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51st state? Instead of cozying to Trump, Canada should chart independent anti-monopoly path

By Dave McKee

It sure didn't take long for Hurricane Trump to make landfall. Less than a month after the U.S. election, the president-elect announced his intention to impose 25% tariffs on all products from Mexico and Canada along with higher penalties on Chinese imports.

Trump's feverish flip-flops during his first term in office are the stuff of legend, but that doesn't mean threats like this shouldn't be taken seriously. Regardless of whether or not these tariffs are implemented, the announcement is a sharp indication of where the incoming executive branch stands.

Clearly, one of Trump's priorities is the renegotiation of the USMCA (the "new NAFTA") so that things like Canada's agricultural supply management policies and the country's public healthcare are put on the table and up for grabs. The tariff threat is a nasty but evidently quite effective way for him to bully the Canadian government (and perhaps that of Mexico) into delivering this big prize.

In a kind of neo-Manifest Destiny, Trump is trying to put the whole of the North American economy at his disposal. No doubt, this would be accompanied by unrelenting pressure to sell off public institutions and assets and privatize public services.

Of course, a 25% tariff would be devastating for working people in Canada as well as the United States and Mexico. In all likelihood, it would spark a severe recession which would lead to major loss of both public and private investment in the most useful areas of our economy – public services and infrastructure, productive industries, housing, etc.

It would certainly sound the death knell for the forestry industry, which is already suffering from the doubling of customs duties imposed over the past year. The auto industry would likely face a harsh and "permanent" downturn or even bankruptcy. The same could be true for the aeronautics industry; following Trump's tariff announcement, Bombardier declined 9% on the stock market.

The Canadian business community has opportunistically jumped on this issue, pressing for an all-party united front to respond to Trump's threat (in a way, of course, that serves the interests of private profit.) So, rather than oppose Trump and his anti-social, anti-democratic, anti-union and warmongering policies, private monopoly corporations are hoping to consolidate and extend their power by integrating with them.



After all, free trade is just a euphemism for "protectionism of monopoly interests." The "protectionism" that Trump promotes is really just a globalized capitalist economy in which all countries open their borders to serve U.S. imperialism. Either way, corporate monopolies get more powerful at the expense of working people.

This is important for working people to know, especially since many labor and "left" leaders don't seem to get it. Certainly, there has been a sharp reaction from Canadian unions and progressive organizations, noting the incredible destructive potential of Trump's proposed tariffs. A lot of it is quite good and very welcome.

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CONTINUING THE DAILY WORKER



For over a century, People's World and its predecessor publications have taken the side of the 99 percent and worked to promote the struggle for a sustainable environment, jobs, democracy, peace, and equality.

51st state?

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But there's often also an underlying naïve belief that "our" monopoly corporations and "our" capitalist government will suddenly adopt some kind of altruistic nationalism and act in Canadian public interest against big bad Uncle Sam.

This isn't the time to be cozying up to the corporate execs and flirting with tripartism. The only way out of this situation is to confront the power of the monopolies – including Canadian ones.

We need to mobilize and press for nationalization of key sectors of the economy – banks and financial corporations, energy, telecommunications, steel, and auto, among others.

We need to intensify the fight against U.S. imperialism and fight for independent foreign, trade, and industrial policies which put people's needs ahead of corporate profit.

And we need to break away from the destructive logic of capitalism and build the movement for socialism.

Mass rage at for-profit health insurance demands collective action

By Communist Party USA

A suspect has been arrested for allegedly assassinating UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson on Dec. 4 in New York City. The suspect, Luigi Mangione, was arrested on Dec. 9 in Pennsylvania. The police believe this was a premeditated murder. Mangione had a "[manifesto](#)" on him at the time of his arrest in which he is reported to have condemned the healthcare insurance industry for putting profits over patients, saying "These parasites had it coming."

A large number of people have expressed understanding of Luigi Mangione's anger at the industry, while also condemning the violent expression that anger took on. Mangione [appears](#) to come from a privileged background, and expressed his justified rage in a way that does not lead to change for the working people that suffer daily from the vile actions of the huge healthcare insurance management industry.

UnitedHealthcare and similar corporations which exist to generate obscene profits for the billionaire class, not to meet the needs of the people for healthcare, are rightly hated by great masses of workers and other oppressed peoples in the United States. In [2023](#), UnitedHealthcare generated \$22 billion in profits stolen from patients, doctors and nurses, and transferred to billionaires.

UnitedHealth's largest [shareholders](#) are asset manager giant Vanguard, which owns a 9% share, followed by BlackRock (8%) and Fidelity (5.2%).

Despite recognizing a real issue, Mangione acted in an individualistic manner that doesn't strengthen the struggle for real change in this system on behalf of the people who require healthcare and their families and communities.

