

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite! workers.org Vol. 67, No. 1 January 2, 2025

From Syria to Staten Island in 2025

Resist capitalism and imperialism!



New York City demonstration to resist U.S.-Zionist invasion and occupation in Syria, Dec. 15, 2024. WW PHOTO



Amazon strike, JFK8 warehouse, Staten Island, New York, Dec. 23, 2024. Read editorial online. WW PHOTO



Māori protest against racist, anti-Indigenous bill in Parliament. Wellington, New Zealand, Nov. 12, 2024. Read online.



Activists attend Uhuru 3 rally in Washington, D.C., Nov. 4, 2023. WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE
Read online: Uhuru 3 case a political victory for the movement.

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Workers World

121 W. 27th St., Suite 404

New York, NY 10001

Phone: 212.627.2994

E-mail: wwp@workers.org

Web: www.workers.org

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Editors: John Catalinotto, Martha Grevatt,
Deirdre Griswold, Monica Moorehead,
Betsey Piette

Web Editors: ABear, Harvey Markowitz,
Janet Mayes

Tear Down the Walls! Editors: Mirinda
Crissman, Teddie Kelly

Production & Design Editors: Gery
Armsby, Sasha Mazumder

Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy
Colligan, Steve Gillis

Contributing Editors: G. Dunkel,
K. Durkin, Sara Flounders, Otis
Grotewohl, Gloria Rubac

Mundo Obrero: Deborah Rodriguez,
Carlos Vargas

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Join us in the fight for socialism!

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the imperialist beast. We are a multina-
tional, multigenerational and multigen-
dered organization that not only aims to
abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist
society because it's the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten
the peoples of the world and the planet
itself in the neverending quest for ever-
greater profits.

Capitalism means war and auster-
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im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+
oppression and mistreatment of people
with disabilities. It means joblessness,
increasing homelessness and impover-
ishment and lack of hope for the future.
No social problems can be solved under
capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the
world, yet no one has a guaranteed right
to shelter, food, water, health care, edu-
cation or anything else — unless they can
pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and
youth are saddled with seemingly insur-
mountable student debt, if they even make
it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous

youth and trans people are gunned down
by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks
to wipe out decades of gains and benefits
won by hard-fought struggles by people's
movements. The super-rich and their
political representatives have intensified
their attacks on the multinational, mul-
tigender and multigenerational working
class. It is time to point the blame at —
and challenge — the capitalist system.

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antee basic human needs.

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for a socialist future, please sign up at
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organizer will get back to you. Or contact
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If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact:

National Office

121 W. 27th St., Suite 404
New York, NY 10001
212.627.2994
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta

PO Box 18123
Atlanta, GA 30316
404.627.0185
atlanta@workers.org

Bay Area

P.O. Box 22947
Oakland, CA 94609
510.394.2207
bayarea@workers.org

Boston

284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
boston@workers.org
instagram: @wwpboston

Buffalo, N.Y.

335 Richmond Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14222
716.883.2534
buffalo@workers.org

Cleveland

cleveland@workers.org

Durham, N.C.

919.322.9970
durham@workers.org

Houston

P.O. Box 3454
Houston, TX 77253-3454
713.503.2633
houston@workers.org

Minnesota

minnesota@workers.org

Philadelphia

P.O. Box 5634
Philadelphia, PA 19129
610.931.2615
phila@workers.org

Portland, Ore.

portland@workers.org

Salt Lake City

801.750.0248
slc@workers.org

San Antonio

sanantonio@workers.org

Seattle

seattle@workers.org

West Virginia

WestVirginia@workers.org

The Panama Canal

From Teddy Roosevelt to Donald Trump

Just what is motivating President-elect Donald Trump's threats to take over the Panama Canal, buy Greenland and make Canada the 51st U.S. state? Does he think he can impose a new historic era of U.S. domination, or is he simply following in the footsteps of his imperialist predecessors — Republicans and Democrats alike?

During his first term, Trump's "America First" policy was purportedly based on U.S. isolationism. Is his recent demand that the Panama Canal "be returned to us, in full, quickly and without question," an indication his second term has emboldened him to assert U.S. interests abroad more aggressively? And what motivates his false claim that Chinese soldiers occupy the canal?

Panama's President José Raúl Mulino's response to Trump that "every square meter of the Panama Canal and its adjacent area belongs to Panama," indicates he is taking Trump seriously. And so should we.

