftists internationally would have to seriously assess it. But there are no indications the current “movement” of protests in Iran expresses serious anti-imperialism. This is even despite the fact that it claims it stands for “workers” and “unions” and subjectively opposes the “crony capitalism” of the Iranian government. Sure, there are workers demonstrating against the economic hardships largely caused by US sanctions. Some Iranians certainly blame the government, even while recognising the impact of US sanctions. But in a country whose population has now surpassed 82 million people³⁵, such demonstrations and rallies have to be closely analysed.

Khuzestan and separatism

GLW’s article by Minna Langeberg hinges on two supposed labour struggles breaking out in Iran. Langeberg writes “..two simultaneous waves of labour protests stand out, both in the southwest province of Khuzestan: the Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Company protests, and the National Steel Company protests in Ahvaz, the capital of Khuzestan.”³⁶ So of all the alleged labour unrest and “Union struggle” in Iran, the two most important all happen in one province in the south of Iran? Some explanation for this is required here, yet none is offered by GLW.

³⁵ <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/iran-population/> (16-02-19)

³⁶ Ibid, 1.



Above: The Iranian province of Khuzestan (highlighted). Note its strategic position at the tip of the Persian Gulf – a key reason why the West desires to foment separatist tendencies. Image from Wikipedia.

The south-western province of Khuzestan hosts the majority of Iran’s oil production. It also is home to around 1.5 million Ahwazi Arabs, reportedly making up around 2% of Iran’s population.³⁷ Generally, Ahwazi Arabs claim that they are marginalized and excluded from Iranian society and government, as a minority in a majority Persian country. Khuzestan’s capital Ahvaz is hard hit by unemployment, but that is unfortunately widespread across Iran. Doubtless there are some grievances that need to be addressed, but whether the Ahwazi Arabs generally favour separatism from Iran is not clear. There are certainly some Ahwazi organisations, including armed ones, which stridently advocate a separation from Iran. One is the Arab Struggle Movement for the Liberation of Ahwaz (ASMLA), which may sound legitimate. However, this group, in seeking separation from Iran, has bombed government buildings and pipelines in the region which have killed civilians.³⁸ In other words, regardless of the justness of

³⁷ <https://bigthink.com/strange-maps/the-phantom-emirate-of-al-ahwaz> (17-02-19)

³⁸ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/ahwazis-dont-give-anniversary-annexed-arab-province-looms-iran> (17-02-19)

whatever cause they claim, they are a terrorist organisation with no regard for innocent life.

Below: The September 22, 2018 terrorist attack on an Iranian military parade in Ahvaz. Both ISIS and the Ahwaz National Resistance claimed responsibility. 24 innocent people died, and around 70 were wounded. Such is the regard of the Ahwaz separatists for the lives of others. Image from www.thetimesofisrael.com



Another recent example of the absent lack of concern for the butchering of innocents by Ahwaz separatists was the September 22 terrorist attack on a military parade in Ahvaz. The parade was marking the anniversary of the beginning of the Iraq-Iran war, in which then Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein apparently believed the Ahwazi Arabs would welcome the entry of the forces of fellow Arabs. They did not, and Iranian forces had to wage a battle to retake the city a couple of years later at a high cost of life. What occurred at that parade only last year, was that four gunmen disguised as soldiers opened fire and indiscriminately shot dead fleeing soldiers and civilians. At least 24 people died, including a four year old child.³⁹ Around 70 were injured.

Saudi Arabia, UAE, Denmark, the Netherlands all aid “jihadist separatists”

Two groups claimed responsibility for the attack: ISIS and the Ahwaz National Resistance. It is unlikely that ISIS was behind it – they claim responsibility for many attacks they have nothing to do with. The claim of the Ahwaz National Resistance is much more likely. What kind of “resistance” movement would openly claim responsibility for an attack which clearly extinguished innocent lives? Iran’s Supreme Leader the Ayatollah Ali Khamanei did not mince his words in response: “This cowardly attack was the work of those very individuals who are rescued by the Americans whenever they are in trouble in Iraq and Syria and who are funded by the Saudis and the (United) Arab Emirates.”⁴⁰ It has long been suspected that the Saudi Arabian royal family, along with the UAE government, fund and arm the Ahwaz separatists, as a way of undermining and destabilising Iran. In this case, it seems likely it was direct payback for the role Iran has played in Syria, helping to defeat the foreign backed jihadists seeking ultra-violent regime change. Without endorsing the Iranian government per se, working people can only support the actions of the Iranian military in Syria, which contributed to the defeat of the US and its proxy forces.

While the Saudi and Emirati governments fund and arm the ultra-violent terrorist Ahwazi groups, the governments of Denmark and the Netherlands give them safe haven on their soil. In response to the September 22 atrocity, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Bahram Qasemi stated that it was not acceptable for European Union countries to refrain from blacklisting known members of terrorist groups as long as they do not commit a crime on European soil. He said the Iranian government had warned Denmark and the Netherlands about the presence of the terrorists and called for their arrest and trial.⁴¹ The hypocrisy is galling. One could only imagine the response if

⁴⁰ Ibid, 6.

⁴¹ <https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2018/09/iran-criticises-the-netherlands-for-sheltering-terrorists-after-parade-attack/> (17-02-19)

³⁹ <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/9/25/iran-says-jihadist-separatists-behind-ahvaz-attack> (17-02-19)

Iran had hosted known terrorists on its soil, whose fellow members then went on a shooting rampage in the US, or a European country. Yet the reverse happens, but the imperialist powers get away scot-free.

Workers must defend Iran, and condemn Western armed terrorism

Unfortunately the Socialist Alliance is joined by the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) in blindly backing the Ahwaz separatists, who skillfully manipulate progressives under the cover of backing “independent” workers’ “Unions”. In an article in the CPA’s *The Guardian* newspaper dated December 12, 2018, the author attempts to draw a wall between the open US state aim of regime change in Iran, and the workers’ protests in Khuzestan.⁴² Yet they are one and the same! How do we know this? One reason is because none other than John Bolton – currently heading up US backed regime change in Venezuela and Iran – has openly advocated backing Iran’s ethnic minorities as a means of destabilising the country.⁴³

Not only has John Bolton advocated the stoking of ethnic tensions in Iran as part of regime change efforts, his links to the notorious terrorist group the Mujaheddin E Khalq (MEK) are well known. The MEK fought with the invading Iraqi government during the Iraq-Iran war, and as such are despised as traitors by almost all Iranians. They are exiled because of this, but it has not stopped John Bolton declaring to MEK supporters that he will celebrate with them in Tehran “before 2019”.⁴⁴ This is a senior US official, openly preparing not only regime change in Iran, but choosing known ultra-violent terrorists as the new leaders! In addition, MEK cult

