

Jeff Bezos says you don't deserve \$2,000

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 31, 2020



Jeff Bezos has a fortune of \$194 billion. Just in the United States, over a third of a million people have died from the coronavirus.

The tragedy has been a gold mine for the owner of Amazon. Bezos' stash [gained another \\$79 billion](#) in 2020.

Yet the richest man on earth doesn't think you deserve a \$2,000 stimulus check. His personally owned newspaper, the Washington Post, came out against the proposed \$2,000 checks in a Dec. 29 editorial.

The Post calls this "a bad idea." It attacked "the progressive left, spearheaded by Sen. Bernie Sanders," for saying that the \$2,000 would go to desperate families.

Bezos' newspaper claimed that "huge amounts [are] destined for perfectly comfortable families." The same phony argument could be made against Social Security and Medicare.

The Washington Post is [furious about the alleged \\$464 billion cost](#) but is silent about the twice as large annual cost of the Pentagon and U.S. spy agencies.

The real crime in the bill is [cutting federal supplemental unemployment benefits](#) from \$600 per week to just \$300.

The initial \$600 weekly amount actually reduced the poverty rate. Seven million more people were [thrown below the absurdly low federal poverty level](#) when the checks expired at the end of July.

Sweatshop billionaire

The attitude of Bezos' mouthpiece shouldn't surprise anyone. Mr. Amazon's \$194 billion treasure is based on working to the bone hundreds of thousands of workers in the U.S. and other countries.

Amazon warehouse workers are monitored and if they can't keep up with the pace they're fired. Fifteen workers collapsed during a 2011 heat wave at an Amazon

warehouse in Breinigsville, Pa., 11 miles from Allentown.

The company knew of the health dangers but refused to reduce the line speed. Amazon [instead parked ambulances](#) outside the door.

Even before Bezos bought it, the Washington Post was a company town newspaper, the “company” being the CIA and the military-industrial complex. Its real name should be the Pentagon Post.

The Post broke the 1976-1977 strike of its printing press operators. This defeat of labor whetted the appetite of other union busting capitalists.

Poor and working people — led by Black, Indigenous and Latinx voters — defeated Trump by over 7 million votes. But all the capitalists, landlords and cops have some Trump in them.

Just in order to live, we have to struggle. Union organizing drives at Amazon, Walmart and Target are no more impossible than making Henry Ford sign a union contract in 1941.

The new year will be a fightback against all the billionaires.



Celebrate the Cuban Revolution: Jan 1 Film Screening

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Friday, January 1, 2021 at 6:00 PM EST

Online Event

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RhY0lvuaQdOOfSEFnShrqA

“Solidarity with Cuba – End the U.S. Blockade”

Film Screening “Cuba & COVID 19 Public Health, Science and Solidarity”

Start the New Year with an inspiring film & discussion on what is possible when people’s needs are put before profits.

Friday, January 1, 6 pm Eastern Time, 3 pm West Coast

Register

HERE

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RhY0lvuaQdOOfSEFnShrqA

Celebrate the January 1 anniversary of the victory of the Cuban revolution in 1959.

Dictator Fulgencio Batista fled the country on December 31, 1958 and the 26th of July Movement declared victory. This day is also known as Liberation Day (Triunfo de la Revolución) and is commemorated every year in Cuba.

We will be holding a screening of the new film

“Cuba & COVID 19 Public Health, Science and Solidarity”

Let’s watch it together then join us for presentations and discussion.

Special introduction by:

John Parker is a national organizer for the Socialist Unity Party/ Partido de Socialismo Unido and lives in Southcentral Los Angeles. California has the unfortunate distinction of leading the U.S. in COVID cases.

Cheryl LaBash, one of the co-chairs of the National Network on Cuba, just returned from Cuba. The NNOC and the Canadian Network on Cuba initiated the Saving Lives Campaign to confront the pandemic by organizing for medical and scientific collaboration with Cuba..

Both are contributing writers for “Struggle La Lucha”.

Following the film screening we will hear short reports from our two speakers and open the floor to questions and comment.

From the description of the film:

A global pandemic in a globalized world. Over one million people have died. What could we have done differently to save lives and livelihoods? In search of collective solutions and best practice, Dr Helen Yaffe and Dr Valia Rodriguez look to Cuba for valuable lessons. By reacting decisively, mobilizing their extensive public healthcare system and state-owned biotech sector, Cuba has kept contagion and fatalities down

and begun over a dozen clinical trials for COVID-19 treatments and vaccines. They have also treated Covid-19 patients and saved lives overseas. Within seven months of the pandemic, Cuba had sent nearly 4,000 medical specialists to 39 countries. This has been achieved despite the Trump administration severely tightening sanctions against Cuba, blocking revenues and generating scarcities of oil, food and medical goods.

Cuba & Covid-19: Public Health, Science and Solidarity is produced by DaniFilms in collaboration with Belly of the Beast Cuba. The film premiered early December and is an hour long.

So make your popcorn and join us as we collectively get inspired for the new year.

Register HERE
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RhY0lvuaQdOOofSEFnShrqA



Los Angeles car caravan says: 'End

the blockade of Cuba. Medical collaboration to fight COVID-19'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 31, 2020

On Sunday, Dec. 27, Covid-stricken Californians filled Los Angeles hospitals. In response, an 18-car caravan showed support for Cuban families caravanning in Miami and other cities. Decked out with signs calling for an end to the U.S. economic war against Cuba, the protest also called for ending barriers to medical and scientific collaboration with Cuba. Spanish language TV [Telemundo reported](#) the action: Instan al gobierno que acepte ayuda de enfermeras y médicos cubanos.

In the fight against COVID-19, Cuba's Henry Reeve Brigade responded to the call from dozens of countries on all continents to relieve exhausted medical teams and share their internationally recognized experience fighting epidemics and the aftermath of natural disasters. The U.S. attempt to strangle the Cuban economy intensified, even during the pandemic, blocking fuel and COVID relief to the island. Yet Cuba's research and pharmaceutical industries have developed not just one vaccine, but four COVID-19 vaccine candidates now in trials. At least one Cuban vaccine can be administered through nose drops, really giving hope to the world that everyone can be protected from this virus.