In Panama, dozens of protesters gathered outside the U.S. Embassy chanting "Trump, animal, leave the canal alone," carrying banners reading "Donald Trump, public enemy of Panama." Saul Mendez, leader of a Panamanian construction union that helped organize the protest, quoted France's AFP news agency saying: "Panama is a sovereign territory and the canal here is Panamanian. ... Donald Trump and his imperial delusion cannot claim even a single centimeter of land in Panama." (dw.com, Dec. 25)

To dismiss Trump's demands as frivolous ignores U.S. history and how Washington first came to control the canal.

In 1903, U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt financed a revolt to seize territory controlled by the Republic of Colombia in order to create the Republic of Panama. The newly formed "republic" and the U.S. then signed a treaty giving the U.S. control over a 10-mile-wide strip of land to build and operate the canal in exchange for money.

The U.S. ruled the Canal Zone as a settler-colony for more than 60 years, but uprisings by Panamanians in the 1960s and 1970s combined with U.S. military losses in



Protesters chanted anti-Trump slogans in front of the U.S. Embassy in Panama.

Vietnam led then-President Jimmy Carter to sign a 1977 agreement to return control to Panama.

That legislation, ceding full control over the canal to Panama by 1999, has been unsuccessfully opposed by subsequent U.S. administrations. In December 1989, however, under President George H.W. Bush, the U.S. bombed and invaded Panama and overthrew President Manuel Noriega. Washington claimed this invasion ensured "the integrity of the Panama Canal treaties."

Competition from planned Nicaragua canal

With the canal under Panama's full control since 2000, a massive project from 2007 to 2017 greatly expanded the canal's capacity. Recently, however, severe drought around the canal that lowered water levels has hindered its function. These problems led Panama to set restrictions on traffic and impose higher fees.

The number of ships able to use the canal dropped from 14,080 in 2023 to 9,944 in 2024, or 29%, according to the Panama Canal Authority.

The U.S. is the Panama Canal's number one user. China is number two. In November, China announced that its government has been negotiating with Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega to construct an alternate waterway to connect the Caribbean Sea to the Pacific Ocean.

This challenge from China may well be the motivation behind Trump's threatened takeover and false claims about Chinese soldiers controlling the Panama Canal.

During his first term, Trump repeatedly promoted the idea of the U.S. buying Greenland from Denmark. The Indigenous population of Greenland would clearly challenge any sale. Greenland's prime minister,

Múte Egede, has said, yet again, that the island "is not for sale."

But Trump hasn't stopped. While announcing his pick for ambassador to Denmark, Trump arrogantly tweeted: "For purposes of National Security and Freedom throughout the World, the United States of America feels that the ownership and control of Greenland is an absolute necessity." (CNN, Dec. 22)

Trump's new "America First" pronouncements also included a jab at Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. While threatening to increase tariffs on Canadian imports to the U.S., Trump said it would be a "great idea" for Canada to become the 51st U.S. state.

'America First' – same old U.S. imperialism

It may be tempting to dismiss Trump's comments on social media, but in fact he is following in his predecessor's footsteps. President Joe Biden laid the groundwork for major U.S. military expansion during his presidency through increased war threats against both Russia and China and total support for Israeli aggression and territorial expansion in West Asia, which includes the recent overthrow of the Bashar al-Assad government in Syria. The field is wide open for Trump.

It is critical for the anti-imperialist movement to understand that Trump makes these threats not as an individual but as the next head of the world's major capitalist and military power — made all the more dangerous because its economic system is in serious decline. □

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Webinar exposes imperialist role in Syria's regime change

By Hugo East

The United National Antiwar Coalition held a webinar Dec. 29 to discuss the political situation in Syria and the role of the U.S. and other imperialist forces in the Dec. 8, 2024, ouster of Syria's elected president Bashar al-Assad and the regime change in Damascus.

The left in the United States, including some who have opposed U.S. imperialist intervention in West Asia and its support for Israel's genocidal war in Gaza, has been divided in its reactions to the regime change in Syria.

Organizers of the webinar said it was necessary for an anti-imperialist perspective to be presented strongly. Their aim was to condemn the takeover of Syria by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and expose the role of U.S. imperialism, Israel and Türkiye in overthrowing the government led by Bashar al-Assad, with the active aid of various Western and Gulf states-backed militias.

Other forces in the Western left movement have erroneously celebrated the new government as an improvement for the people of Syria.