⁴² <http://www.cpa.org.au/guardian/2018/1852/06-rally.html> (17-02-19)

⁴³ <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-khuzestan-poverty-separatism-bloody-war-memories/29515269.html> (17-02-19)

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<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2018/6/8/bolton-ons-mek-ties-make-him-more-lobbyist-than-statesman> (17-02-19)

leader Maryam Rajavi has publicly supported the Ahwazi separatists.⁴⁵

Due to Iran’s necessary building of conventional missiles as defence, not to speak of a united and well-armed military, external US led regime change on Iran is unlikely – though not impossible. Much more likely is *internal* US led regime change – which utilises all manner of anti-government yahoos, up to and including ultra-violent terrorists and criminal jihadists. Without endorsing the political positions of the Iranian government, workers internationally have a vital interest, at this time, in defending Iran against internal and external regime change. Imperialism must be opposed regardless of its *modus operandi*.



www.bbc.co.uk



www.rferl.org

Above: The immediate aftermath of the September 22 attack on the Iranian military parade in Ahvaz. The soldier above carries an injured child. A “workers’ movement” led by, or in association with, such barbarians is not a workers’ movement at all, but a separatist movement with links to the governments of Saudi Arabia and the West.

⁴⁵ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/ahwazis-dont-give-anniversary-annexed-arab-province-looms-iran> (17-02-19)

FOR REAL CLIMATE ACTION: EXPROPRIATE CAPITAL!



Above: Coastal erosion is just one of the effects of unchecked global warming. www.theguardian.co.uk

(The following is the text of a leaflet distributed by the Workers League at one of the “School Strike 4 Climate” actions which took place on 15-03-2019)

The 2018 report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued yet another dire warning: the world has until 2030 to limit the rise in pre-industrial temperatures to an average of 1.5 degrees.⁴⁶ Failure to do so will risk drought, floods, hurricanes, storms and poverty for hundreds of millions of people. Vast climate distortion, with the current 1 degree average rise in global temperatures, is a current reality, with bushfires and floods now a semi-regular feature of Australian “weather”, to say nothing of the

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<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/08/global-warming-must-not-exceed-15c-warns-landmark-un-report> (27-02-19)

extreme conditions buffeting Asia, Europe and the Americas. The demand for ultra-urgent action to prevent the further life-threatening emission of carbon is now almost universal.

In the face of this, students are now following the lead of Greta Thunberg, a 15 year old from Sweden who has taken the initiative of walking out of school on Fridays in a bid to call global leaders to account. Or so we are told. Is it really as simple as that? Not likely. Greta Thunberg was born into wealth and privilege, and the strings behind her lead directly to some of the most powerful corporations on planet earth – which are part and parcel of the very system responsible for the potential termination of the climatic conditions necessary for human survival. The truth must be told – this is a set up.

Compromised NGOs lead climate activists to parliament

The entire game is given away by just a brief glance at the “School Strike 4 Climate” website. First, the demands purportedly being put forward are 1. Stop Adani (coal mine in the Galilee Basin in Queensland) 2. For no new Coal or Gas and 3. For 100% renewable energy by 2030. Immediately below is an exhortation for supporters to “host a climate change forum for school students ***in your electorate before the Federal Election.***”⁴⁷ (emphasis added) So the future of the entirety of human civilisation is tied back down to a run of the mill bourgeois election! If this wasn’t blatant and tawdry enough, the website comes replete with tips on “How to get your (!?!?) politician to take some REAL climate action”, including how to “ask for a meeting”, “tell them why you care” and “ask them to make concrete commitments” at the meeting.⁴⁸ Despite being incredibly patronising, the NGOs behind School Strike 4 Climate demonstrate that they are cynically using children who are motivated by perhaps the most progressive cause of our time, to bolster and fortify the very system entirely responsible for climate catastrophe in the first place – the rule of private finance capital.

Which NGOs are linked to the School Strike 4 Climate? The website Wrong Kind of Green has carried out an exhaustive exposure of the corporations behind Greta Thunberg and their motivations.⁴⁹ They include Avaaz, The B Team, World Resources Institute, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Purpose, TckTckTck, Rockefeller Foundation, Oxfam, Amnesty International and the World Wildlife Fund, amongst others. Al Gore, personally worth around \$350 million dollars, is amongst them, as is Richard Branson – fresh from a failed attempt to join with the US Empire to

violently overthrow the Venezuelan government.⁵⁰ Many have been taken in by a supposedly innocent 15 year old Greta Thunberg, staging a one-out vigil outside the Swedish parliament every Friday. But as the research of Cory Morningstar and Forrest Palmer shows, Greta Thunberg is linked to Al Gore to Bill Gates to Richard Branson to the “liberal” wings of the most powerful ruling classes in the history of world capitalism. It is clear they demand the impossible – a movement to arrest or reverse global warming which remains entirely within the bounds of the US Empire.



Above: Images of 15 year old Greta Thunberg holding lone strikes for climate action have fooled many around the world. Thunberg is linked to some of the largest corporate NGOs in the world, which have zero interest in even curbing capitalist imperialism, let alone abolishing it. Domestic NGOs such as the AYCC and GetUp! are also in on the act, to which many left parties remain oblivious. Workers need to be aware of being hoodwinked while taking part in climate strikes. www.theguardian.com

The concept that the very same politicians who have, for over one hundred years, overseen the development of catastrophic global warming, can at the same time be somehow convinced to reverse course and save the world is not only a flight of dangerous fantasy. It reveals the entire political strategy of the liberal bourgeoisie, which in this country is represented most particularly by the notorious GetUp! – founded by the very same

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<https://drive.google.com/file/d/18MtPGabeW5IPQ9asPRQGk26YuRB94te4/view> (02-03-19)

⁴⁸ <https://www.schoolstrike4climate.com/blog/tips-for-getting-your-politician-to-commit-to-real-climate-action> (02-03-19)

⁴⁹ <http://www.wrongkindofgreen.org/2019/02/24/the-manufacturing-of-greta-thunberg-a-decade-of-social-manipulation-for-the-corporate-capture-of-nature-crescendo/> (02-03-19)

⁵⁰

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/19/maduro-government-richard-branson-rival-venezuela-concerts> (02-03-19)

people behind Purpose and Avaaz. GetUp! disingenuously claim that they are not linked to the Labor Party, when former and current board members have been prominent Labor Party politicians, including Bill Shorten himself.⁵¹ It is suspected that GetUp! are the concealed hands behind the School Strike 4 Climate, given their heavy promotion of the first one on November 30, 2018.⁵² Particularly disorienting is their herding of people back into the parliament, pushing the notion that the politicians there are “ours” and can be made to “listen” to us.