In this time of transition to the MAGA Trump administration, which foments violence as a core principle, and has made violence against migrants a day one priority, people must be careful to avoid confrontations which will be used to justify more violence by the administration.

Trump sees violence as a primary means of achieving his goals, as shown by the January 6th anti-people attack on the capital. Only people's movements built on collective non-violent struggle will be able to successfully resist the MAGA agenda and compel change that meets the needs of the great mass of working and oppressed people in the U.S. and internationally.

Violence is not an answer to social problems. Join us and many others in building a mass movement to reshape the U.S. healthcare system.

Reforms like "[Medicare for All](#)" are important steps towards a democratically controlled people's healthcare system that operates on the principle that every person by dint of their existence within the United States deserves affordable or free access to any healthcare they need without corporate or police interference in their personal lives and without interference into their relationship with their caregivers.

Doctors and nurses deserve the dignity and respect of practicing their work without such heinous and inhumane corporate oversight. All people in the U.S. deserve to live healthy and happy lives, and to raise their families without concern for access to the necessary healthcare that every person requires at some point in their life.

The Communist Party USA condemns making a profit off the healthcare needs of working people struggling to survive under the stress of work and financial strains in an unjust economic system. We call for a healthcare system that puts the needs of the people before the needs of the corporations and the billionaires for profits.

Let us unite together in the struggle for a U.S. healthcare system that puts people before profits.

Democratic governors launch resistance to Trump's right-wing scheme

By Mark Gruenberg

SPRINGFIELD, Ill.—Capitol Hill lawmakers may not always be sure how best and when to resist the right-wing schemes of Republican President-elect Donald Trump but three Democratic governors—J.B. Pritzker of Illinois, Gavin Newsom of California and Jared Polis of Colorado—have no qualms about opposing Trump's plans. They're planning how to do so.

That bodes well for workers and their unions, who will find themselves, like Democratic governors, proclaimed as “enemies” of the coming Republican regime, and caught in Trump's crosshairs.

Pritzker, one of the nation's most pro-worker governors, runs a deep-blue state. He's already warned Trump that if he tries anything to hurt Illinoisans, “He'll have to go through me.”

In particular, Pritzker and Polis want governors, regardless of party, to resist Trump attacks on the Constitution and the rights it grants.

And California's Newsom, whose state and legislature are as deep blue as Pritzker's Illinois, has already reminded Trump “This is the United States of America.” He emphasized the Golden State, with one-eighth of the U.S. population and with an economy which would be the world's fifth-largest if it was a separate country, can afford to go it alone.

The three governors are taking different tacks to tackle Trump. Newsom called a special session of the legislature to ask for additional appropriations to finance California's defense, especially in issues around the green economy, fossil fuel restrictions and worker rights. California has been in the vanguard on those for at least a decade.

Pritzker and Polis—whose state is more moderate—launched a coalition seeking support from like-minded governors to file lawsuits and stimulate grass-roots campaigns against Trump and his hard-right ideas. Polis chairs the National Governors Association, a post which rotates between the parties.

They seek public support for funds for their group, Governors Safeguarding Democracy. Their top goal, Pritzker said in a recent news conference and TV interview, is to save the nation from the threat of Trump authoritarianism. They're asking Republican governors to join them and thus “leverage collective experience and institutional knowledge to protect the rule of law,” Pritzker said.

Hope alone won't do it

“We know simple hope alone won't save our democracy. We need to work together, especially at the state level, to protect and strengthen it,” added Polis at the press conference.

“Each governor has good ideas worth sharing across state lines with one another about how to safeguard our states from what we think might be an onslaught from the federal government to take powers away from the states and/or to actually violate the Constitution,” Pritzker elaborated in the PBS interview.

“We want to know, I want to know, what governors across the country, whether they be Republican or Democrat, have—what their ideas are for pushing back. In Illinois, we have done a number of things to protect, for example, reproductive rights. Other states may not have taken those actions.”



The Pritzker-Polis pushback against the federal government is not new. Indeed, tension between the states and the feds has been an underlying theme throughout U.S. history, stretching back to the Revolution through secession threats, the Civil War, “states' rights” opposition to civil rights and in the last four years, Texas-led opposition, aiding and abetting the corporate class, to pro-worker Biden administration regulations.

And the original U.S. “constitution,” the Articles of Confederation, established a weak central government. When the Founders met behind closed doors to “revise” it, those white men, all of the merchant or landowning upper class, ripped it up instead. The result was a centralized presidency, which has only grown more so over succeeding centuries.

Unionists should be concerned about Trump's constitutional threats. Past rightist presidents and governors sent troops and/or the National Guard to violently put down worker protests.