While Black, Brown and Indigenous U.S. communities suffer disproportionate deaths from COVID-19, the U.S. blockade stymies collaboration that has proven it can save lives. Not one Cuban medical professional has died of COVID-19, nor have pregnant women or children. For more information on how you can help to open the door to medical and scientific collaboration with Cuba to save lives, go to SavingLives.US-CubaNormalization.org.



The caravan was initiated by the Los Angeles U.S. Hands Off Cuba Committee. Cars decorated with signs and banners spread the message as they drove from the Westwood Federal Building across Los Angeles to Echo Park.

Organizers announced nationally coordinated actions to take place on Jan. 20 that will further the same demands.

SLL photos: Scott Scheffer

CUBA SOLIDARITY CAR CARAVAN DEMONSTRATION

WHEN:
SUNDAY,
DEC. 27
10 AM

WHERE:
Wilshire Federal Bldg.
1000 Wilshire Blvd
Los Angeles, CA
(Caravan to Echo Park)



This will be a car caravan with signs adorning vehicles and safely distanced masked protestors.

U.S. HANDS OFF
CUBA COMMITTEE



New York City: Don't Extradite Assange Rally & Press Conference, Jan. 3

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We will be practicing social distancing—6' apart—and wearing masks.

FREE JULIAN ASSANGE DEFEND FREE SPEECH NO EXTRADITION FROM UK ON JANUARY 4, 2021



**Rally and Press
Conference**
Sun., Jan. 3, 2021
11am—12 noon
UK Consulate

885 Second Avenue
(btw 47th & 48th Streets)

On January 4, 2021, the UK will make a decision as to whether or not to extradite Julian Assange to stand trial in the US on espionage charges. We are here to demand the UK not extradite Assange.

SPEAKERS

Nellie Bailey, activist in the Harlem community
Cliff D. Conner, historian and author
Randy Credico, comedian, radio host and activist
Kim Ives, writer and editor of *Haiti Liberté*

ORGANIZED BY NYC FREE ASSANGE

ENDORSERS (*list in formation*): Veterans for Peace (Chapter 34, NYC), Socialist Action, Haiti Liberté, Courage Foundation, Assange Defense

nycfreeassange.org For info call: 212-726-1385



Stop U.S. attacks on Iran. No war! End sanctions!

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 31, 2020



On Facebook: [Emergency Day-After Protests: U.S. Hands Off Iran](#)

We call on the anti-war and anti-imperialist movement, workers' and community organizations to be on alert for the possibility of a U.S. military attack on Iran. We urge the movement to join us in calling for emergency day-after protests in cities around the country to demand "Hands Off Iran" in the event of a strike by the Pentagon or its proxies. The U.S. may use Israel to initiate an attack.

Since Election Day, the Trump administration has escalated war threats against Iran. On Nov. 27, Israel assassinated Iranian scientist [Mohsen Fakrizadeh Mahabadi](#). Israel is a proxy state completely dependent on Washington. It could not have carried out such a provocative act without prior approval from the U.S. government.

On Nov. 30, the U.S. aircraft carrier Nimitz and its strike group of guided-missile cruisers and destroyers entered the Arab/Persian Gulf off the coast of Iran. On Dec. 10, U.S. B-52 bombers based in Louisiana flew another run over the gulf off the coast of Iran. Saudi, Bahraini and Qatari warplanes — made in the USA — flew with them. On Dec. 21, the [U.S. nuclear submarine Georgia](#), accompanied by two other warships, passed through the Strait of Hormuz.

On Dec. 20, several Katyusha rockets were fired at the Green Zone in Baghdad, Iraq, which houses the U.S. Embassy. One Iraqi civilian was killed and there was minor damage to the perimeter of the U.S. Embassy complex. The [U.S. Central Command](#) issued a statement claiming that the attack was "almost certainly conducted by an Iranian-backed rogue militia group," a charge [disputed by Iraqi officials](#). On Dec. 23, [Trump tweeted](#): "If one American is killed, I will hold Iran responsible. Think it over."

The Trump administration's baseless and illegal withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement was a pretext to escalate war preparations. Unilateral sanctions imposed on Iran by Washington and enforced against other countries have caused terrible economic harm as well as death, especially during the [COVID-19 pandemic](#). Sanctions are another form of war.

Last January, Trump ordered the assassination of Iranian Gen. Qasem Soleimani while he was on a peace mission to Iraq. Soleimani helped lead the resistance to imperialist-funded forces seeking to overthrow the sovereign government of Syria. On Dec. 24, [Israel launched a missile attack](#) in western Syria.

The section of the U.S. capitalist class that most favors Trump includes oil and gas bosses who profited from the fracking boom after the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. Overproduction of oil on the global market has sent their profits into a downward spiral. [They are eager for a war](#) to disrupt the supply chain and boost their profits at any cost.

Trump may use a war with Iran as part of his strategy to overturn the election and remain in office. But even if Joe Biden takes office on Jan. 20, there is no guarantee that he would end a war that Trump set in motion. One only needs to look at recent congressional bipartisan actions — [\\$696 billion for the U.S. war machine](#) and a mere \$600 in “stimulus” for workers — to see the real priorities of both the Republicans and Democrats.

Thirty-one years ago, George H.W. Bush and the Pentagon used the December holidays as a screen for the brutal, illegal invasion of Panama. The rulers must be put on notice that they will be met with opposition in the streets if they dare to attack the people of Iran.

Money for COVID relief for the people, not for war!

U.S. troops out of Syria and Iraq!

End the sanctions! U.S. hands off Iran!