Above: Renewable energy sources such as wind turbines have many practical problems. Here, a helicopter is used to blast ice from the blades of a wind turbine, which gathers in cold climates. Some manufacturers have had to install electronic de-icing devices, highlighting the over-engineering needed for an energy source which has a capacity factor of only 30 to 40%. Image from www.windpowerengineering.com

Working people should be crystal clear on this point – politicians from all parliamentary parties in Australia, be they Liberal, Labor, National, Greens, One Nation, Katter’s Australian Party and so on are not “ours” at all. They are politicians of the capitalist class responsible for not only the catastrophe of impending climate collapse, but the decimation of the standard of living for all workers

⁵¹ <https://www.jimball.com.au/blog/the-getup-setup-brad-norrington-the-australian/> (02-03-19)

⁵² <https://www.getup.org.au/campaigns/climate-action-now/climate-strikes/school-strikes-for-climate-action> (02-03-19)

and the oppressed. They **CANNOT** be allies in any political struggle, and most especially one as important as climate change. Working people need our own party, and our own state – which necessarily must be politically and organisationally independent of all federal and state parliaments. A workers’ government will have no impediments such as private profit standing in the way of rational action to address climate distortion.

Driving the illusion of “100% renewable energy”

The School Strike 4 Climate [or likely the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC) behind the scenes] proffers the demands to Stop Adani and for no new coal and gas. These demands are necessary and can be backed by workers. However, the demand for 100% renewable energy – by 2030 or anytime – is a green illusion which hooks most liberals and almost the entire environmental movement. Renewable energy – by which its advocates mean primarily wind and solar power, and to a lesser extent geothermal, tidal or pumped hydro – is nowhere near a point which it could be rolled out to provide 100% of Australia’s electricity needs. Wind and solar are intermittent sources – solar power produces nothing at night, and wind power relies on strong consistent winds. They need backup, which is primarily slated to come from gas, or biomass. The lack of capacity of wind and solar means that the build out for it has to take into account building in overcapacity – which is probably completely impractical. This is an ongoing debate, but there are already comprehensive critiques compiled which supply convincing evidence that the “100% renewable energy” demand is essentially an empty claim.⁵³ At any rate, using current technology, there is hardly an industry which is willing to switch to 100% renewable energy right now. Industry, as well as a small household, needs baseload and peakload power. Grids set up for the **intermittent** power of wind and solar have yet to be built, and would involve wasted endeavour trying to devise.

⁵³ <https://bravenewclimate.com/2014/06/02/critique-100pc-renewables-edm/> (02-03-19)

As the intense carbon emissions from coal and gas rule them out as power sources into the future, the **best placed replacement for baseload carbon free energy is nuclear power.**⁵⁴ Yet decades of misinformation and scaremongering from many environmentalists has pushed the development of zero-carbon nuclear power off the agenda. Ironically, being anti-nuclear has arguably contributed to the use of coal, and thus the adding of dangerous emissions to the atmosphere. It is ironic that Australia exports Uranium overseas for use in fuelling zero-carbon nuclear power overseas, but there are laws which prevent the building of zero-carbon nuclear power on these shores.

Red China leads the way

What the GetUp!/Avaaz/AYCC/Al Gore/Greta Thunberg crew cannot mention, due to loyalty to the system of production for private profit, is that it is actually the People's Republic of China (PRC) which is far and away leading the transition away from fossil fuels and towards zero carbon energy sources. The corporate NGOs lament the wholesale lack of action of any kind of transition to wind, water and solar power in Australia, while simultaneously ignoring the PRC, the world's largest country by population, where this is actually taking place. The sheer scale of the installation of wind, water and solar power in the PRC dwarfs any of the deliberately half-hearted attempts to do so in the West. Figures from the China Electricity Council (CEC) in 2017 show that there is a marked shift towards zero carbon energy sources on the Chinese mainland. Wind, water and solar power added 51.9% of new capacity, thermal accounted for 42.9% and nuclear for 5.2%.⁵⁵

The 5.2% for zero carbon nuclear power may sound small, but in fact Red China is again leading the way in the operation and construction of reactors. There are now more than 40 reactors operating in China, and another 18 under construction – and

that is just for starters. The specialists advising the Communist Party of China (CPC), unlike the Western environmental movement, anticipates that the share of power from renewables will tail off in the longer term, to less than half of the total. In other words, they are aware of the limitations of renewables vis-à-vis the advantages of nuclear generated electricity. Moreover, if China's rapid economic growth continues at anything like what has occurred since the 1980s, China's power demands will double by 2040. Hence, China's Energy Development Strategy Action Plan for 2014-2020 has set a target of 58 Gigawatts (GWe) for nuclear power, with an additional 30 GWe slated to be under construction.



Above: For serious zero carbon energy, the People's Republic of China is building out nuclear power. Standard reactors emit no carbon, and only water vapour is released from the cooling towers, as seen above. China's predominantly publicly owned economy allows planning, and is generally not beholden to corporate interests. Image from Finance Asia.

The key here is “plan”. Red China is leading the way on the replacement of fossil fuels, because it has a **planned economy**. Not only that, China's economy primarily does not run on the basis of production for private profit. The 1949 socialist revolution in China established a workers' state which has not been overthrown, despite policy shifts since that time. The major means of production in China are state owned or majority state owned. This is especially the case for the **strategic** drivers of the economy – such as roads, railways, ports, steel

⁵⁴ <https://nuclearforclimate.com.au/2019/02/05/the-heat-is-on-time-for-nuclear/> (02-03-19)

⁵⁵ <https://reneweconomy.com.au/chinas-amazing-green-shift-solar-wind-water-power-57490/> (03-03-19)

production and infrastructure construction. And this is even before taking into account the fact that all of the largest banks and financial institutions are not only state-owned, but directed by leading members of the Communist Party of China (CPC). In short, China's socialism allows it to take the lead in combatting climate distortion, whereas the West's capitalism stands as an immediate and major block to even the first steps.

Left parties unite for climate – across classes

To be sure, workers in the PRC need more political decision making power than they currently have. Nevertheless, workers internationally need to work with, not against, the leadership on climate being shown by the PRC. Grating against this are some Australian left parties, who have fallen hook, line and sinker for the Greta Thunberg roadshow. The Socialist Alliance (SA)⁵⁶, Socialist Alternative (SAIt)⁵⁷ and Solidarity(Sol)⁵⁸ are all building the March 15 Climate Strike as if it is perfectly normal to be working directly with GetUp! and Avaaz and Al Gore and Richard Branson. There is a reason why these ostensibly left parties do not see a contradiction – they all unite as one for imperialist war. SA, SAIt and Sol uniformly joined with GetUp! in its subtle backing of the US/Saudi/UK/FRA/AUST led imperialist war for regime change on Syria. Likewise, they all combine to drive relentless calls for US backed regime change in Iran. And, despite claiming to be “anti-war”, they all spruik about “repression” in China, Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) – which indicates they will not genuinely oppose a US led war against these or other countries independent of Wall Street.