Pro-corporate Democratic President Grover Cleveland dispatched troops to move the mails and break the Pullman Strike, over the opposition of Illinois Democratic Gov. John Peter Altgeld. President Woodrow Wilson let Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer touch off a “Red Scare” with mass arrests and deportations of militants and labor leaders just over a century ago. Wilson's own Labor Secretary voided Palmer's moves against lesser-known leaders.

And Democrat Harry Truman planned to send troops to operate U.S. coal mines, again to break a United Mine Workers strike, just after World War II. The strike was settled literally as Truman was announcing his plan to Congress.

Trump has other constitutional threats, Pritzker told PBS.

One is to force states to deputize state and local police to help federal agents round up undocumented people, including workers, for Trump's planned mass deportations. He's especially worried by one facet: Sending red-state cops to help arrest people in blue states.

“And how do we deal with the fact that the Trump administration, when it comes into office, apparently wants to re-impose prayer in public schools?” he asked. “That can sound like it's something that would be a Supreme Court issue, but it may be they're going to try to take away funding from our schools if, in fact, we're upholding the separation of church and state.”

“So how do we push back on that? The point is, we have a lot of very smart governors across the country, and we will work in a bipartisan fashion to try to solve these problems.”

‘Gas on a dumpster fire’: Migrant children face increased danger under Trump 2.0

By Aspen Coriz-Romero



The right to seek asylum or refuge from danger is a fundamental human right. It’s protected by both international and U.S. law. But Donald Trump wants to eliminate that right, including for the most vulnerable: children.

Many children are often forced to cross the border without their parents to try and claim asylum in the United States. I spoke with Arlene Rodriguez, Esteffany Luna, and Esther Ramos, who provide legal and social services to unaccompanied migrant youth in Texas. They gave me a glimpse into the daunting obstacles faced by young asylum seekers.

Nearly a third of new cases in immigration court are minors, I learned, with 1 out of 8 being 0-4 years old. But these children are expected to navigate the same complex processes as adults.

“They have to sign their own agreements and applications, present themselves in court, and answer the judges’ questions,” said Ramos. “They’re treated very adversarially — not much different from adults.”

“Sometimes they’re so young they don’t understand what they’re being asked to do, or what is being asked of them,” Luna added.

Asylum applicants have to undergo “credible fear” screenings to convince authorities that it’s unsafe for them to go home.

In interviews, documents, and court appearances, children are required to repeatedly disclose trauma, which takes a toll.

“For older kids who are more conscious of the bad things they’ve experienced, it’s difficult to deal with having someone else know about it,” Rodriguez told me.

Unaccompanied minors with legal representation are nearly 100 times more likely to be granted relief than those without. But unfortunately, there’s no right to an attorney in immigration court, and pro bono legal services are scarce. And the few hard-won protections minors do have are at risk of being undermined as Trump retakes office.

During his first term, Trump tried to terminate the 1997 Flores agreement, which set standards for the care and release of children in federal immigration custody. He gutted asylum qualifications, removing domestic and gang violence as reasons to obtain protection. And most notoriously, his “zero-tolerance” policy forcibly separated over 5,000 children from their parents in immigration custody.

Under a policy called Title 42, many asylum applicants were turned away altogether, violating their due process. Under “Remain in Mexico,” applicants including children were forced to await asylum hearings in Mexico, exposing many to danger. And courts were hostile and caseloads were rushed through.

Migrant children in danger under Trump 2.0

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Ramos put it bluntly: “Immigration law has always been hard — attorneys call it a dumpster fire. Under the Trump administration, it was like trying to put out a dumpster fire with a liter of gasoline.”

For children seeking asylum, the mental and emotional toll of these legal procedures is compounded by language barriers, social marginalization, and fear of deportation.

These fears can also deter their sponsors, the relatives or volunteers who take them in while their case proceeds — and who are often undocumented themselves. It can even discourage them from accessing medical care, educational services, and food banks due to fears of arrest.

The three experts I spoke to all agreed our immigration system is outdated and inefficient — but said reform should make it more welcoming, not restrictive.

Until then, we’ll need to band together and advocate for local and state governments to pass legislation defending immigrant communities — and for President Biden to take steps to protect migrants before Trump takes office. You can also help by donating to organizations that support immigrants.

Asylum is a matter of life or death for these kids. If we truly care about the safety and dignity of children, our immigration policies must reflect that commitment.

A systemic failure: Jury sets Jordan Neely’s killer free

By Taryn Fivek

NEW YORK—More than a year after Jordan Neely was strangled on a northbound F train, resulting in his death, a jury in Manhattan delivered a verdict that set his killer free. After the jury declared themselves deadlocked on the second-degree manslaughter charge last week, 24-year-old Daniel Penny was acquitted of the lesser charge of involuntary manslaughter on the following Monday.

According to witnesses, Penny grinned as the verdict was given, and his supporters began to cheer. Neely’s father, Andre Zachery, became visibly upset and had to be escorted from the courtroom by bailiffs.