Socialist Unity Party/Partido de Socialismo Unido and Struggle-La Lucha newspaper

December 25, 2020



What Biden's cabinet picks show

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 31, 2020

Many organizations participated in the Dec. 12 International Human Rights Day: Uniting Beyond 2020 webinar, with speakers addressing the need for continued political struggle against policies of war and poverty promoted by both the Democratic and Republican parties in the U.S. and for international solidarity with working and poor people around the world in their struggle against imperialism. The event was organized by Anakbayan LA, CISPES LA, Students for Justice in Palestine/UCLA, the Palestinian Youth Movement, Unión del Barrio, the African Peoples Socialist Party, Bayan-SoCal, the Socialist Unity Party, the Student Labor Advocacy Group and others.

Following is the talk given by John Parker, representing the Socialist Unity Party, who spoke on Biden's proposed cabinet and administration and its essentially pro-business, pro-war, pro-cop, anti-worker character.

Sometimes the ruling class will use the real issue and need for representation of the oppressed in a cynical way to further more oppression and exploitation against our

class. That's what's going on with regard to Biden's new cabinet picks.

Records are being broken in his selection of the first Black woman as vice president, Kamala Harris, who is so pro-cop she's against even the most minimal demands to end police repression. And then there are cabinet appointments, including the first woman to run the Treasury Department, the first Black deputy treasury secretary and the first Black chair of the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA).

The fact remains, however, that the capitalist state needs repression to maintain inequality and exploitation of our class and, with regard to economics, their goal is to maintain profits and the exploitation that keeps us in poverty for the sake of their profits.

Biden made that clear during a campaign event to rich donors in the summer of 2019, where he said that "no one's standard of living will change, nothing would fundamentally change." At an event by the Poor People's Campaign that he attended, he said the opposite.

With regard to war, Biden's pick for U.S. secretary of defense is retired Army Gen. Lloyd Austin, who led the U.S. Central Command from 2013 to 2016 under Obama. Austin would be the first African American secretary of defense.

Austin was in the U.S. military when, as reported by the Council of Foreign Relations, the U.S. dropped an average of 72 bombs every day — the equivalent of three an hour — in 2016. The council admitted that these numbers were low. Around the same time, a report from military officials admitted that twice as many civilians were killed as previously reported.

Austin is on the board of Raytheon, one of the country's most powerful defense contractors. Last year, Raytheon received more than \$16 billion in federal government contracts, the fourth-most of any company.

Imperialist war, however, is also a domestic war, and this may be why Susan Rice, former national security adviser under Obama, was chosen as Biden's pick for White House Domestic Policy Council. The job is supposed to, among other things, help fight racial injustice. However, Rice, along with another Biden pick, John Kerry, pushed Obama toward bombing. And, as national security adviser under Obama, Rice was an integral part of Obama's use of drones for assassinations and admittedly pushed Obama toward the war against and destruction of Libya.

According to an article in the Guardian, Obama increased drone strikes by ten times from the preceding former president Bush. To attempt to justify this legally, they categorized all males of military age in these regions as combatants, "making them fair game for remote-controlled killing."

If Rice was part of and encouraged this type of racial profiling with the use of military weapons, why would Rice be opposed to the profiling and frequent assassinations of Black and Brown children "of military age"? The extrajudicial killings and bombings that occurred during the Obama administration occurred largely in countries around East Africa, including Somalia and Yemen, and ignored mounting numbers of civilians killed on the African continent by U.S. terrorism. Again, if Rice couldn't see the racial injustice of U.S. imperialist war, why would Rice see it in Black and Brown occupied communities?

Regarding climate change, unfortunately it's business as usual with the appointment of John Kerry as the head of Biden's climate change effort. Kerry told National Public Radio that he was relying on the market — the same market that failed miserably in supplying health and safety equipment during this pandemic.

The market is in search of profits, not the saving of humanity. And the two goals are often irreconcilable. The ruling class is willing to run humanity over the cliff of nonexistence with its irrational allegiance to capitalism and profit. This explains Biden's cabinet, which will be predominantly made up of the enablers of capitalism's

many diseases, along with war criminals who belong in a jail and not in office. Therefore, it will take a unified movement of our working class to promote and fight for a society that puts the control of the resources and the land and factories in the hands of the people, not the profiteers. That's why we must fight for socialism.



The trials and tragedy of Duryea Green

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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In 2004 in the Baltimore neighborhood of O'Donnell Heights, two teenagers playing basketball were shot. To this day, it is unclear what exactly happened.

What is clear is that this was a frame-up and the wrong man is still in prison for a crime he did not commit.

Duryea Green was arrested and charged, convicted and imprisoned for the

attempted murder of the two teenagers. Two witnesses were pressured by police to identify Duryea as the shooter.

The Green family was your typical Baltimore family. Both parents, Van and Duryea, worked full time, doing their best to raise two sons. Due to racism, a corrupt police detective and a thoroughly rotten Baltimore police department, their lives were turned upside down.

In the weeks following the shooting, Van Green started to receive strange visits to her house from the Baltimore City Police Department. There were three visits by the investigating officer, Detective James Lloyd, who would eventually be promoted to Sergeant. During Lloyd's first visit, he asked for an individual named "Darrell Green."

As this wasn't Duryea's name, Van told the police that she did not know anyone named Darrell Green. A week later, Detective Lloyd returned and asked for someone named "Derrick Green." Again, Van didn't know a Derek Green. These two requests were particularly strange because the Green family had lived in the same home for ten years. Duryea's name was on the records and known in the community.

The first two times the police visited the Green home, Duryea was at work. Eventually, Lloyd interviewed the couple in their living room. Duryea asserted he could not have committed the crime as he was working at the time. After a brief conversation, Lloyd left.

For approximately a month, the Greens didn't hear anything from the Baltimore police. One day, James Lloyd arrived again at the home; however, this time he forced his way into the house. He was accompanied by other patrol officers. All of their guns were raised. The only people home at the time were Van and her two sons.

Lloyd and his officers physically forced Van onto her couch, guns still raised. Her

two young sons were scared and confused. Lloyd berated Van and her sons with questions. The family was eventually placed in a police van, the same type used in the [murder of Freddy Gray](#), and were taken to the Southeastern District station. They were held in a cell for over three hours, but not told why. After three hours, Van started to protest and demand to know why she and her children had been thrown in jail. Several hours after this, Lloyd appeared and presented an arrest warrant. This warrant is supposed to be for Duryea Green, yet the name on the warrant is “Derrick Green.” To this day, the name “Derrick” appears in the case file and court documents.

