

El terrible destino del pueblo afgano

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 16, 2022



Las familias aún se tambalean después de que dos terremotos sacudieran una remota aldea de la provincia de Badghis (Afganistán) el mes pasado, en medio de una grave crisis económica. Foto: UNICEF

El 8 de febrero de 2022, el Fondo de Naciones Unidas para la Infancia (UNICEF) Afganistán [publicó](#) una serie sombría de tuits. En uno de los hilos, que incluía una foto de una niña tumbada en una cama de hospital y su madre, sentada junto a ella, se [leía](#): “Tras recuperarse de una diarrea acuosa aguda, Soria, de dos años, está de vuelta en el hospital, esta vez sufriendo de edema y emaciación. Su madre ha estado

junto a su cama las últimas dos semanas, esperando ansiosamente que Soria se recupere”. La serie de [tuits](#) muestra que Soria no está sola en su sufrimiento. En Afganistán, “una de cada tres adolescentes sufre de anemia” y el país [se enfrenta](#) a “una de las tasas más altas del mundo de retraso en el crecimiento en niños y niñas menores de cinco años: 41%”, según UNICEF.

La historia de Soria es una entre millones. En la provincia de Uruzgan, en el sur de Afganistán, los casos de sarampión están [aumentando](#) debido a la falta de vacunas. El [hilo](#) de tuit sobre Soria fue un nuevo y sombrío recordatorio sobre la gravedad de la situación en Afganistán y su impacto en la vida de los niños y niñas: “sin una acción urgente, un millón de niños y niñas podrían morir de desnutrición aguda severa”. UNICEF está [distribuyendo](#) “pasta de maní de alto contenido energético” para evitar la catástrofe.

Mientras tanto, la ONU ha [advertido](#) que aproximadamente 23 millones de Afganos – aproximadamente la mitad de la población total del país – están “enfrentando un nivel récord de hambre aguda”. A principios de septiembre, ni un mes después de que los talibanes tomaran el poder en Kabul, el Programa de Desarrollo de la ONU [señaló](#) que “una reducción de 10 a 13% del PIB, en el peor de los escenarios, arrastraría a Afganistán al precipicio de la pobreza casi universal: una tasa de 97% de pobreza para mediados del 2022”.

El Banco Mundial no ha [proporcionado](#) un cálculo firme de cuánto ha disminuido el PIB afgano, pero otros indicadores muestran que, probablemente, el [umbral](#) del “peor escenario” ya se ha pasado.

Cuando los occidentales abandonaron el país al final de agosto 2021, una [gran parte](#) del financiamiento extranjero (del que depende el PIB afgano) desapareció junto con las tropas: el 43% del PIB afgano y el 75% de los fondos públicos, que provenía de las agencias de ayuda, se [secaron](#) de la noche a la mañana.

Ahmad Raza Khan, el jefe de recaudación (aduanas) de Khyber Pakhtunkhwa en Pakistán, [afirma](#) que las exportaciones de su país hacia Afganistán han disminuido en un 25%. Según Ahmad, el banco estatal de Pakistán “introdujo una nueva política de exportaciones a Afganistán el 13 de diciembre” que exige a los comerciantes afganos demostrar, antes de ingresar al país, que tienen dólares estadounidenses para comprar productos. Esto es prácticamente imposible para muchos comerciantes, puesto que los talibanes han [prohibido](#) el “uso de moneda extranjera” en el país. Como están las cosas actualmente, es probable que Afganistán no esté lejos de la pobreza casi universal.

El 26 de enero de 2022, el Secretario General de la ONU, António Guterres [declaró](#) que “Afganistán pende de un hilo”, al tiempo que señalaba el 30% de “contracción” de su PIB.

Sanciones y dólares

El 7 de febrero de 2022, el vocero de los talibanes Suhail Shaheen [declaró](#) a Sky News que esta peligrosa situación, que está provocando hambres y enfermedades a los niños y niñas de Afganistán, “no es el resultado de nuestras actividades [de los talibanes]. Es el resultado de las sanciones impuestas a Afganistán”.