Prosecutors argued that 24-year-old Daniel Penny, a former Marine, held Neely in a chokehold for at least six agonizing minutes while bystanders either held Neely down or did not intervene. When the New York City Police Department arrived on the platform at Broadway-Lafayette, just one stop away, they administered Narcan, an anti-overdose medicine, and performed CPR. They waited for the Fire Department to arrive and take Neely to Lenox Hill Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

After interviewing Penny, the NYPD let him go. It was only after widespread outcry that Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg indicted the former Marine, spurring a campaign by the extreme right to paint him as a hero.

A fundraiser for Penny raised \$3.3 million for his defense. Project 2025’s publisher, the Heritage Foundation, said the prosecution was politically motivated. “Alvin Bragg wants to make sure the next Daniel Penny doesn’t dare to help other victims,” they said in a statement, omitting the fact that the only victim on that F train was Neely, who died at the hands of the man the Heritage Foundation sought to defend.

Not the first time

Indeed, it was not the first time that Neely was victimized by a racist system that condemns the poor to premature death. When he was 14 years old, his mother was murdered in an act of femicide by a man she was in an abusive relationship with. Neely was immediately captured by the court system, both as a witness to the man’s trial and as a foster child.

What followed was his lifelong battle for care in a system that neglects those with mental health needs, often resulting in homelessness, as happened to Neely. When the police took inventory of Neely’s belongings after he was killed, they found only a muffin in his pocket.

A bright light to those who remembered him, he spent many years performing as a Michael Jackson impersonator in the New York City subway system. After his killing, the New York City Department of Homeless Services announced that Neely was on the list of the 50 people experiencing homelessness who were most in need of help and care.

Jawanza Williams, Managing Director of Organizing with VOCAL-NY and one of the leaders who took to the streets in response to Neely’s murder, spoke to People’s World about the verdict. Williams discussed how society’s views on homelessness condemned Neely to death before Daniel Penny even got on the train that day.

“Why was he in this situation? [Penny] was inflamed by the rhetoric of Mayor Eric Adams and [Governor] Kathy Hochul. They created this environment of fear, and that empowered people like Daniel Penny to commit acts of vigilante violence,” Williams said.

Under Governor Hochul and Mayor Adams’ tenure, both offices have scaled up the presence of police officers and the National Guard in the subway system. This is despite the incredibly low rate of crime in the subway system.

“Every time I see a story on PIX11 about violence on the subway from someone experiencing homelessness, they play it over and over again for days and weeks, without mentioning that there literally were two million people who rode the subway that day who had no problem at all,” Williams said. “The violence we need to contend with is the violence spurred on by politicians.”

With another Donald Trump administration on the horizon, Williams expects that the situation will get worse for people experiencing poverty and homelessness. “We are in an emergency situation where we need all of the working people across the country to realize that we need to get organized to protect the most vulnerable in our communities. If we do not protect them, then we are subject to lose what little protections some of us enjoy today.”

As for the threat of vigilante violence against the most vulnerable, Williams is even more concerned for the future. “MAGA is a death-dealing ideology. It’s incredibly dangerous, and it produces people like Daniel Penny.

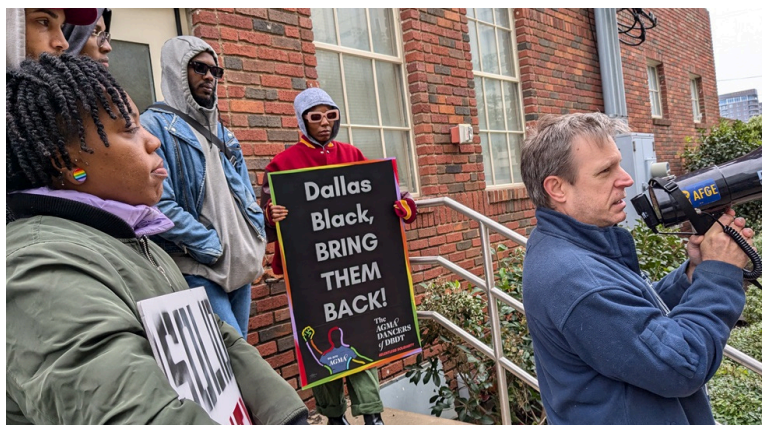
We risk seeing more of that kind of behavior because it’s been essentially sanctioned by the court’s decision and was sanctioned in the lead-up to his murder by the political rhetoric against the homeless.”

While the jury was deliberating on the Penny case, just blocks away two teenage migrants were stabbed, one killed, by men who first asked if they spoke English. Both teenagers were housed in a migrant shelter in the Roosevelt Hotel.