The miscarriage of justice based on these facts alone is disgraceful. However, in many ways it is just the tip of the iceberg. The state violence and racism against the Green family is a stirring example of a bigger problem: an inherently racist and profit-motivated criminal justice system. Nothing represents this better than the record of the lead detective on Duryea’s case, James Lloyd.

James Lloyd, a corrupt cop in a corrupt department

The corruption and racism manifest in the Baltimore Police Department is well documented in mainstream news. This heinous record includes not only a [long history of racist murder](#), but also [planting evidence, beating suspects, and paying witnesses to provide false testimony](#).

James Lloyd is a poignant manifestation of this corruption, demonstrated by two particular incidents during his career. The most telling example is that James Lloyd is currently [being held without bail](#) on charges of extortion and kidnapping. [According to court documents](#), Lloyd used threats of arrest and kidnapping to extort large payments from several individuals. The charging documents assert that Lloyd had a pattern of using his position in the police department to force cash payments. The prosecution provided such a wealth of evidence that the judge denied bail. It is extremely rare for police officers to be indicted, let alone held without bail.

As if this wasn't enough, James Lloyd is notorious in the area for being the assigned detective to the [Sean Suiter case](#). Sean Suiter was a Baltimore police officer set to testify before a grand jury investigating a corrupt Baltimore police task force. The night before his scheduled testimony, Suiter was found shot by his own service weapon in his patrol car. The police first locked down the neighborhood where Suiter was found, Harlem Park. The narrative pushed by the BPD was that someone in the community murdered Suiter. The brutal and racist [lockdown](#) lasted six days. Not long after the lockdown ended, Lloyd concluded that Sean Suiter had committed suicide. To this day, many in Baltimore doubt the veracity of this conclusion. It is commonly assumed by many that Suiter was murdered to prevent his testimony. Given Lloyd's checkered and violent history, it is even possible he killed Suiter.

The criminal injustice system

Sixteen years later, Duryea Green remains in prison as the COVID pandemic rages; furthermore, Green is currently battling cancer and is thus vulnerable to the virus. The Baltimore Peoples' Power Assembly along with this publication demand that he be released immediately. Frankly, if this article were to detail every injustice committed against Duryea by the police, the courts and his own attorneys during this process, it could easily fill a book.

In the United States, we are always told that the police are here to protect and serve us. We are told that we have the greatest court system in the world. We are the land of the free and the home of the brave. How is that working for Duryea Green and his family fighting tooth and nail to get him home? This case demonstrates what is truly at the heart of the police, courts and jails in this country. It certainly isn't justice. Those three institutions are committed to the will of the wealthy and the powerful. Consequently, they adhere to two tenets and two tenets alone: racism and profit.

Duryea Green deserves better. Oppressed communities deserve better. Community control of the police now! Free Mumia! Free Duryea Green! Free them all!



Spies are going to spy. Five questions on the so-called Russian hack

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 31, 2020

[“Russian Hackers Broke Into Federal Agencies, U.S. Officials Suspect,”](#) was the Dec. 13 New York Times headline on a report by David Sanger.

U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin said the hack is “virtually a declaration of war.” U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio said that “America must retaliate, and not just with sanctions.” A [Reuters](#) headline said, “Biden’s options for Russian hacking punishment: sanctions, cyber retaliation.”

What’s really going on?

1. What is the role of the media?

The report on the hack in the New York Times said that Russia did it, even though

none of the agencies reporting the hack cited Russia in any way.

David Sanger's report said the official story is that Russia hacked into U.S. government networks.

That became the story used by all the big media in the U.S. For example, NBC followed with a report that the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency "has not said who it thinks is the 'advanced persistent threat actor' behind the 'significant and ongoing' campaign, but many experts are pointing to Russia."

Sanger has written multiple pieces blaming Russia for hacking, much like what he and his colleague, Judith Miller, did leading up to the U.S. war on Iraq, insisting on the presence of weapons of mass destruction — weapons that never existed.

Sanger was also an originator and promoter of the false claim of a Russian hack of the Democratic National Committee and top officials in the 2016 Hillary Clinton campaign. That accusation was used as a distraction after it was learned that WikiLeaks was about to publish emails that showed how Clinton and the DNC had intervened to block Bernie Sanders.

Too many still believe the Russia hacking and Trump campaign conspiracy story. But, like the weapons of mass destruction, it never happened.

2. What happened?

About 18,000 organizations around the world downloaded a software update for the SolarWinds Orion network management tools that contained a hidden software tool that opened a backdoor into any system running Orion. That was reported by SolarWinds on Dec. 14.

The SolarWinds Orion software is used by nearly all Fortune 500 companies, all of the top 10 telecommunications companies, all five branches of the U.S. military, and

all of the top five accounting firms. SolarWinds software is used by more than 300,000 companies and government agencies around the world.

According to [Microsoft President Brad Smith](#), of the 18,000 organizations that downloaded the backdoored app, only 0.02% were actually accessed through the backdoor, that is, only 40 corporations or agencies. Most were in the U.S., but not all.

Of the 40 institutions accessed through a follow-up hack, 44% were tech companies and 18% were government agencies. The rest were other kinds of private companies.

Microsoft's Smith says that this kind of operation is typically done by private cybersecurity companies.

Smith writes: "One illustrative company in this new sector [private cybersecurity companies] is the NSO Group, based in Israel and now involved in U.S. litigation. NSO created and sold to governments an app called Pegasus, which could be installed on a device simply by calling the device via WhatsApp; the device's owner did not even have to answer. According to WhatsApp, NSO used Pegasus to access more than 1,400 mobile devices, including those belonging to journalists and human rights activists."

3. Who did it?

The actual security reports on the attack say no source for the hack can be identified. There is no evidence that Russia was involved. If there was, the media would have presented it instead of attributing the charge to anonymous sources.