Joining this unholy alliance are the top officials of Australian Unions – some of whom have donated Union members funds directly to GetUp! What transpires is a ***cross-class popular front***, where the

politics is wholly subordinated to the “left” wing of the ruling class – that part of the elite which can see something needs to be done about catastrophic climate change, but will stanchly resist any challenge to the capitalist system. Workers must be clear – human relations will not be rational so long as the working class has not yet abolished the private ownership of the means of production. Capital – the banks, the mines, major industries – must be expropriated from the obscenely rich and placed in the hands of society, held in trust by a workers' republic. A pre-requisite will be the forging of a Marxist vanguard party, which could lead workers and all of the oppressed in the consolidation of a collectivised, planned economy – and hence rational action to avoid dangerous climate collapse. This should be the ultimate aim of “climate strikes”.

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WORKERS LEAGUE



Above: China's state owned economy allows it to pour money into solving crucial technological problems. Here, it has developed a meltdown-proof nuclear reactor. It works by encasing the fuel in “pebbles” and using gas cooling. China is also leading the way in developing nuclear fusion – which has the potential to replace all other energy sources while producing zero carbon emissions. www.sciencealert.com

⁵⁶ <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/unions-join-students-call-strike-our-climate> (03-03-19)

⁵⁷ <https://redflag.org.au/index.php/node/6634> (03-03-19)

⁵⁸ <https://www.solidarity.net.au/mag/current/123/editorial-strike-out-morrison-coalition-of-climate-deniers/> (03-03-19)

USA/AUST: HANDS OFF VENEZUELA! WORKERS TO POWER IN LATIN AMERICA

STATEMENT OF THE WORKERS LEAGUE



Above: China's "Peace Ark" hospital ship docks at a port near Caracas in Venezuela. www.rt.com

(Since this statement was released, the intervention of Russia and China has been decisive in staying the hand of US imperialism, negating its blatant attempts at regime change in Venezuela.)

30-01-2019 – The Workers League condemns US and Australian imperialism for their open attempt at regime change in Venezuela, with their recognition of Juan Guaidó's self-declaration as President. Fresh from three years of accusing the Russian government – without a shred of evidence – of "meddling" in the US Presidential election of 2016, now both conservative and liberal wings of the US and Australian ruling classes brazenly attempt to subvert the 2018 election of President

Nicolas Maduro, and install their own puppet, potentially (yet again) threatening the world with catastrophic war.

Most Venezuelans had reportedly never heard of Juan Guaidó before he was elected the head of Venezuela's national assembly. Now the whole world has, which looks on incredulously. Seemingly not even being aware of trying to appear to be rational, Washington and Canberra have been joined by the ruling cabals in London, Paris, Berlin and Madrid, who have repeated in unison that the Venezuelan government has "eight days" to call new elections – during which they will recognise Juan Guaidó as interim leader of the country. To

say this is an imperialist obliteration of national sovereignty would be stating the obvious. Not even the most outlandish spy novelist could write such fiction, yet this is reality.

Below: Venezuelan Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino welcomes Russian military personnel who landed on December 10, 2018 in Venezuela. They arrived on a TU-160 long range heavy supersonic bomber, as part of long standing alliances between Russia and Venezuela. Since that time, 100 Russian troops have been dispatched. These are invited guests, unlike the US Empire. Those who defend Venezuela against US backed regime change must also defend Russia against US imperialism. Image from www.newsweek.com



The wounded beast of imperialism lashes out

Venezuela is the new target for regime change for Washington, after US imperialism arguably suffered its first defeat since the liberation of Vietnam in 1975 with its atrocious proxy war of regime change against the Syrian Arab Republic. The US was backed in this unspeakably barbaric war which hired the mercenaries of ISIS through the ruling classes of, inter alia, Britain, France, Canada, Australia and their allies in Saudi Arabia and Israel. Opposing this war was the Venezuelan government under both Hugo Chavez and Nicolas Maduro, along with the material assistance of Russia, Iran and Hezbollah. Unable to publicly admit being behind ISIS, Washington has, for the moment, realised political and military defeat in

Syria – even though they still operate US troops illegally on the ground. Smarting from being blocked primarily by Russia, the US masters of war now pick what they see as an easier target – Venezuela.

The same imperialist forces – utilising the nefarious NATO – also conducted regime change against Libya in 2011. Again the Venezuelan government under Chavez voiced strong opposition. However, on that occasion Russia abstained, and Libya – a nation with the then highest standard of living in Africa – was destroyed. Since that time, no state or government has been able to be restored, and black slavery – a practice ended by the republic led by Colonel Gaddafi – has returned. Many of the same Western funded cutthroats were then transported to Syria to repeat the dose.

The end of “Socialism of the 21st Century”

Washington sees Venezuela now as an easier target due to the fact that the right-wing now has almost the same amount of support as does the “Bolivarian Revolution” – the process begun by President Hugo Chavez in 1998 and continued by Nicolas Maduro since 2013. How has this situation come about? Workers must be told the truth. For all of its gains for working people and the poor, the Bolivarian process was not socialist, even despite the self-described intentions of its protagonists. The Bolivarian “revolution” was actually an attempt to reform capitalism, primarily using the mechanism of cross-class elections. Time and time again, throughout history, the working class has learnt the lesson that capitalism cannot be voted out of power – it must be overthrown. Yet the PSUV (United Socialist Party of Venezuela) had no intention of studying, let alone abiding by, these crucial lessons previously learnt by workers the world over. The theory of “Socialism of the 21st Century” – where supposedly workers no longer need to construct their own state, but only be elected into power – is now dead in the water. If US imperialism has its way, Venezuela will not only have its false “Socialism of the 21st Century”

exterminated, it will return to a stage worse than when the Bolivarian “revolution” began.