“It’s not just happening in New York City, it’s happening across the U.S.,” Williams asserted. “We need to center the homeless with love, care, and compassion. We need city and state budgets to mitigate homelessness and mental health complexities so that people aren’t subjected to the type of treatment Jordan experienced.”

Fired Dallas Black Dance Theater members now in national spotlight

By Stu Becker



DALLAS—Picketers in the cold in Dallas, Nov. 25, learned that the local union cause they have been supporting since August has gone national. Instead of defending themselves from more than 40 charges filed by the National Labor Relations Board in traditional ways, management has chosen to try to have the National Labor Relations Act, and with it virtually all federal law protecting workers, declared unconstitutional.

The incredible effort was launched a few weeks earlier by the richest man in the world, Elon Musk, who lives about 190 miles south in Austin. Vicious Texas employers are now the spearpoint of capitalism’s drive to push everybody backward by hundreds of years of struggle for workers’ rights.

Fortunately for American workers, the ten fired dancers are standing strong. Their supporters from the labor movement, led by a mixed organization of unionists and other activists named Young Active Labor Leaders (YALL), have brought good crowds to picket every time that the scab dancers perform.

American Guild of Musical Artists organizer Griff Braun told the crowd that attendance is low at every scab performance, and that “hardly anybody” had gone around our picket line and into the building.

Rich people and corporate sponsors are deserting the theater management, Braun said. The Dallas City Council voted unanimously against union busting and withheld \$248,000 in subsidies for management at the theater.

Support continues to grow. The president of the Dallas Central Labor Council, Gene Lantz, read statements from several prominent Texans.

Dallas City Councilman Paul Ridley said, “I strongly support the fired Dallas Black Dance Theater performers in their efforts to unionize and obtain fair labor practices from their employer.

There is no place in our city for union-busting. I call upon DBDT to reinstate the performers with back pay and agree to collective bargaining with the union. I am proud to stand in solidarity with the fired workers.”

Texas State Rep. Jessica Gonzalez declared, “The skilled artists that make Dallas’ Black Dance Theater one of the most unique dance troupes in the country—they are entitled to the right to organize, strike and negotiate with their employer. Dallas won’t stand for union-busting—we’re a union town. I’ll always support workers in their pursuit of fairness and justice, and I am proud to stand with the fired workers of the Dallas Black Dance Theater!”

“As the son of an Illinois Education Association (IEA) member, I know that the right to collectively bargain is one that helps provide financial stability and dignity for workers and their families,” said Dallas City Councilman Chad West. “I look forward to the day that our city can enjoy performances at the Dallas Black Dance Theatre again from its dedicated and talented dancers.”

Texas AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Leonard Aguilar said, “The Texas labor movement continues to stand in full solidarity with the fired dancers of Dallas Black Dance Theater. Their steadfastness in the face of an egregious union-busting campaign is an inspiration to workers everywhere. As DBDT aligns itself with anti-worker corporations like SpaceX and Amazon to claim the NLRB is unconstitutional, we will keep fighting to get these dancers the justice they deserve.”

Braun announced two more picket dates and then asked everyone to buy tickets for the Fired Black Dancers’ benefit performances on December 18 and 19 at the Dallas Latino Cultural Center.

North Carolina town launches first U.S. climate lawsuit against a utility company

By Cristen Hemingway Jaynes



The small [North Carolina](#) town of Carrboro has initiated the country's first [climate accountability](#) litigation against an electric utility.

The [lawsuit](#), filed on Wednesday, claims Duke Energy waged a "deception campaign" in order to obscure the [climate hazards](#) of [fossil fuels](#). This led to delayed action in curbing [planet-warming emissions](#), which caused the costs of the [climate action](#) to increase.

"We have to speak truth to power as we continue to fight the existential threat that is [climate change](#). The [climate crisis](#) continues to burden our community and cost residents their hard-earned tax dollars," said Mayor of Carrboro [Barbara Foushee](#) in a press release from the Center for Biological Diversity. "Duke Energy's knowledge of the environmental injustice being caused by the use of fossil fuels has unfairly plagued our community for decades. Historically underserved and marginalized communities are facing disproportionate impacts and health risks that are associated with climate change. This was not an easy decision to make but I believe that we must be courageous as we call out these injustices and seek change and accountability."

Carrboro says Duke Energy's "decades-long role" in a countrywide plan of deception harmed the community of approximately 21,000 while costing the town millions.

The legal action claims that top executives at Duke Energy knew for over 50 years that fossil fuels posed risks, but were "ringleaders" of a far-reaching campaign to mislead the public concerning its climate harms, while also boosting reliance on [gas](#) and [coal](#) as sources of [electricity](#).

Carrboro has been developing [community-based solar](#) programs, funding nature-based solutions for the management of [stormwater](#) and implementing [climate resilience](#) measures that benefit [lower-income residents](#) and small businesses for decades, the press release said.