The hack was discovered by the network security company FireEye. "The highly evasive attacker" used "difficult-to-attribute tools," FireEye said. Neither FireEye nor Microsoft could identify any source for the "difficult-to-attribute" intrusion.

Max Abrahms, an international security professional and author of a book on terrorism, [said on Twitter](#): ““The U.S. government did not publicly identify Russia as the culprit behind the hacks, first reported by Reuters, and said little about who might be responsible.’

“You know this story will be retold as all 17 intel agencies 100% certain Putin is behind it.”

A second Tweet by Abrahms added:

“American Media:

“1. Punish Russia

“2. Possibly continue investigating whether the Russian government carried out the cyberattack

“3. Only report evidence corroborating the media’s priors that Moscow was behind the attack

“4. Find additional rationales to punish Russia.”

4. What was the hack?

The hack was in some ways very simple. The SolarWinds Orion software is used by companies and agencies to centrally monitor IT systems. It provides information on the internal systems being run by the company. It is a system used to monitor network and server performance.

A SolarWinds adviser warned the company that it was an “incredibly easy target to hack.” Ian Thornton-Trump, who now works as the chief information security officer at Cyjax, [told Bloomberg News](#) that he’d warned SolarWinds in 2017 of its vulnerability. According to the Bloomberg report, access to the Orion software

distribution server that delivers system updates used the password “solarwinds123,” which was publicly visible until sometime in 2019.

The hacking software that was put on the SolarWinds Orion distribution server was newly developed, according to FireEye. It was not built using hacking tools that were developed by the U.S. Defense Department’s National Security Agency (NSA) that were leaked in 2017 and have become the primary tools used for spying operators outside the U.S.

The capability to develop these kinds of spy tools is held primarily by the NSA, along with Britain’s Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) and Israel. China and Russia have some capability. Microsoft’s Brad Smith suggests that it is likely a private cybersecurity company that is involved.

Despite the lack of evidence that points to a specific actor, the U.S. media immediately blamed Russia for the spying attempt.

5. Was this an act of war?

Cybersecurity and legal experts say that the hack would not be considered an act of war under international law and most experts consider it a routine act of espionage. Espionage is internationally allowed in peacetime.

To qualify as an act of war, United Nations resolutions and other sources of international law require the use of force or destruction. In this case, there has been no loss of life or damage of any kind to the infrastructure. The hack has been for data collection only. The intrusion has not reached any systems on the specially protected “secret” networks.

The hackers gained access to the U.S. Treasury Department’s unclassified systems but really just saw what the system was doing, the applications running and that sort of thing.

“At this point, we do not see any break-in into our classified systems,” [Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin said on CNBC](#). “Our unclassified systems did have some access. I will say the good is there’s been no damage, nor have we seen any large amounts of information displaced.”

Breaking into unclassified government and corporate networks, reading other people’s emails — that’s spying. That’s the kind of cyber spying that the National Security Agency does 24 hours a day against Russia, China, Iran, Cuba, Venezuela and many more.

“Warfare implies violence, death and destruction,” [said Duncan Hollis](#), a professor of law at Temple University specializing in cybersecurity. Hollis and other experts said the attack appears to have been carried out to steal sensitive U.S. information, and should be viewed as espionage.

“Simply stealing information, as much as we don’t like it, is not an act of war — it is espionage,” said Benjamin Friedman, a policy director at the think tank Defense Priorities.

The U.S. is the primary purveyor of espionage in the world. [As Edward Snowden revealed](#), the U.S. Defense Department’s NSA is engaged in this kind of data collection on a global scale as well as in the U.S.

There is a difference between espionage and war.

Take it from Carl von Clausewitz, the Prussian general and military theorist whose “On War” is required reading at West Point. Clausewitz wouldn’t consider this “war” either, [says Tom Mahnken](#), a veteran of long service in the Navy and civilian Pentagon posts who now heads the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments.

Clausewitz defined war as “an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will,” Mahnken noted. “What remains essential to war is that it is meant to compel an

adversary — to achieve political objectives. That's not what this hack is about: It is a classic intelligence-gathering operation."



Billionaires got a trillion. We get \$600.

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 31, 2020

After months of doing nothing, the super Scrooge Congress finally provided a little help for poor and working people. We desperately need it.

The coronavirus pandemic has killed over 320,000 people in the United States. Black, Indigenous and Latinx people are [almost three times as likely to die](#) from it.

The real number of unemployed was at least 30 million people In October, [according to Dr. Heidi Shierholz](#), former chief economist of the U.S. Department of Labor.

Eight million more people have been pushed below the official poverty line since June. Close to 28 million adults — and millions of children — live in [hungry](#)

[households](#). Landlords and bankers want to launch a tidal wave of evictions and foreclosures.

So [what did we get](#)? Eleven weeks of \$300-per-week supplemental unemployment checks. The moratorium on evictions and home foreclosures will be extended until Jan. 31, 2021 — the middle of winter.

And a [\\$600 “stimulus” check](#) that will last an average family who rents an apartment or house just 11 days. [Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley](#), a member of The Squad, rightfully calls this money “survival” checks.

This absolutely needed yet criminally delayed assistance for millions of poor and working people is chump change to what billionaires have stolen. Between March and November of 2020, the [647 U.S. billionaires](#) grabbed another \$960 billion.

That’s enough money to give \$15,000 checks to 64 million poor and working families. Instead, Jeff Bezos deposited another \$70 billion in his piggy bank. All of Bezos’ loot is produced by Amazon workers, 20,000 of whom have caught COVID-19.

Three members of the Walton family — who own Walmart and the state of Arkansas — added another \$48 billion to their pile. Yet Walmart refuses to provide hazard pay to its 1.4 million U.S. employees.

Then there’s Mr. Grinch himself, John Tyson, CEO of Tyson Foods. The dead animal capitalist [gained another \\$800 million](#) while 11,000 Tyson workers were infected with the coronavirus.

They don’t really care about us

Why did Congress dawdle for almost six months after the last set of assistance measures expired at the end of July? Even the airlines and mass transit agencies were screaming for help.