En este punto, Shaheen tiene razón. En agosto de 2021, el Gobierno estadounidense [congeló](#) los 9.500 millones de dólares que el Banco Central de Afganistán (Da Afghanistan Bank) tenía en la Reserva Federal de Nueva York. Mientras tanto, los familiares de las víctimas que murieron en los atentados del 11-S habían demandado a “[una lista de objetivos](#)”, incluyendo a los talibanes, por sus pérdidas. Posteriormente, un tribunal estadounidense [dictaminó](#) que se pagara a los demandantes una “indemnización” que ahora asciende a 7.000 millones de dólares. Ahora que los talibanes están en el poder en Afganistán, el Gobierno de Biden parece estar [avanzando](#) en “despejar el camino legal” para que una parte del dinero depositado en la Reserva Federal (3.500 millones de dólares) se destine a

“indemnizar” a las familias de las víctimas del 11 de septiembre.

La Unión Europea siguió su ejemplo, [cortando](#) 1.400 millones de dólares en asistencia gubernamental y ayuda al desarrollo a Afganistán, que se supone debía haberse pagado entre 2021 y 2025. Debido a la pérdida de este financiamiento por parte de Europa, Afganistán tuvo que [cerrar](#) “al menos 2.000 instalaciones sanitarias que atienden a unos 30 millones de afganos”. Cabe señalar aquí que la población total de Afganistán es de [aproximadamente 40 millones](#), lo que significa que esta decisión se traduce en que la mayoría de los afganos y afganas perdieron el acceso a la atención sanitaria.

Durante todo el período de 20 años de ocupación estadounidense en Afganistán, el Ministerio de Salud Pública había llegado a [depender](#) de una combinación de fondos de donantes y asistencia de organizaciones no gubernamentales (ONG). Gracias a estos fondos, Afganistán experimentó un [descenso](#) en las tasas de mortalidad infantil y materna, según la Encuesta de Mortalidad de Afganistán de 2010. No obstante, todo el sistema sanitario público, especialmente fuera de Kabul, tuvo dificultades durante la ocupación estadounidense. “Muchos centros de atención sanitaria primaria no funcionaban debido a la inseguridad, la falta de infraestructuras, la escasez de personal, las inclemencias del tiempo, las migraciones y la escasa afluencia de pacientes”, [escribieron](#) profesionales sanitarios de Afganistán y Pakistán, basándose en su análisis de cómo el conflicto en Afganistán afectó a la “prestación de servicios de salud materno-infantil”.

Caminar por la carretera de Shaheed Mazari

El 8 de febrero de 2022, un amigo afgano que trabaja en la calle Shaheed Mazari de Kabul me llevó a dar un paseo virtual - utilizando la opción de vídeo de su teléfono - por esta transitada zona de la ciudad. Quería mostrarme que en la capital al menos las tiendas tenían productos, pero que la gente sencillamente no tenía dinero para comprarlos. Habíamos estado hablando de los [cálculos](#) de la Organización

Internacional del Trabajo, según los cuales casi un millón de personas se quedarán sin trabajo a mediados de año. Muchas de estas personas son mujeres, que sufren las restricciones de los talibanes al trabajo femenino. Afganistán, me dijo, está siendo destruido por la combinación de la falta de empleo y de dinero, debido a las sanciones impuestas por Occidente.

Hablamos del personal talibán encargado de las finanzas, gente como el ministro de finanzas Mullah Hidayatullah Badri y el gobernador del Banco Central de Afganistán Shakir Jalali. Badri (o Gul Agha), el “hombre del dinero” para los talibanes, mientras que Jalali es un experto en banca islámica. No hay duda de que Badri es una persona con recursos, que desarrolló la infraestructura financiera de los talibanes y aprendió sobre finanzas internacionales en los mercados ilícitos. “Incluso la persona más inteligente y con más conocimientos no podría hacer nada si se mantienen las sanciones”, me dijo mi amigo. Él lo sabe. Solía trabajar en el Banco de Afganistán.

“¿Por qué no se puede utilizar el Fondo Fiduciario para la Reconstrucción de Afganistán del Banco Mundial (ARTF) para apurar el dinero a los bancos?”, preguntó. Este [fondo](#), una asociación creada en el 2002 entre el Banco Mundial y otros donantes, [cuenta](#) con 1.500 millones de dólares en fondos. Si se visita el sitio web del ARTF, se recibe una sombría [actualización](#): “El Banco Mundial ha pausado los desembolsos en nuestras operaciones en Afganistán”. Le dije a mi amigo que no creía que el Banco Mundial vaya a descongelar estos activos pronto. “Bueno, entonces nos moriremos de hambre”, me dijo, mientras pasaba al lado de unos niños sentados al costado de la calle.