"The Carrboro community has worked for over five decades to protect, conserve and preserve the environment, the [ecosystems](#) and the wellbeing of its citizens," said Carrboro Town Council member Randee Haven-O'Donnell in the press release. "Carrboro is a strong, vibrant community, and Duke Energy needs to be held accountable for the deception and damages it's caused and continues to cause. Duke Energy's deceptive public campaign erases the progress we strive for to address climate change. We're the little engine that could, and we hope other towns can be, too, and hold their polluting utilities accountable. In Carrboro, we're standing up to be the change we want to see in the world."

Duke Energy is the United States' third largest-polluting corporation. The company has spent millions on PR firms and industry front groups with the purpose of deceiving the public regarding climate change science, according to the lawsuit. The complaint said Duke Energy has blocked action to combat climate change, which has resulted in significant harm to the town of Carrboro and its residents.

Climate change driven by fossil fuel emissions has led to more severe and frequent storms and flooding in Carrboro and other parts of the U.S., along with record-high temperatures. The climate crisis also brought deadly and destructive Hurricane Helene to the state of North Carolina.

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Carrboro has had to saddle millions for road repairs, rising energy costs and the cost of other infrastructure to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The lawsuit puts the responsibility for these damages on Duke Energy since the utility giant knew misleading the public and obstructing climate change legislation would worsen climate impacts on the town and accelerate the climate crisis.

“This lawsuit exposes Duke Energy executives as using the tobacco scandal playbook. They’re making the global climate crisis worse despite widespread and accelerating misery,” said Jim Warren, nonprofit NC WARN’s executive director, in the press release. “And they’re still expanding fossil fuels and suppressing renewables – in flat defiance of scientists demanding that we do the exact opposite. We need the judicial system to hold Duke Energy leadership accountable and finally break their corporate control over our political system and public decisions.”

Not only has the energy company denied the harms caused by climate change, it claims to be a leader in clean energy. Meanwhile, it continues to build methane-burning power plans while suppressing solar and other renewable sources of energy. It also falsely advertises and promotes methane gas as a solution.

“We’ll soon have a climate denier-in-chief in the White House, but Carrboro is a shining light in this darkness, taking on one of the country’s largest polluters and climate deceivers,” said Jean Su, director of energy justice at the Center for Biological Diversity, an advisor on the case, in the press release.

“Climate action doesn’t stop at a national level, and Carrboro is holding Duke Energy and all fossil utilities’ feet to the fire. This town is paving a way for local governments to drive climate justice despite who’s in Washington.”

Duke Energy is one of the largest providers of electricity, as well as among the biggest corporate polluters, on the planet. It brings power to 8.2 million customers in six states, including almost all of North Carolina and parts of Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Florida and South Carolina.

Dozens of city and Tribal governments and 11 attorneys general across the U.S. have filed suits against oil and gas majors for deceiving the public about the role of fossil fuels in climate change. Multnomah County, Oregon, in October added NW Natural – the region’s gas provider – to its lawsuit against fossil fuel companies for the role they played in the area’s deadly heat dome in 2021.

“This lawsuit represents an incredible opportunity to put an end to corporate deception and enter a new era for Carrboro,” said Mayor Pro Tem Danny Nowell in the press release. “It’s time for us to hold Duke Energy accountable for decades of deception, padding executives’ pockets while towns like ours worked to mitigate the harmful effects of climate change. This suit will allow the Town of Carrboro to invest new resources into building a stronger, more climate-resilient community, using the damages justly due to our residents to reimagine the ways we prepare for our climate reality.”

City workers fight for unionization in Portsmouth, Virginia

By Malik Swain

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – City workers and union organizations in Portsmouth, Va., urged city council members to pass an ordinance that would give city workers the right to unionize at the Tuesday November, 26 city council meeting.

After accepting donations for police departments, and inaugurating a ‘Small Business Day’ for the city, the city council heard the demands of city workers.

Amidst unsafe working conditions and a rising cost of living, municipal workers are fighting to get the city to follow through on its resolution passed last year that would allow them to form a labor union. However, management has responded with retaliation and harassment for things as small as petitioning. Despite what workers say are dangerous conditions, they refuse to accept or hear complaints.

Workers who support unionization or speak out against their working conditions are met with reprisals from anti-union management. Managers lie to workers about their rights, probe them to see if they want to unionize, and give their opinions on unions. All of these tactics are prohibited by U.S. labor law.

One worker from fleet maintenance who spoke at the meeting revealed that management refused to even acknowledge a signed petition in which workers expressed safety concerns. The only response offered was that workers who did not like their working conditions could leave.

Members of other local union organizations such as UE, a national union, members of the Fire Department and Paramedics union, and the Tidewater Workers Assembly all showed up to support the public workers and speak to the council members.