The aid that finally dribbled out was \$50 billion less than what 647 billionaires had grabbed while 320,000 nonbillionaires died of the coronavirus. Paid leave for workers with COVID-19 was blocked.

But another [\\$696 billion could be found for the Pentagon](#). As Michael Jackson pointed out, they don't really care about us.

It was no different 90 years ago at the start of the Great Depression. Then, President Herbert Hoover claimed he was given the following advice by Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon: "Liquidate labor, liquidate stocks, liquidate the farmers, liquidate real estate."

Isn't that what's happened in the last six months? Hundreds of thousands of small and not-so-small businesses have gone to the wall with millions of workers losing their jobs.

Meanwhile, the big banks are doing swell. Among them is the Bank of New York Mellon with \$381 billion in assets.

As Larry Kudlow — Trump's \$185,000-per-year director of the National Economic Council — once said, ["Recessions are therapeutic."](#)

It was cleanup time for Big Capital. ["One capitalist always kills many,"](#) was how Karl Marx, the founder of scientific socialism, described the process. More important was the drive to further impoverish the working class. Capitalists wanted to force workers to take any job and lower wages even more.

Many on Wall Street and in Congress even blamed the original \$600-per-week supplemental unemployment checks for the Black Lives Matter movement.

They figured the only reason that 26 million people protested police murders was that they had nothing to do and cash in their pocket. Kudlow claimed that extending

the \$600 checks was a ["disincentive"](#) for people to try to find a job.

The beds never get cold

Kudlow's remarks echo those of his class. In their country clubs and mansions, they tell each other that the working class is lazy and has to be compelled by hunger, evictions and police terror to take any job.

They not only don't really care about us, they have no idea how millions of people live.

On Dec. 19, three people died in a fire that spread through a crowded building in the Elmhurst neighborhood of Queens, N.Y. This tragedy occurred less than a mile from the Elmhurst Medical Center, where, in the springtime, refrigerator trucks stored the bodies of those who died of COVID-19.

According to [City Councilperson Daniel Dromm](#), "Many of the inhabitants [of the burned building] are immigrants who share beds, switching off for 12 hours at a time while they are working, because they cannot afford to live in better conditions."

Those were the conditions of the working class in Britain 200 years ago. Here's how John Fielden, a capitalist himself, described them:

"The profits of manufacturers were enormous; but this only whetted the appetite that it should have satisfied, and therefore the manufacturers had recourse to an expedient that seemed to secure to them those profits without any possibility of limit; they began the practice of what is termed "night-working," that is, having tired one set of hands, by working them throughout the day, they had another set ready to go on working throughout the night; the day-set getting into the beds that the night-set had just quitted, and in their turn again, the night-set getting into the beds that the day-set quitted in the morning. It is a common tradition in Lancashire, that the

beds ‘never get cold’.” [\(Quoted by Marx in “Capital.”\)](#)

“Power concedes nothing without a demand,” declared Frederick Douglass. It was the fear of what millions of suddenly unemployed workers might do that forced Trump and Congress to provide \$600 weekly unemployment checks and a \$1,200 stimulus check in the springtime.

We need to make them fear us again. The year 2021 will be a year of struggle.



State Supreme Court rejects Faulkner widow’s ‘evidence-free’ effort to block Mumia appeal

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Mumia Abu-Jamal, the prison journalist long known as the “voice of the voiceless” for his compelling writings and short audio tapes about life behind bars, moved a step closer to getting a chance for a reconsideration of his earliest appeal of his conviction — an allegedly flawed Post-Conviction Relief Act hearing in 1995, as well as three other later PCRA appeals of aspects his case, all ignored and their findings rejected by Pennsylvania’s appellate courts under spurious conditions.

The opening comes in the form of dismissal by the state’s Supreme Court of an attempt by Maureen Faulkner, widow of slain Philadelphia Police Officer Daniel Faulkner, to use an obscure legal gambit called a King’s Bench petition, to have DA Larry Krasner’s office removed as the legal entity defending against Abu-Jamal’s appeals. That effort, filed last February had blocked any forward action on those

appeals.

Abu-Jamal's attorneys had filed an appeal several years ago in Philadelphia's Court of Common Pleas, claiming that the handling of those four PCRA hearings, all of which were rejected by the State Supreme Court, were all constitutionally flawed because one of the judges reviewing them, Justice and eventually Chief Justice Ronald D. Castille (now retired), had refused Abu-Jamal's requests that he recuse himself, despite his having been Philadelphia's district attorney and the man overseeing the DA Office's legal effort to oppose Abu-Jamal's appeals of his sentence and conviction. (That appeal was filed following a 2016 US Supreme Court ruling in a case called *Williams v. Pennsylvania*, in which another Philadelphia defendant convicted of murder sentenced to death was granted a new penalty phase trial because the same Justice Castile had as DA approved his prosecutor seeking the death penalty, and then did not agree to recuse himself in considering an appeal of that sentence.)

Abu-Jamal's new legal effort gained urgency when in late December 2018, newly elected progressive DA Krasner (elected in Nov. 2017), reported discovering, in an unused storeroom of the DA's office, six file boxes containing a vast number of documents relating to Abu-Jamal's case. Many of these documents were found to be dated from around the time of his 1982 trial, and including material that should, under the US Supreme Court's 1963 *Brady decision*, have been disclosed by to Abu-Jamal and his defense team at the time of the trial or, depending on the date of their production, before his 1995 PCRA hearing.

Among these documents was, for example, a shocking letter from a key prosecution witness, white taxi driver Robert Chobert, asking prosecuting attorney Joseph McGill, "Where is my money?" As journalist Linn Washington has noted, Chobert, as a prosecution witness, was unlikely to have been asking for reimbursement for travel to court, or for meals as a witness, "Because typically as a key prosecution witness

he would have been brought to and from court by police officers, and would have been provided with his meals and hotel room by the DA's office, not expected to front his expenses himself and then get reimbursed."