Below: 100 military personnel from Russia arrived in Venezuela on the 24th of March, aboard two planes. Pictured are Russian service officers, flying the Russian flag. In the background, the Venezuelan and Chinese national flags are displayed. International backing from non-imperialist powers has effectively blocked Washington’s regime change plans for now. Image from www.thelondonpost.net



Despite this, workers in Venezuela and internationally cannot afford to allow the Venezuelan government to be overthrown by Washington. While many huge steps forward need to be taken by workers in Venezuela, a major defeat could re-energise the US Empire, and even embolden it to trigger the wider war which some elements of its ruling class see as the only hope to counter the rise of Red China, and the independence of Russia. This is why workers internationally should demand that China – as the world’s pre-eminent socialist power – step up to the plate and offer a lead by materially blocking US moves to overthrow Venezuela. This is also why workers internationally should welcome the mooted moves by Russia and Iran to militarily intervene to defend Venezuela from black reaction.

Forward to real socialism

The immediate task, therefore, is not only to defend the sovereignty of Venezuela, as necessary

as that is. It is also urgent to lead workers to power in Venezuela, and throughout Latin America. For US imperialism cannot in the least be halted by capitalist republics, no matter how “democratic”. Classes must be arrayed against one another, rather than fruitless attempts to unite the “people”. While workers must not obstruct the Venezuelan military forces where they take measures to ward off the US Empire, at the same time there must be left-wing political opposition built to the PSUV – a party which is conservative, bureaucratic and corrupt even according to its own supporters. Committees for workers’ power in every workplace, school and university need to be established wherever possible. The most class conscious of these elements should forge the Marxist vanguard party needed to win the best elements away from Chavismo and for a real revolution. *US/AUST: HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!*

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WORKERS LEAGUE

INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY 2019: WORKERS MUST FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S LIBERATION



Above: The slogan "Women Hold Up Half the Sky" was first coined by Mao Zedong. Image from Vecteezy

(The following is the text of a leaflet distributed by the Workers League at the International Working Women's Day rally in Brisbane on 09-03-2019)

08-03-2019 – Despite all the technological and scientific advances that drive the 21st century, women in Australia in 2019 have yet to attain full equality. Just a few examples will demonstrate this graphically. The Australian government's own figures from 2018 reveal that the gender pay gap averages at 14.6% overall, and is up to 25% in some industries, in terms of men earning more than women. For men and women in full-time positions, women earn a staggering \$27 500 less per year than men.⁵⁹ 65.3% of the Australian workforce are

women, and women live on average five years longer than men. Despite this, 40% of older single retired women live in poverty, and women currently retire with 47% **less** superannuation than men.⁶⁰

Homelessness and poverty are increasing, which disproportionately affects women, especially single mothers. The Federal Government's draconian "Parents Next" program is an obscenity, which is already making living conditions for single mothers dependent on welfare even more difficult than they already are. It reinforces decades old dogma that the raising of children – mostly performed by

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<https://www.sbs.com.au/topics/life/culture/article/2018/11/>

[27/these-kids-have-learned-harsh-reality-australias-gender-pay-gap](http://www.womeninsuper.com.au/content/the-facts-about-women-and-super/gjumzs) (06-03-19)

⁶⁰ <http://www.womeninsuper.com.au/content/the-facts-about-women-and-super/gjumzs> (06-03-19)

women – is not work, and therefore should not be paid. It also punishes single mothers for not returning to the workforce – which is hard enough in an era of high unemployment, let alone attempting to do it while raising children. The program targets women by a factor of 96%, and approximately 10 000 indigenous women.⁶¹ The “mutual obligations” under the program are simply insulting, such as having to attend compulsory “story time” sessions, where women are compelled to discuss how they became single mothers.

Domestic violence against women is at epidemic levels. Domestic or family violence against women is the largest driver of homelessness for women, with police being called to deal with an instance once every **two minutes** across the country. Incredibly, on average one woman per week is murdered by a partner or former partner.⁶² While both men and women can be subjected to domestic and family violence, the overwhelming majority is gendered, with men the perpetrators against women.

Profit system driving the collapse

Despite this, it would be wrong to target men *per se* for the crimes that some men commit against women. Any real analysis of the causes of male violence against women will reveal that the cause is rooted in the oppression of women under class society, and the current dire economic malaise of the capitalist system, not only in Australia, but in the US, Europe and Japan. The capitalist economies have not recovered from the financial crisis of 2008, and living and working conditions are subsequently worsening. Men, who once had permanent jobs which would pay enough to raise a family of four, now largely struggle with a skyrocketing cost of living, bullying from managers where they have work, self-serving politicians lining their own pockets while stripping society of essential services, and CEOs who earn millions of

dollars more than the value of what they can possibly produce in one year. Any violence against women is abominable, but, unable to see a reason for their seemingly inescapable predicament, some men lash out in desperation against their female partners, unable to explain their own despair.



Above: International Women's Day rally in Melbourne in 2018. Image from 3CR

The only solution is a society where employment and a decent standard of living is guaranteed for all, where healthcare and education are provided at little or no cost, where transport and infrastructure are built for the collective use of society. Yet capitalism in 2019 is unable to deliver on any of these, and so it turns against those who produce the wealth of society – the working class. The greater the extent of the crisis of the profitability of capital, the more misery and oppression is thrown down upon the workers and the oppressed. Unsafe working conditions are one consequence, the destruction of the natural world through ecological collapse and unending imperialist wars are others.

Revolution the only way out

The three pillars of class society remain the family, private property and the state. Of these, it is society's smallest repressive unit – the nuclear family – which is the deepest source of women's

⁶¹ <http://unemployedworkersunion.com/write-a-submission-to-the-parentsnext-senate-inquiry/> (06-03-19)

⁶² <http://www.domesticviolence.com.au/pages/domestic-violence-statistics.php> (06-03-19)

oppression. Yet like the capitalist state, the family cannot be “abolished” - it can only wither away as a classless society approaches. Liberation for women therefore requires the overturn of the capitalist order, and the construction of socialism – the working class holding supreme power.

Below: While women’s liberation is not complete in the People’s Republic of China, women have made tremendous gains since the revolution in 1949. Here is one of many female jet fighter pilots who serve in the People’s Liberation Army. Image from www.chinesemilitaryreview.blogspot.com



While it is true that all women are oppressed by capital, women of the middle and ruling classes can simply buy their way out of the burdens of second class citizenry. The women’s liberation movement therefore seeks to liberate working class women only, as a vital component of the struggle to emancipate the working class as a whole from capitalist bondage. Feminism as such denies this essential task, and seeks only to carve out the best possible conditions for the advancement of (upper class) women within the system and its corrupt parliaments and corporate boardrooms. Despite the intentions of some of its adherents, feminism is also usually silent, or actually endorses, imperialist war – one of the crucial issues of our time. To our knowledge, no strand of feminism has consistently opposed the imperialist wars on Libya and Syria, nor the impending ones on Russia, China, Iran, the DPRK (“North Korea”), Sudan, Venezuela and so on

ad nauseam. It is the primary contradiction: one cannot be silent in the face of the marauding US Empire (and its allies in London, Paris and Canberra) and claim to stand for women.