“When these workers face unsafe conditions or lack the resources that they need the consequences are felt in many other places including public safety and at the end of that stream is the city at large,” a paramedic who works for Portsmouth said.

An ordinance protecting workers’ right to unionize from Portsmouth’s city council is crucial. City workers play a vital role in the safety and operation of the city. Fleet maintenance maintains the firetrucks and ambulances. Facilities maintenance maintains the upkeep of the fire stations. Public utilities manage the water supply to fight fires. Without them, people could not count on the help of the fire department and ambulance services.

The call for public sector unions in Portsmouth joins a rising shift of workers demanding a more democratic workplace and higher wages across the country. The plight of these workers which compels them to fight back against their material conditions and against their management, is a struggle faced by workers all over the country.

Portsmouth can set the example for the other cities by passing an ordinance to protect these public employees’ right to organize a union, without being punished or lied to by management.

As terrorist forces overthrow Syrian government, Israel invades and U.S. holds onto oil

By Vijay Prashad



On Sunday, Dec. 8 – after over a week of intense fighting between the Syrian government and the terrorist group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and its allied factions, who gained control over key cities in the country – Syrian President Bashar al-Assad fled Syria. The news was announced by the Russian Foreign Ministry, which also informed that with his resignation al-Assad instructed his prime minister to stay in charge of the state to oversee a peaceful transition of power to opposition forces.

The development happens 14 months into Israel's genocide in Gaza and weeks after Benjamin Netanyahu signed a ceasefire agreement with Hezbollah in Lebanon. Below are reflections from Vijay Prashad regarding the takeover and key elements to understand it.

1. The Syrian state that fell this weekend had been devastated – first by the civil war which began 2011 and then by the sanctions placed on the country by the United States and its allies in the years since. The Syrian Arab Army (the official state army) never fully recovered in the aftermath of the major fighting of that earlier period and was incapable of ever taking back the main cities of Hama, Homs, and Aleppo.
2. The continued Israeli bombardment of Syrian military facilities over a long period further weakened the Syrian armed forces' logistical and ordinance capabilities. These attacks were sustained and painful for the Syrian armed forces.
3. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the assassination of Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah over the last several months weakened the ability of Hezbollah to operate even within Lebanon's south, which forced the recent "ceasefire" agreement with Israel. This demonstrated that Hezbollah was not in any position to enter Syria again to defend the Syrian government against any armed incursion on the Hama to Damascus road (Highway M5).
4. The attacks on Iranian supply depots and military facilities in Syria as well as the attacks by Israel on Iran prevented any build-up of Iranian forces to defend the Syrian government. The weakening of Hezbollah also in turn meant a weakening of Iran's role in the region.
5. The nearly three years of conflict in Ukraine denied Syria the ability to call upon further assistance from Russia – which has been providing military aid to the al-Assad government for years – to protect either Damascus or the Russian naval base in Latakia.

6. Therefore, Syria's government no longer had its Iranian and Russian military allies for assistance against the reinforced rebels.

7. The Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, formed in 2017 out of existing al-Qaeda terrorist formations, drew together various military forces, ranging from Turkey to the Uyghurs – with a large number of other al-Qaeda-influenced fighters – and built up its forces in Idlib over the past decade. HTS has received aid and support from Turkey but also covertly from Israel, according to a highly-placed intelligence official in Turkey.

8. Now that the secular al-Assad government is gone, what will the new HTS-led Islamist government do regarding the many social and religious minorities in Syria? What will the new HTS-led government do regarding Syria's Golan Heights region, which Israel invaded and occupied Sunday? How will the new government do regarding the Israeli military incursion in Quneitra?

9. This story is not over yet. There will be much further unrest in the country led by ISIS as well as the Kurdish groups in the north; already Turkish-backed groups are in combat against the Kurdish YPG (People's Defense Units) and PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) forces in Manbij.

U.S. forces are already stationed in eastern Syria, where they say that they will remain as a "buffer" against ISIS – and importantly, will therefore retain control of much of Syria's oil.

Israel, meanwhile, now has its troops in control of the buffer zone in Syria's Israeli-annexed Golan Heights. There will be tension between the governments of Turkey and the U.S. regarding what the new HTS-led government must, and must not do.

10. I hope very much that the statements made by the HTS Islamist leader Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, that retribution must not be the new culture, will come true. The real fear remains, however, as to how whatever new government emerges will treat the minority populations. There is also no word yet if the militia groups in Iraq will enter Syria. Much of this depends on what happens to places such as the Sayyida Zaynab shrine in Damascus.

Israel takes credit as jihadists seize control from Assad's Syrian government

By Roger McKenzie

Syrian jihadists took control of the capital Sunday as President Bashar al-Assad was reported to have fled the country to Russia. While the streets of Damascus were filled with celebrants, many activists labelled the collapse of Assad's Syrian government a "victory for imperialism" and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed credit for the overthrow.