Chobert was indeed a critical prosecution witness, as he claimed at the trial to have parked his taxi directly behind Faulkner's patrol car, and that from that position to have witnessed Abu-Jamal allegedly firing multiple times down at the prone Faulkner on the sidewalk with his licensed snub-nosed pistol. That testimony has been challenged by many because photos of the crime scene taken almost immediately after the shooting do not show a taxi cab behind Faulkner's squad car. Also many people familiar with this case, this journalist included, find it hard to believe that Chobert, who at the time was driving his taxi cab illegally because his license had been revoked following a DWI conviction, and moreover, he was at the time on probation on a five-year sentence for felony arson of an elementary school, would have pulled up and parked directly behind a cop car.

(In fact, it is likely that Chobert was actually parked a block away on 13th street north of Locust where the shooting incident occurred, his vehicle pointing away from the scene. This would explain why no other witness, for either prosecution or defense, ever mentioned either in court testimony or in statements to police investigators seeing a taxi cab near Faulkner's car or the shooting, and why the other main eye witness, the prostitute Cynthia White, in a drawing she made of the scene for police detectives, drew Faulkner's car, Abu-Jamal's brother's VW in front of it, and even an uninvolved Ford sedan in front of that, but no taxi.)

The idea that there was a letter from Chobert asking the DA for "my money" that was not shown to the jury weighing Abu-Jamal's fate, or to the defense when Chobert was recalled to testify at the 1995 PCRA, is certainly appalling. It appears on its face to be a serious case of possible prosecutorial misconduct, or the type of evidence that, if known of to a jury considering a murder conviction, could have led

to a different outcome. (Jury decisions in felony cases have to be unanimous for conviction, so even one juror voting no to conviction makes it a hung trial.)

Also important in those discovered boxes were documents suggesting that Judge Castille, while DA, contrary to his own assertion, was indeed directly monitoring how his office's felony appeals unit had been handling his the legal effort to oppose Abu-Jamal's appeals in the state's court system.

Common Pleas Judge Leon Tucker disagreed with Castille's decision on recusal. In a ruling issued nearly two years ago he approved Abu-Jamal's motion to have four of his rejected PCRA hearings re-considered, or reopened, because of Justice Castille's failure to recuse, based upon the US Supreme Court's *Williams precedent*. In that precedent-setting 2016 decision, the US Supreme Court ordered a new sentencing jury trial for the convicted and condemned Terrance Williams, finding that Castille's refusal to recuse himself after having as DA approved a subordinate prosecutor's request to seek the death penalty, had "violated the Due Process Clause of the [US Constitution's] Fourteenth Amendment."

Using forceful language, the Judge Tucker wrote, regarding Abu-Jamal's petition:

"The claim of bias, prejudice and refusal of former Justice Castille to recuse himself is worthy of consideration as true justice must be completely just without even a hint of partiality, lack of integrity or impropriety."

Tucker added, citing the US High Court's *Williams* ruling:

"If a judge served as prosecutor and then the judge, there is a finding of automatic bias and a due process violation...The court finds that recusal by Justice Castille would have been appropriate to ensure the neutrality of the judicial process in [Abu-Jamal's appeals] before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court."

The ruling by Tucker (the first African American jurist to have heard any aspect of the Abu-Jamal case or any of his appeals over four decades), is viewed as a stunning breakthrough, offering Abu-Jamal, for the first time in more than two decades, an opportunity to have his conviction, not just his now-vacated death sentence, reconsidered. But that appeal was halted in its tracks earlier this year when Maureen Faulkner, the widow of the slain Officer Daniel Faulkner, filed in Supreme Court a rarely used King's Bench petition — a hoary legal claim dating to pre-Revolutionary British Common Law — arguing that DA Krasner, a progressive former defense attorney who won election as DA in November 2017, should be barred from defending against Abu-Jamal's petition. Faulkner's petition made a number of factually erroneous or baseless claims that Krasner was biased in favor of Abu-Jamal. Her attorney, George Bochetto, made nine claims to support his client's contention about Krasner's alleged bias. Among these were the assertion that Krasner had been a member of the leftist civil rights law firm the National Lawyer's Guild, which in 2000 had defended protesters at the 2000 Republican National Convention in Philadelphia, calling for Abu-Jamal's freedom; that Krasner had publicly referred to "some prosecutors" in the DA's office being "war criminals;" and that he had not tried to challenge or delay Judge Tucker's order authorizing a new PCRA to consider the cartons of hidden and unreported documents relating to Abu-Jamal's case.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court on Dec. 16, in a in a 3-1 ruling (by Justices Christine Donohue, David Wecht and Kevin Dougherty, with Justice Sallie Updike Mundy dissenting and three justices recusing themselves because of unlisted conflicts of interest) , supported the conclusion of that court's appointed "master," McKean County Judge John M. Cleland. Judge Cleland, after a lengthy and detailed investigation that included interviews with Krasner and other witnesses, had recommended rejection of the King's Bench petition. He reported that he'd found no "direct evidence of a conflict of interest" or even "an appearance of impropriety" that would "compromise" DA Krasner's ability to "carry out his responsibilities," in

defending against Abu-Jamal's appeal of his PCRA rejections. The court master learned for example that Krasner had never paid dues to the NLG and in any event was not involved in any defense of pro-Mumia protesters at the convention, and found other Faulkner claims to be similarly without any factual basis.

As Judge Cleland concluded in his report to the court:

"A perception based on the arguments of detractors cannot overcome the actual and undisputed fact that Ms. Faulkner has presented no evidence that Krasner or his assistants have not defended the conviction of Mumia Abu-Jamal or do not intend to do so in the future."

He added:

"No credible argument has been made that Krasner and his assistants have adopted legal positions or legal strategies that do not have arguable merit or are not supported in law based on the facts."

Abu-Jamal Attorney Judy Ritter tells [ThisCantBeHappening!](#), "The King's Bench petition has been dismissed, and that decision cannot be appealed. Now our case involving the four rejected PCRA hearings will go forward."