Este artículo fue producido para [Globetrotter](#).

Vijay Prashad es un historiador, editor y periodista indio. Es miembro de la redacción y corresponsal en jefe de Globetrotter. Es editor en jefe de [LeftWord Books](#) y director del [Instituto Tricontinental de Investigación Social](#). También es miembro senior no-residente del [Instituto Chongyang de Estudios Financieros](#) de la

Universidad Renmin de China. Ha escrito más de 20 libros, entre ellos [*The Darker Nations*](#) y [*The Poorer Nations*](#). Su último libro es [*Washington Bullets*](#), con una introducción de Evo Morales Ayma.



From the U.S. to Honduras - Socialism and Black Liberation, Feb. 20

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 16, 2022



From the U.S. to Honduras - Socialism & Black Liberation

Sunday, February 20, 5 pm ET, 4 pm CT, 2 pm PT

[Please Register Here](#)

Panelists: John Parker, Berta Joubert, Hernan Amador

See the film "Revolutionary Medicine: A story of the First Garifuna Hospital"

Award winning documentary! "A moving true story of the courage of the Afro-Honduran community and Garifuna Dr. Luther Castillo who graduated from the ELAM medical school in Cuba"

It took only eight days for the newly elected administration of Xiomara Castro and the Libre Party to make changes that impact poverty and racism in Honduras. One million people had electricity bills cut, tuition for schools ended, and Afro-Hondurans made gains in hiring by the new government.

Panelists include:

John Parker is a founder of the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice and the Socialist Unity Party. He was part of an international delegation that attended the inauguration of President Xiomara Castro.. Parker will speak on the present, and historic role socialism has played in the liberation of Black/African peoples here in the U.S. and abroad.

Berta Joubert is a founding member of Women in Struggle/Mujeres En Lucha. Joubert lives in Puerto Rico and is a writer for Struggle La Lucha. They were also a part of the international delegation at the inauguration of Honduran President Xiomara Castro.

Hernan Amador is a member of the Libre Party of Xiomara Castro, who was part of the delegation. He lives in Costa Rica and will talk about the African ethnicities, including the Garifuna people in Honduras. In addition, Amador will discuss how conditions for Afro-Hondurans have changed since the U.S. supported the 2009 coup that unseated socialist and elected President Manuel Zelaya.



New York City: Rally in Solidarity with Workers' Strikes in Puerto Rico, Feb. 18

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 16, 2022

WORKERS, SI! COLONIZERS, NO!

A RALLY IN SOLIDARITY
WITH THE WORKERS
STRIKES IN PUERTO RICO

MANIFESTACIÓN EN SOLIDARIDAD
CON LAS HUELGAS DE
TRABAJADORES EN PUERTO RICO

FRIDAY, FEB. 18TH
UNION SQ SOUTH
NEW YORK CITY
5 PM



Call to Action on Puerto Rico
(Colectiva / IMACC / PIP) Puerto Rico



Call to Action on Puerto Rico, Colectiva Solidaridad, New York Boricua Resistance and Partido Independentista Puertorriqueña will host a rally on Friday February 18 5 pm @ Union Square in solidarity with Worker strikes in Puerto Rico.

Un Llamado a la Acción por Puerto Rico, Colectiva Solidaridad, New York Boricua Resistance and Partido Independentista Puertorriqueña tienen una manifestación en solidaridad con las huelgas de trabajadores en Puerto Rico el viernes 18 de febrero @ las 5 de la tarde



Brian Flores lawsuit exposes NFL racism

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 16, 2022

Everyone in the sports world should unite in solidarity with Brian Flores for standing up against racism in the National Football League (NFL).

The NFL is being called out as a racist institution - particularly in its hiring practices of oppressed nationalities, specifically African Americans. Former Miami Dolphins head coach Brian Flores, who is Black, filed a [class-action lawsuit](#) against his former employer, the NFL, and two additional teams — the Denver Broncos and New York Giants.

Flores filed his case on the first day of Black History Month, accusing the NFL of systemic racism in the hiring of coaches and executives. Flores also dismissed the Rooney Rule, the league directive by which NFL owners are compelled to interview one “minority” candidate per head coach vacancy, as a sham that has produced nothing except unconvincing window dressing.