The speakers, all firmly in the anti-imperialist camp, were in agreement that U.S. imperialism is largely responsible for the recent political tumult and regime change in Syria. Washington had announced since the early 2000s that it was targeting Iraq, Libya, Syria and Iran.

Regarding Syria, the U.S. coordinated decades-long policies of sanctions that strangled the local economy. Washington backed and trained opponents of the Damascus government. U.S. corporate media waged a relentless propaganda campaign intended to justify its bombing of the then-Syrian government.

The presentations showed how the U.S. — along with its NATO allies, including Türkiye — and the Gulf monarchies and Israel engineered the recent political upheaval. Even prior to the final offensive, U.S. forces had occupied one-third of Syria. Washington recently admitted there were 2,000 U.S. troops stationed on



Panelists on United National Antiwar Coalition webinar on Syria, Dec. 28, 2024.

Syrian territory, which cut some of Syria's most resource-rich lands from use by the Syrian people.

Syria's key role in Axis of Resistance

The presenters also identified Syria's key role in the pro-Palestine Axis of Resistance as a major motivator of imperialist support for regime change. Syria has a land border with Lebanon, Iraq and Palestine, and could facilitate delivering provisions to Gaza or where they are needed.

The Axis of Resistance is an alliance of states and liberation movements including Hezbollah in Lebanon, Iran, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, Syria, the Yemen Ansarallah (also called Houthi) movement and the different organizations within the movement for Palestinian liberation.

In particular, the speakers identified the Axis's support of the movement for Palestinian liberation as a major motivating factor for overthrowing the Assad government, especially since the recent intensification of the Israeli genocide against Palestinians beginning on October 7, 2023. Many presenters cited Israel's and Türkiye's rapid incursions and annexations of sovereign Syrian territory.

The seminar's speakers included: Sara Flounders, coordinator of the SanctionsKill Campaign and contributing editor to Workers World newspaper; Joe Lombardo, coordinator of United National Antiwar Coalition; Jacqueline Luqman, vice chair

of Black Alliance for Peace Coordinating Committee and host of Darker Than Blue on WPFW Pacifica Radio; and Mick Kelly, political secretary of Freedom Road Socialist Organization and editor of FightBack News.

Also presenting were Shawky Darwich, from Students for Justice in Palestine at The New School; Judy Bello, board member of the Syrian Support Movement and member of Ban Killer Drones; Cody Urban, National Coordinator of International League of Peoples Struggles; and Richie M., from the Bronx Anti-War Coalition. Co-chair Saher Al Khamash of the BAWC read a statement by Bahman Azad, Coordinator of the U.S. Peace Council.

To watch the webinar use this url: youtu.be/2QEn3wllu2Q.

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Nationwide holiday strikes hit Starbucks

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

Starbucks Workers United (SBWU) opened up a series of “rolling strikes” across the country on Dec. 20 to run for five days. This latest strike action opened up after over three years of workers organizing and Starbucks’ failure to agree to a contract the union can accept. The promise from Starbucks’ latest CEO, notorious union-buster Brian Niccol, for a fair contract by the end of this year has not happened.

Workers struck five stores in the Seattle area on the first day of the strike. SBWU said the strike, authorized by the union’s membership, was projected to escalate each day, affecting hundreds of stores by Christmas Eve.

The Starbucks struggle, along with the Amazon workers’ holiday strikes, caught



WW PHOTO: JIM MCMAHAN

Starbucks workers on strike near Pike Street market in Seattle, Dec. 20, 2024.

the U.S. bosses off-guard as they preoccupy themselves with genocidal wars in West Asia. This is adding to the capitalist crisis, especially for Starbucks, whose former CEO and chief stockholder, Howard Schultz, has been heavily involved in supporting Israel’s colonization project.

SBWU has spent hundreds of hours in negotiations with the company. The union is demanding an immediate and substantial increase in the Starbucks minimum starting wage, with increases over the life of the first contract. Workers want more predictable scheduling, guaranteed minimum hours for workers and full-time status for those who work 32 hours a week, along with other demands.

The union is fighting back against Starbucks’ union-busting labor law violations. The National Labor Relations Board filed a complaint in December 2023 demanding that Starbucks reopen a number of union stores that it had shuttered to intimidate union supporters. Eight of these stores are in Seattle.