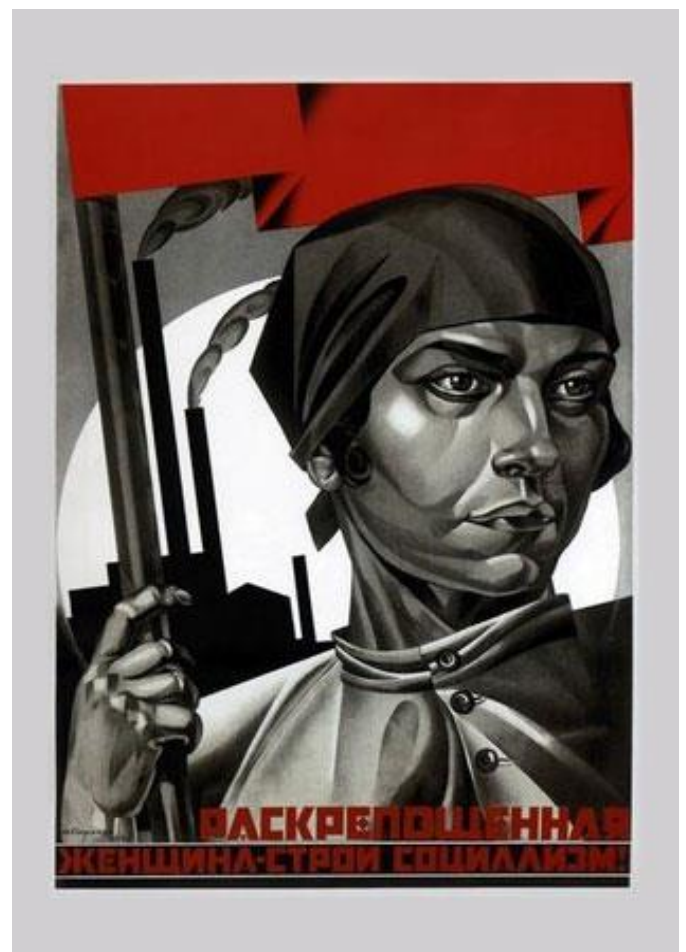
The struggle for women’s liberation cannot be simply subsumed within the working class movement, however. Rather, male and gender non-binary workers need to be won to the fight for women’s liberation. The key to this task is the forging of a Marxist vanguard party, which can lead all of the oppressed towards the egalitarian order based on common property and a planned economy.

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WORKERS LEAGUE



NEW ZEALAND TERROR ATTACKS: CIRCUMSTANCES DEMAND ANSWERS

STATEMENT OF THE WORKERS LEAGUE



Above: The alleged gunman (face obscured) in a New Zealand courthouse. Image from www.news.com.au

17-03-2019 – The circumstances surrounding the terror attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, on Friday remain murky. The corporate media claim that 50 people were shot dead, in coordinated attacks on mosques at around 1.30 in the afternoon. At the time of writing, the names, ages and occupations of those that perished have not been released. One name that has been released is that of Brenton Tarrant, a 28 year old from Australia, who had apparently written a far-right wing and fascist manifesto. The names of another three people arrested who allegedly took part have also not been released.

There are three possibilities, which we remain open to. Either: 1. This act of right-wing terror took place as it was reported by the corporate media, with no prior knowledge or involvement of the capitalist state and its security arms. 2. This act did not occur as it was reported by the corporate

media, but was inflated with a torrent of false information. 3. This act of right-wing terror took place after being staged and contrived by the security agencies of the imperialist states – coordinated across Australia and New Zealand and perhaps with the US, with the gunman a willing or unwilling patsy.

The first scenario we consider unlikely. This attack was apparently planned for two years, and it seems unlikely that the police and internal security services, which have been beefed up in the wake of the “war on terror”, had no prior knowledge or involvement. The second scenario is a possibility because the corporate media is an arm of the state in capitalist societies. The third scenario is also a possibility, due to the significantly adverse geopolitical conditions in which the Anglo/US Empire finds itself.

The US Empire has just suffered a huge defeat after eight years of an atrocious war for regime change on Syria. Arguably, this was the first defeat in war for US imperialism since the liberation of Vietnam in 1975. The governments of the UK, France, Australia, Canada, Israel, Saudi Arabia and others, all took part in an effort to overthrow the Syrian Arab Republic using extreme violence. This included the arming, funding and creation of ISIS, and subtle backing for Al Qaeda and numerous death squads – some of whom had been transplanted from Libya, where NATO had destroyed Green Libya in 2011. Russia, Iran, Hezbollah and the Syrian armed forces combined to defeat US imperialism where they ordinarily would have expected a reasonably quick overthrow.

The US Empire has repeatedly attempted to foment regime change in Iran in recent years, but has not been successful. While there are a number of pro-Western Iranians who agitate for the downfall of the Islamic Republic of Iran, they are very far from gaining anywhere near enough backing for “internal” regime change. The US imposes sanctions upon sanctions, but they are unable to break Iran. Iran’s stock of conventional missiles is vast, they have loyal armed forces, and the majority of Iranians are very well aware of what US imperialism is capable of.

The US Empire’s attempts at regime change in Venezuela have proven farcical, and have fallen flat. The outrageous meddling involved in officially recognising Juan Guaido, a member of a small right-wing party, as “interim president” has placed almost half of the United Nations offside. This is despite backing from the governments of Australia and the European Union. The Bolivarian Armed Forces of Venezuela remain loyal to the government of President Maduro, even despite the economic problems plaguing the country.

The US Empire was unable to foment regime change in Sudan, or at least for now. Russia is

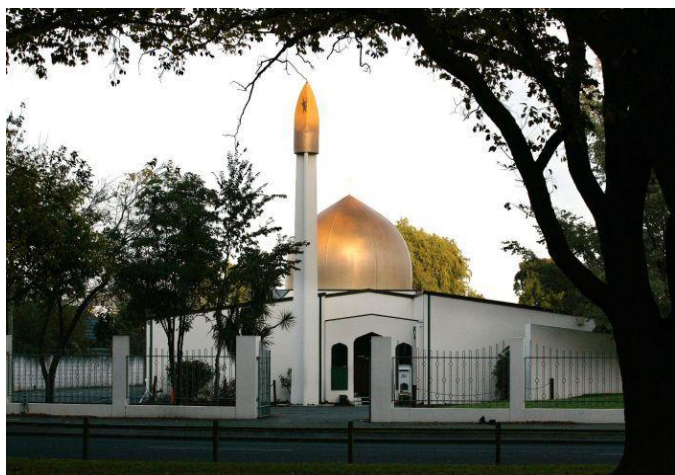
continuing to rebuild its economy since the devastation of the 1990s, and militarily at least, it has strategic weapons which it uses not only for its own defence, but to occasionally restrain the US Empire. China’s economy is still booming, and its development of science and technology, combined with a huge manufacturing base, is enabling it to, sooner or later, overtake the US. Socialist state led development is the reason for the rise of China, and the fact that the economy is not primarily based on production for private profit. Red China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a trillion dollar trade and economic development package for Africa and Eurasia, is a stark example of its economic superiority.