So too will the long-delayed evidentiary hearing, called for by Judge Tucker last April, into the contents of those six boxes of prosecutorial documents relating to the case — documents that prior DAs from Ed Rendel through Ron Castille, Lynn Abraham, Seth Williams to Kelly Hodge had illegally kept undeclared and hidden away from Abu-Jamal and his lawyers for four decades.

What happens next will be a hearing in superior court on Abu-Jamal's petition for reconsideration of his PCRAs and a hearing before Judge Tucker into whether the newly discovered documents pose a *Brady* violation in his initial trial or later during his PCEA hearings. It is virtually certain that however Tucker and the superior court

rule, this case will be appealed by one side or the other on up to the state Supreme Court — a court which no longer includes the now retired Justice Castille.

Abu-Jamal's appeal prospects there could be iffy, given the recusal already in the current case by three of the court's seven judges, and by negative comments about the applicability of the Supreme Court's *Williams* precedent to Abu-Jamal's case filed by on of the three judges who concurred in the 3-1 decision, not to mention the dissent by one judge. (Pennsylvania's higher courts have been notorious for showing a proclivity for denying this particular prisoner, Abu-Jamal, the benefits of precedents routinely made available to less notorious appellants — a point specifically noted by one of the three federal Circuit Court judges who heard his last appeal of his conviction.)

That said, one of the justices who voted with the majority to reject Faulkner's petition, David Wecht, wrote a 20-page powerful concurring opinion supporting the court's King's Bench petition rejection. In that concurrence, he included a blistering dismissal of the negative comments about DA Krasner and Abu-Jamal's case made by his court colleague Justice Kevin Dougherty, writing:

The dearth of evidence in the record to support Ms. Faulkner's allegations does not deter my learned colleague, Justice Dougherty, with whose perspective I respectfully disagree. Justice Dougherty elects to forego the requirement that we afford supported factual findings due consideration and chooses instead to ignore those findings and reach his own conclusions. Notwithstanding the broad prerogatives attendant to our review at King's Bench, this approach strikes me here as unwise and in any event unavailing. It is axiomatic that we afford due consideration to fact-finders, because "the jurist who presided over the hearings was in the best position to determine the facts." I see no reason not to give Judge Cleland's findings their due "consideration."

After several pages devoted to a thorough debunking of Dougherty's evidence-free

claims of purporting to demonstrate Krasner's pro-Mumia bias, Wecht writes:

"From that empty bucket, Justice Dougherty somehow nonetheless finds paint to compose a 'disturbing picture.' However vast our authority in cases such as this one is, our standard of review still does not permit such creations."

Justice Wecht also debunks, in his opinion, the arguments of Justice Mundy, the lone dissenting vote on the decision rejecting Faulkner's King's Bench petition, writing:

"Justice Mundy's dissent fares no better. Like Justice Dougherty, Justice Mundy elects to premise her analysis upon Ms. Faulkner's allegations, ignoring the fact record as it now stands and the decisions that Judge Cleland made based upon that record. As opposed to Justice Dougherty, Justice Mundy would resolve the matter [regarding Abu-Jamal's right to appeal for a reconsideration of four PCRA's where Judge Tucker found Justice Castille should have recused himself] instead of awaiting a future ruling based upon Reid. However, like Justice Dougherty, Justice Mundy makes no serious attempt to explain if, or how, Judge Cleland's fact-finding was undeserving of our due consideration. Consequently, Justice Mundy's position fails for the same reasons that undercut the position advanced by Justice Dougherty."

Since 2001 when his death sentence was finally ruled unconstitutional and converted to a sentence of life without chance of parole, Abu-Jamal has spent nearly 20 additional years in prison, some of that time he was still held in solitary confinement on the state's death row while the DA battled all the way to the US Supreme Court to have his death sentence reimposed. Now 66, he is suffering from cirrhosis of the liver from a Hepatitis C infection contracted while in prison and left untreated for some time until he won a federal lawsuit mandating that effective treatment be belatedly made available to him. Over the years, Abu-Jamal, referred to by supporters and opponents alike by his first name Mumia, has been the focus of intense efforts by the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police, which, along with

Faulkner's widow, has campaigned doggedly to have him executed, and, since his death sentence was overturned on Constitutional grounds, to keep him locked up and denied avenues of appeal.

Meanwhile, a global campaign seeking his freedom continues to demand his release from prison arguing that he never received a fair trial and that, as he has always maintained, he did not murder Officer Faulkner.

That Abu-Jamal did not receive a fair trial is clear given how the trial judge, the late Albert Sabo, a judge boasting the greatest number of death penalty notches on his belt of any jurist in the US, repeatedly denied defense requests for subpoenas and witnesses, and allowed the prosecutor, in his summation to the jury, to make spurious references to his having been a member of the Black Panther Party as a 15-year-old kid. That he didn't receive a fair appeal process is even clearer. First there's the fact that Judge Sabo was recalled from retirement to preside over Abu-Jamal's initial PCRA, where he was so biased in his rulings on things like permissible testimony and requests for subpoenas of witnesses that even the Philadelphia Inquirer, no backer of Abu-Jamal, called the hearing "embarrassing." And that case has been made even more abundantly clear by Judge Tucker's ruling, and by the recent discovery of the hidden crates of prosecution documents in the DA's office that were never revealed to the defense in the case.

The existence of those documents in themselves is a clear violation of the US Supreme Court's 1963 *Brady policy*, which requires that prosecutors to provide defendants in criminal cases with all evidence in their possession that might exonerate a defendant.

Whatever the future holds, this case is not going away, and Abu-Jamal and his defense team are headed, finally, to a hearing Pennsylvania superior court hearing on Judge Tucker's ruling granting Abu-Jamal the right to challenge the earlier rejection of his PCRA hearing findings by Pennsylvania's higher appellate courts.

Beyond that, should he appeal for reconsideration of his four rejected PCRA's and for the chance to have a further PCRA hearing be rejected, he will be able to appeal that decision in the federal courts.

Dave Lindorff is the author of "Killing Time: An Investigation into the Death Penalty Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal" (Common Courage Press, 2003)

Source: [This Can't Be Happening!](#)