SBWU President Lynne Fox said: “After all Starbucks has said about how they value partners throughout the system, we refuse to accept zero immediate investment in baristas’ wages and no resolution of the outstanding unfair labor practices.” (msn.com, Dec. 20)

Starbucks workers shut down the Reserve Roastery, a tourist attraction near downtown Seattle, on Dec. 20. Only one worker showed up for work. The Roastery has over 100 unionized workers. Starbucks workers struck all five days of the strike in Seattle.

On the picket line strikers chanted, “Workers united, give them holy hell. It’s not just our right, but our duty to rebel!” and “No contract, no Coffee! No workers, no Starbucks!” They received much support, from honks of passersby to pizza donations.

Also, baristas at the front of the

Starbucks world headquarters in Seattle just voted in SBWU! This adds to the over 520 stores where workers have thus far joined the union. □



WW PHOTO: JIM MCMAHAN

At close to 540 Starbucks stores, workers have joined the union. Here, on strike, Seattle, Dec. 24, 2024.

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Las huelgas navideñas en todo el país afectan a Starbucks

Por Jim McMahan
Seattle

Starbucks Workers United (SBWU – Trabajadores Unidos de Starbucks) inició el 20 de diciembre una serie de «huelgas rotativas» en todo el país que durarán cinco días. Esta última huelga se abrió después de más de tres años de organización de los trabajadores y de que Starbucks no llegara a un acuerdo sobre un contrato que el sindicato pudiera aceptar. La promesa del último director general de Starbucks, Brian Niccol, de un contrato justo para finales de este año no se ha cumplido.

Los trabajadores hicieron huelga en cinco tiendas de la zona de Seattle el primer día de huelga. El SBWU dijo que se preveía que la huelga, autorizada por los miembros del sindicato, se intensificaría cada día, afectando a cientos de tiendas para Nochebuena.

La lucha de Starbucks, junto con las huelgas navideñas de los trabajadores de Amazon, cogen desprevenidos a los



MO FOTO: JIM MCMAHAN

Trabajadores de Starbucks en huelga en Seattle, 20 de diciembre de 2024.

patrones estadounidenses mientras se preocupan por las guerras genocidas en Asia Occidental. Esto se añade a la crisis capitalista, especialmente para Starbucks, cuyo antiguo director general y principal accionista, Howard Schultz, ha estado muy implicado en el apoyo al proyecto de colonización de Israel.

El SBWU ha dedicado cientos de horas a negociar con la empresa. El sindicato exige un aumento inmediato y sustancial del salario mínimo inicial de Starbucks, con incrementos a lo largo de la vigencia del primer contrato. Los trabajadores quieren horarios más predecibles, horas mínimas garantizadas para los trabajadores y un estatus de jornada completa para los que trabajan 32 horas semanales, junto con otras reivindicaciones.

El sindicato está luchando contra las violaciones de la legislación laboral por parte de Starbucks. La Junta Nacional de Relaciones Laborales presentó una denuncia en diciembre de 2023 exigiendo que Starbucks reabriera varias tiendas sindicales que había cerrado para intimidar a los simpatizantes del sindicato. Ocho de estas tiendas se encuentran en Seattle.

La presidenta del SBWU, Lynne Fox, dijo «Después de todo lo que Starbucks ha dicho sobre cómo valora a los socios en todo el sistema, nos negamos a aceptar cero inversión inmediata en los salarios de los baristas y ninguna resolución de las prácticas laborales injustas pendientes». (msn.com, 20 de diciembre)

Los trabajadores de Starbucks cerraron la Reserve Roastery, una atracción turística cerca del centro de Seattle, el 20 de diciembre. Sólo un trabajador se presentó a trabajar. El Roastery cuenta con más de 100 trabajadores sindicados. Los trabajadores de Starbucks harán huelga los cinco días de huelga en Seattle.

En la línea de piquete los huelguistas coreaban: «Trabajadores unidos, dales caña. ¡No es sólo nuestro derecho, sino nuestro deber rebelarnos!» y «¡Sin contrato, no hay café! Sin trabajadores, ¡no hay Starbucks!». Recibieron mucho apoyo, desde bocinazos de los

transeúntes hasta donaciones de pizza.

Además, ¡los baristas de la fachada de la sede mundial de Starbucks en Seattle acaban de votar a favor del SBWU! Esto se suma a las más de 520 tiendas en las que hasta ahora los trabajadores se han afiliado al sindicato. □



MO FOTO: JIM MCMAHAN

En más de 520 tiendas Starbucks, los trabajadores se han afiliado al sindicato. Aquí, en huelga, Seattle, 24 de diciembre de 2024.

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