Above: A screen shot of the video which claimed to be a live stream of the actual shootings. There is speculation as to the bona fides of this video. Image from www.thenamal.com

Under these circumstances, the US Empire is desperate, and needs to somehow regain the political loyalty of “their own” working people. This could be one reason for its potential involvement in the preparation and staging of the Christchurch terror attacks. This could well include the utilisation of far-right wing and Nazi inspired elements such as that of Brenton Tarrant. If the police and security services were not involved, the fault still lies with the entire operation of the capitalist class system, which is reaching the point of crisis in Australia, the US and Europe. It is out of

crisis that far-right, anti-immigrant sentiment is fueled – if not adequately challenged and defeated by the workers’ movement.



Above: A photo of the Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch
www.abc.net.au

This is why a simple broad front of “anti-fascism” and/or “anti-Islamophobia” built in response will not address the causes of the extreme violence of one-off mass shootings or the other end of the spectrum – imperialist war. Many of those who are now expressing their horror and condemnation of the mass murder of Islamic worshippers in Christchurch were actually the most vocal in their backing of the US imperialist war against Syria – where Muslims and Christians and others were slaughtered indiscriminately. This includes the entirety of the establishment politicians now piously condemning the New Zealand attacks. This also includes many Australian left parties, who strongly backed regime change in Syria – and call for the dose to be repeated in Iran. In addition, all of these forces remain hostile to Russia and China and the DPRK (“North Korea”) – with which the US Empire is itching for catastrophic war. A broad front with such elements – even under a banner of “anti-fascism”, will forever remain politically powerless.

To cleanse society of ultra-right wing violence requires nothing less than the overthrow of capitalist imperialism – in Australia, New Zealand, the US, Europe and Japan. A strong workers’

movement must be built, which can rebuild the Union movement through replacing conservative officials with a class struggle leadership. This is linked to the painstaking endeavour of forging a Marxist vanguard party, which can lead all of the workers and the oppressed to the goal of building a collectivised, publically owned and internationally planned economy. This is the only way to eliminate racist terror, the far-right, and the grim possibility of global nuclear war.

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WORKERS LEAGUE



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Strategic Culture Foundation

Above: Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad waving to supporters after victory against the US led regime change war, which was won with the crucial support of Russia. Syria is a secular state which was besieged by US/Israeli/Saudi armed death squads for eight years. This major defeat for US imperialism, combined with farcical attempts at regime change in Iran, Sudan and Venezuela, could be one reason why there may have been Western state involvement in the Christchurch events.

Guido Set to Enact Uprising Rooted in US Regime Change Operations Manual



Above: Juan Guaidó has now been barred from holding public office in Venezuela for 15 years. Image from dw.com

(We reprint this article which first appeared at Mint Press News on March 29, 2019. For original footnotes please visit the website. The line of the article does not necessarily reflect the views of the Workers League – Ed)

By Whitney Webb

Juan Guaidó, the self-proclaimed “interim president of Venezuela” who is supported by the United States government, recently announced coming “tactical actions” that will be taken by his supporters starting April 6 as part of “Operation Freedom,” an alleged grassroots effort to overthrow Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

That operation, according to Guaidó, will be led by “Freedom and Aid Committees” that in turn create “freedom cells” throughout the country — “cells” that will spring to action when Guaidó gives the

signal on April 6 and launch large-scale community protests. Guaidó’s stated plan involves the Venezuelan military then taking his side, but his insistence that “all options are still on the table” (i.e., foreign military intervention) reveals his impatience with the military, which has continued to stay loyal to Maduro throughout Guaidó’s “interim presidency.”

However, a document released by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in February, and highlighted last month in a report by *Devex*, details the creation of networks of small teams, or cells, that would operate in a way very similar to what Guaidó describes in his plan for “Operation Freedom.”

Given that Guaidó was trained by a group funded by USAID’s sister organization, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) — and is known

to take his marching orders from Washington, including his self-proclamation as “interim president” and his return to Venezuela following the “humanitarian aid” showdown — it is worth considering that this USAID document may well serve as a roadmap to the upcoming and Guaidó-led “tactical actions” that will comprise “Operation Freedom.”

RED Teams

Titled “Rapid Expeditionary Development (RED) Teams: Demand and Feasibility Assessment,” the 75-page document was produced for the U.S. Global Development Lab, a branch of USAID. It was written as part of an effort to the “widespread sentiment” among the many military, intelligence, and development officials the report’s authors interviewed “that the USG [U.S. government] is woefully underperforming in non-permissive and denied environments,” including Venezuela. Notably, some of the military, intelligence and development officials interviewed by the report’s authors had experience working in a covert capacity in Venezuela.

The approach put forth in this report involves the creation of rapid expeditionary development (RED) teams, who would “be deployed as two-person teams and placed with ‘non-traditional’ USAID partners executing a mix of offensive, defensive, and stability operations in extremis conditions.” The report notes later on that these “non-traditional” partners are U.S. Special Forces (SF) and the CIA.

The report goes on to state that “RED Team members would be catalytic actors, performing development activities alongside local communities while coordinating with interagency partners.” It further states that “[i]t is envisioned that the priority competency of proposed RED Team development officers would be social movement theory (SMT)” and that “RED Team members would be ‘super enablers,’ observing situations on the ground and responding immediately by designing, funding, and implementing small-scale activities.”

In other words, these teams of combined intelligence, military and/or “democracy promoting” personnel would work as “super enablers” of “small-scale activities” focused on “social movement theory” and community mobilizations, such as the mobilizations of protests.



Above: The Miraflores Palace, the official residence of the President of Venezuela. Although named as a “palace” it houses the residence and the working offices of the President. It could be targeted in an internal US backed regime change attempt. Image from Wikimedia Commons

The decentralized nature of RED teams and their focus on engineering “social movements” and “mobilizations” is very similar to Guaidó’s plan for “Operation Freedom.” Operation Freedom is set to begin through “Freedom and Aid committees” that cultivate decentralized “freedom cells” throughout the country and that create mass mobilizations when Guaidó gives the go ahead on April 6. The ultimate goal of Operation Freedom is to have those “freedom cell”-generated protests converge on Venezuela’s presidential palace, where Nicolás Maduro resides. Given Guaidó lack of momentum and popularity within Venezuela, it seems highly likely that U.S. government “catalytic actors” may be a key part of his upcoming plan to topple Maduro in little over a week.