Besides being a clarion call for others affected by racism in the NFL to join in, the Flores’ lawsuit pays homage to those who sacrificed and challenged discrimination and racism.

In his preliminary statement, Flores said, “As this Class Action Complaint is filed on the first day of Black History Month, we honor the brave leaders that fought so hard to help break down racial barriers of injustice. Martin Luther King Jr., Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Frederick Douglass, Jackie Robinson and Mamie Till, to name only a few.”

In the [58-page lawsuit](#), Flores alleged that “the NFL remains rife with racism, particularly when it comes to the hiring and retention of Black Head Coaches, Coordinators and General Managers.”

Flores — who was [fired by the Dolphins](#) in January, despite a record-winning three seasons — also claims that he was subjected to what he called “sham” interviews for head coaching positions by both the New York Giants this offseason and by the Denver Broncos in 2019. Flores says the interviews were only meant to satisfy the league’s quota for interviewing candidates of color before the teams ultimately hired white men.

Flores has recently been on the losing end of the lie that the NFL cares about diversity. He just completed his second consecutive winning season in Miami. It marked the first time that the hapless Dolphins have had consecutive winning seasons in almost 20 years. Flores even brought the team back from a 1-7 start to a

winning record, the first NFL coach to accomplish that feat. And yet he was fired.

Flores finally had enough and filed his lawsuit, after a phony Rooney Rule interview with the New York Giants – an organization that has never hired a Black head coach.

Flores realized that his interview was a sham when his former mentor Bill Belichick texted him by accident. Belichick tried to congratulate Brian Daboll for landing the Giants job, but texted the wrong Brian.

The Giants had seemingly decided to hire a white coach that had never been a head coach, even before Flores was interviewed. Flores decried the fact that the league has only one Black head coach while 70% of players are Black.

What has really upset the NFL's defenders is that Flores describes the NFL as being managed like a plantation.

Flores recognizes that by undertaking his lawsuit, he will be white-balled from the league just like Colin Kaepernick was for kneeling against police terror. But he also sees the importance of challenging this racist institution for the sake of other Black coaches and players.



Call for emergency response actions: No war on Russia and Donbass!

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 16, 2022



We appeal to anti-war and people's organizations to take to the streets on the day of, day after or as soon as possible after a Ukrainian attack on the Donbass Republics or other U.S./NATO provocation to draw Russia into a war.

On Feb. 11, U.S., Britain and European Union countries ordered their citizens and diplomats to leave Ukraine, claiming an "immediate" danger of a Russian invasion. Biden deployed an additional 3,000 U.S. troops to Poland. Even Ukrainian President Zelensky, no friend of Russia, said there was no indication of an imminent invasion and asked the U.S. to provide evidence for its claim.

The most likely scenario for a U.S./NATO war provocation against Russia is to push for a military attack on the independent Donbass republics — the Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic. While the U.S. has raised alarms about 100,000-plus Russian troops stationed to protect that country's western border, there are 150,000-plus Ukrainian troops deployed along the approximately 200-mile ceasefire "line of contact" between Ukraine and the Donbass republics. NATO itself

has more than 175,000 troops deployed on Russia's western border.

Ukraine has been at war against the Donbass republics for nearly eight years. More than 14,000 people have died in the conflict, according to the United Nations. Despite a longterm ceasefire agreement under the Minsk 2 accord, Ukraine has routinely violated the agreement, bombing civilian areas, deploying armed drones, shooting and kidnapping members of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Militias, and carrying out terrorist attacks on Donbass territory.

Since 2014, when the people of Donetsk and Lugansk voted for independence from Ukraine in a democratic referendum, the U.S. has claimed that Russia "invaded" the region. The People's Militias composed of Donbass residents and internationalist volunteers have been falsely portrayed as "Russian occupation troops." So a Ukrainian invasion or intensified bombing campaign that forces the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Militias to respond defensively would almost certainly be the signal for Western claims that a "Russian invasion of Ukraine" had commenced.

There is a serious lack of attention to the plight of the people of Donbass by the anti-war movement in the U.S. People living in frontline villages have been subject to deadly attacks by Ukraine for years. Seniors and children routinely have to huddle in basements. A near-total blockade by Ukraine and its allies has attempted to starve the populace. Ukrainian neo-Nazi battalions that advocate genocide against the Donbass population are stationed at the front line and would form the spearhead of a Ukrainian invasion.