The defeat of the secular Syrian government came after a lightning offensive by jihadist insurgent groups, mainly under the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) group, which seized control of the capital, Damascus.

Syrian state television aired a statement by a group of men saying that Assad had been overthrown and all detainees in jails had been set free. The man who read it said the opposition group known as the "Operations Room to Conquer Damascus" called on all opposition fighters and citizens to preserve state institutions of "the free Syrian state."

Vijay Prashad, director the Tricontinental Centre for Social Research, said: "There is no Syrian revolution. Syria will face a Libyan future," referring to the overthrow of Muammar Gadhafi in 2011.

Posting on the X social media platform, Prashad explained that "the Syrian state had been devastated by the war from 2011 to 2014," and then by the sanctions placed on the country by the U.S. and its allies.

"The Syrian army had never fully recovered in the aftermath of the major fighting to take back the main cities of Hama, Homs and Aleppo."

He added that Israeli attacks on Iranian supply depots and military facilities in Syria, as well as the conflict in Ukraine, meant "Syria's government no longer had its Iranian and Russian military allies for assistance" against the reinforced insurgents.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed direct credit Sunday for the overthrow of Assad and said he had instructed his forces to "seize the buffer zone and the dominant positions near it," created in 1974.

Netanyahu said the aim of this was "to ensure the protection of all Israeli communities in the Golan Heights, both Jewish and Druze, so that they face no threats from across the border."

Former ambassador and historian Craig Murray said: "I am looking for one single word of condemnation from any NATO government of Israel's current invasion further into Syria.

"Cue the tumbleweed."

El parque de la ciudad de Nashville honrará la historia indígena de Tennessee

By Albert Bender

NASHVILLE—El 3 de diciembre, la Junta de Parques Metropolitanos de Nashville aceptó una solicitud de la Coalición de Pueblos Indígenas (IPC, por sus siglas en inglés) para cambiar el nombre de Cumberland Park a Wasioto Park en honor a la historia indígena de la región.

Sin embargo, el cambio no se produjo sin una prolongada lucha liderada por la IPC y apoyada por sus aliados, incluidos el WilCo Pow Wow, la Asociación de Indios Nativos Americanos y partidarios de una serie de organizaciones de la comunidad de preservación histórica, el sector religioso y organizaciones y ciudadanos progresistas. Fue un esfuerzo multirracial, con afroamericanos, latinos y blancos entre los partidarios de la campaña de cambio de nombre.

La victoria fue el resultado de un verdadero esfuerzo de frente unido.

El cambio de nombre tiene sus raíces en el movimiento de descolonización. Cumberland Park se encuentra en la curva del río Cumberland que serpentea por el centro de Nashville. El río que dio nombre al parque fue bautizado así por un explorador europeo, Thomas Walker, que lo atravesó en 1758. Lo bautizó así en honor al duque de Cumberland de Inglaterra, que nunca pisó ningún lugar de América del Norte ni del hemisferio occidental.

El nombre original de la vía fluvial, Wasioto, se lo dieron los shawnees, que vivían en sus orillas en cantidades prodigiosas en numerosos pueblos a finales del siglo XVII en la zona de la actual Nashville. Incluso después de que Walker le diera el nombre colonial, el río siguió siendo conocido durante años como "El río de los shawnees".

Cuando el parque actual abrió en 2012, se le llamó Cumberland. El parque se encuentra en lo que oficialmente se llama la orilla este del río Cumberland. La orilla este es también el sitio de una vasta ciudad indígena antigua, junto con todo el centro de Nashville, que fue descubierta en 2016 durante la construcción de un nuevo estadio de béisbol.

La campaña para cambiar el nombre del parque comenzó en agosto con una solicitud del IPC. A esto le siguieron una serie de conferencias de prensa, manifestaciones y otras acciones públicas. Inicialmente, hubo resistencia por parte de la Junta de Parques, y muchos sostienen que la decisión final emitida el 3 de diciembre podría haberse emitido en la reunión de la junta en noviembre.

La decisión final fue recibida con mucho júbilo en todo Nashville. Los partidarios de la campaña del IPC hicieron comentarios en las redes sociales como "increíble", "fantástico" y "asombroso". Un destacado líder y activista afroamericano escribió: "Una victoria monumental, en una era en la que las victorias son raras, que inspirará a activistas y comunidades de resistencia en los próximos años". Existía la percepción, particularmente en las comunidades de color, de que era muy difícil tratar con la Junta de Parques en varios temas.

El IPC tiene planes de seguimiento para realizar un evento de celebración antes de Navidad, tentativamente el 21 de diciembre.

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