Furthermore, an appendix included in the report states that RED Team members, in addition to being trained in social movement theory and community mobilization techniques, would also be trained in “weapons handling and use,” suggesting that their role as “catalytic actors” could also involve Maidan-esque behavior. This is a distinct possibility raised by the report’s claim that RED

Team members be trained in the use of both “offensive” and “defensive” weaponry.

In addition, another appendix states that RED Team members would help “identify allies and mobilize small amounts of cash to establish community buy-in/relationship” — i.e., bribes — and would particularly benefit the CIA by offering a way to “transition covert action into community engagement activities.”

Feeling Bolsonaro’s breath on its neck

Also raising the specter of a Venezuela link is the fact that the document suggests Brazil as a potential location for a RED Team pilot study. Several of those interviewed for the report asserted that “South American countries were ripe for pilots” of the RED Team program, adding that “These [countries were] under-reported, low-profile, idiot-proof locations, where USG civilian access is fairly unrestrained by DS [Diplomatic Security] and where there is a positive American relationship with the host government.”

This January, Brazil inaugurated Jair Bolsonaro as president, a fascist who has made his intention to align the country close to Washington’s interests no secret. During Bolsonaro’s recent visit to Washington, he became the first president of that country to visit CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. President Donald Trump said during his meeting with Bolsonaro that “We have a great alliance with Brazil — better than we’ve ever had before” and spoke in favor of Brazil joining NATO.

Though Bolsonaro’s government has claimed late in February that it would not allow the U.S. to launch a military intervention from its territory, Bolsonaro’s son, Eduardo Bolsonaro — an adviser to his father and a Brazilian congressman — said last week that “use of force will be necessary” in Venezuela “at some point” and, echoing the Trump administration, added that “all options are on the table.” If Bolsonaro’s government does allow the “use of force,” but not a full-blown foreign military intervention per se, its closeness to the Trump administration and the CIA suggests that covert actions, such as those carried out by the proposed RED Teams, are a distinct possibility.

Frontier Design Group

The RED Team report was authored by members of Frontier Design Group (FDG) for USAID’s Global Development Lab. FDG is a national security contractor and its mission statement on its website is quite revealing:

Since our founding, Frontier has focused on the challenges and opportunities that concern the “3Ds” of Defense, Development and Diplomacy and critical intersections with the intelligence community. Our work has focused on the wicked and sometimes overlapping problem sets of fragility, violent extremism, terrorism, civil war, and insurgency. Our work on these complex issues has included projects with the U.S. Departments of State and Defense, USAID, the National Counterterrorism Center and the U.S. Institute of Peace.”

FDG also states on its website that it also regularly does work for the Council on Foreign Relations and the Omidyar Group — which is controlled by Pierre Omidyar, a billionaire with deep ties to the U.S. national security establishment that were the subject of a recent *MintPress* series. According to journalist Tim Shorrock, who mentions the document in a recent investigation focusing on Pierre Omidyar for *Washington Babylon*, FDG was the “sole contractor” hired by USAID to create a “new counterinsurgency doctrine for the Trump administration” and the fruit of that effort is the “RED Team” document described above.

One of the co-authors of the document is Alexa Courtney, FDG founder and former USAID liaison officer with the Department of Defense; former manager of civilian counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan for USAID; and former counterinsurgency specialist for U.S. intelligence contractor Booz Allen Hamilton.

In addition, according to Shorrock, Courtney’s name has also been found “on several Caerus [Associates] contracts with USAID and US intelligence that were leaked to me on a thumb drive, including a \$77 million USAID project to track ‘licit and illicit networks’ in Honduras.” Courtney, according to her LinkedIn account, was also

recently honored by Chevron Corporation for her “demonstrated leadership and impact on development results.” *MintPress* recently reported on the role of Chevron in the current U.S.-led effort to topple Maduro and replace him with Guaidó.

Send in the USAID

Though *Devex* was told last month that USAID was “still working on the details in formulating the Rapid Expeditionary Development (RED) Teams initiative,” Courtney stated that the report’s contents had been “received really favorably” by “very senior” and “influential” former and current government officials she had interviewed during the creation of the document.

For instance, one respondent asserted that the RED Team system would “restore the long-lost doing capacity of USAID.” Another USAID official with 15 years of experience, including in “extremely denied environments,” stated that:

We have to be involved in national security or USAID will not be relevant. Anybody who doesn't think we need to be working in combat elements or working with SF [special forces] groups is just naïve. We are either going to be up front or irrelevant ... USAID is going through a lot right now, but this is an area where we can be of utility. It must happen.”

Given that the document represents the efforts of the *sole contractor* tasked with developing the current administration’s new counterterrorism strategy, there is plenty of reason to believe that its contents — published for over a year — have been or are set to be put to use in Venezuela, potentially as part of the upcoming “Operation Freedom,” set to begin on April 6.

This is supported by the troubling correlation between a document produced by the NED-funded group CANVAS and the recent power outages that have taken place throughout Venezuela, which were described as U.S.-led “sabotage” by the country’s government. A recent report by *The Grayzone* detailed how a September 2010 memo

by CANVAS — which trained Juan Guaidó — described in detail how the potential collapse of the country’s electrical infrastructure, like that recently seen in Venezuela, would be “a watershed event” that “would likely have the impact of galvanizing public unrest in a way that no opposition group could ever hope to generate.”

The document specifically named the Simon Bolivar Hydroelectric Plant at Guri Dam, which failed earlier this month as a result of what the Venezuelan government asserted was “sabotage” conducted by the U.S. government. That claim was bolstered by U.S. Senator Marco Rubio’s apparent foreknowledge of the power outage. Thus, there is a precedent of correlation between these types of documents and actions that occur in relation to the current U.S. regime-change effort in Venezuela.

Furthermore, it would make sense for the Trump administration to attempt to enact such an initiative as that described in the document, given its apparent inability to launch a military intervention in Venezuela, despite its frequent claims that “all options are on the table.” Indeed, U.S. allies — including those close to Venezuela, like Colombia — have rejected military intervention, given the U.S.’ past role in bloody coups and civil wars throughout the region.

Thus, with its hands tied when it comes to military intervention, only covert actions — such as those described in the RED Team document — are likely to be enacted by the U.S. government, at least at this stage of its ongoing “regime change” effort in Venezuela.



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