

Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism CCDS

National Convention Workshop August 22, 2020

Peace and Solidarity Committee

Our History

Since the development of the committee structure of CCDS in the 1990s, there has existed a Committee on Peace and Solidarity. At least since the last convention the committee has met monthly. About ten members of CCDS are regular participants in the work of the committee. They are all engaged activists on questions of peace and solidarity: work around Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela; the Middle East; United States foreign policy; military spending, and anti-war activism. Members have been active in Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Jewish Voice for Peace, the National Network on Cuba, Alliance for Global Justice, US Labor Against the War, Peace Action, United for Peace and Justice, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, and other organizations.

The Committee has been too modest in size and capacity to act alone but it has issued timely statements, organized webinars and a conference on imperialism, participated in the production of CCDS publications, including an electronic issue of a foreign policy journal, and has networked with other organizations, such as those above. Over the last year the committee created an active Latin American Task Force, prepared statements against the use of economic sanctions, and organized a webinar on 21st Century Imperialism.

The Issues We Face

This workshop is occurring at a critical time in international history. 1. **The relative power of the United States, particularly relating to China, is declining.** To overcome the perception of the ruling class that US hegemony is on the decline, the Trump administration, without much criticism from Democratic Party spokespersons, is **escalating military spending** and desperately seeking to military technologies; a space force, cybersecurity, biometrics, and advances in drone warfare. In addition, the United States has escalated its brutal economic sanctions against regimes regarded as enemies. And covert operations continue to be used to exacerbate tensions in other countries. And the US still has up to one thousand US military installations around the world, with a growing presence on the African continent. All this turmoil and transformation in world affairs has

increased the danger of war, including nuclear war. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists continues to move its doomsday clock closer to midnight.

2. **Economic inequality** within most countries, with clear exceptions such as Cuba, is increasing and gaps between rich and poor are growing worldwide. Over three billion people live in poverty and more in near poverty.

3. Given the growing economic inequality, protests around the world have increased. And this has engendered **increased state violence against people**, particularly people of color in the Global North. Therefore global instability within countries as well as between them is on the rise. Protests, acts of terrorism, and cross-national class formations have increased populist upsurges from both the left and the right. A new wave of progressivism is occurring at the same time as white supremacy and rightwing fascism.

4. Over the last year, the fundamental danger to human survival caused by **the environmental crisis**, continues. Climate change is worsening while the United States resists the most modest calls for reducing carbon emissions. The Trump administration has been active in removing the US from its international commitments and vigorously reducing all the environmental regulations he can within the United States. And, with the swirl of crises around the world, attention to the climate crisis has declined.

5. And, finally, the covid pandemic has magnified all these global dangers and at the same time forced activists for peace and solidarity to rethink how they organize to make a better world possible. Obviously electronic mobilizations, in their initial stages, have become basic to organizing.

Where Does the Committee Go From Here?

We are all familiar with the problems. What we need to do in this workshop and in continued electronic discussions, is to have a conversation about what this committee should plan on doing in the months ahead. Among our possible tasks are the following:

1. To clearly reflect on the past work of the committee and ask ourselves how to build on this past work.

2. To identify bodies of work:

--networking with peace, justice, and labor comrades from other countries, perhaps bringing international delegations of workers and others to the US

--continue our educational work: teleconferences, such as the recent 21st century imperialism conference; preparing books and articles on topics of concern; issue statements on issues of topical concern; revisit the creation of an electronic journal on United States imperialism; record slide shows, audio commentaries, and other educational tools

--continue to work with others such as our recent participation in the Liberation Road Mexico Solidarity project

--develop within the committee position papers on theoretical questions of relevant to the broader movement such as, for example, building off of the webinar on 21st century imperialism a further articulation of what a theory of imperialism should look like today and how that theory would/should direct our activism

--discuss ways to further address foreign policy issues in anticipation of a Biden or Trump victory.

--carry out an outreach program with other sectors of the peace movement: UFPJ, USLAW, Peace Action, JVP, Code Pink, WILPF

--identify key peace- oriented politicians to work with: Bernie Sanders, Barbara Lee, the "Squad," and other members of the Progressive Caucus in Congress

Today

Our first task, including at this convention, is to recruit more members to the committee. It has been a vibrant committee and despite its small size has accomplished a lot. But the tasks are enormous and our role, while small, could be significant. We should

--announce our need for more participants at the convention

--write an electronic invitation to join our committee to all our members

--prepare a document, perhaps a leaflet, to send to sectors of the peace movement inviting them to appoint delegates to our committee, whether they are in CCDS or not

--Other ideas?

Report submitted by Harry Targ