Other provocations are possible, including an incursion by Ukraine and Poland against Russia's ally Belarus, or a false-flag attack within Ukraine that would be blamed on Russia. The anti-war movement must be prepared to take to the streets **immediately** against a new U.S./NATO war that could quickly escalate into a global conflict between the world's nuclear powers.

U.S./NATO out of Ukraine and Eastern Europe! Hands off Russia and Donbass! Bring all the troops home!

Signed:

- **Solidarity with Novorossiya & Antifascists in Ukraine**
@UkraineAntifaSolidarity
- **Stop Imperialist Wars**
- **Socialist Unity Party / Struggle-La Lucha newspaper**
@StruggleLaLucha

To endorse: solidarityukraineantifa@gmail.com



Struggle □ La Lucha PDF - February 14, 2022

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 16, 2022
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From U.S. to Honduras: Socialism and Black Liberation

By John Parker

On Jan. 27, I was fortunate to be one of a handful of delegates from the U.S. to attend the historic inauguration of President Xi-omara Castro in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Representing the Socialist Unity Party, I was part of an international delegation invited by President Castro and her Libre Party, founded by the National Popular Resistance Front (FNRP).

For the first time in 12 years, the people – service workers, factory workers, agricultural workers, unemployed workers, communities of African ethnicity and Indigenous communities – were also invited to participate.

That's a reflection of the policies and actions already taking place under the new administration, employing a path in line with socialist economic goals. In fact, in the first five days of Castro's presidency, she wiped out the electric bills of a million working and poor people in Honduras, in addition to ending much of the school tuition that also helped keep the poorest of the population destitute.

In addition, Castro's priority of ending the privatizations that have wreaked havoc on the environment – especially for Indigenous communities struggling to maintain clean water – is already being implemented.

Early on the morning of the inauguration, lining up to get into the stadium in Tegucigalpa, our 20-person international delegation witnessed the excitement and joy of the sea of people, some of whom had traveled far, and some of whom had slept there overnight to get good seats.

The gravity of this event was reflected in its open rejection of capitalist and imperialist policies, and, with the multi-ethnic diversity we saw in attendance, a rejection of racism.

Since I'm writing this during Black History Month, as a Black person I want to pose the question: Would the victory of a genuine socialist brought about by a grassroots struggle have the same beneficial effects on the Black, Brown and Indigenous populations here in the U.S.?

And, if so, does the inauguration of Castro show the importance of the struggle for socialism for Black/African liberation in the U.S. and abroad?

Militant mobilization in the streets

Socialists and communists have long been a part of the Black struggle for liberation in the U.S., although hidden behind a wall of racist erasures in history books, state repression and anti-communist propaganda.

Today, the mantra from the ruling class, echoed by liberal politicians, nonprofits and educational institutions, is that the struggle cannot be in the streets, only electoral. It especially cannot challenge the ownership of a very small minority of billionaires and their institutions who hold the major industries of manufacturing, war, finance, education and health care in their possession.

In Honduras, however, although this was an electoral victory, it was made possible only by militant activism in the streets and growing organization of working-class and nationally oppressed sectors to challenge the

Continued on page 8

U.S. protests: No war on Russia & Donbass 6



ALL PHOTOS: SHARON BLACK

- U.S./NATO war facts 7
- Anti-trans bills threaten youth 8
- Racism + COVID = Death 9
- #UnblockCuba 10
- Europe for Cuba Forum 10
- U.S. targets China, loses COVID battle 11

- Voting rights 2
- Black woman on Supreme Court 3

- Georgia's police killings 4
- Baltimore's racist politics 4

- Los Angeles: No police in Martin Luther King Day Caravan 5

ILL PHOTO: MAGGIE VASCASINO



- From U.S. to Honduras: Socialism and Black Liberation
- Murder and voting rights
- Biden's promise to appoint first Black woman to Supreme Court
- Behind Georgia's epidemic of police killings
- Racist campaign targets Marilyn Mosby
- No cops, ICE or military in Los Angeles MLK Day Caravan
- Across the U.S., protests demand 'No war on Russia and Donbass!'
- Anti-trans bills threaten youth in many states
- Racism + COVID = death
- U.S. and international actions demand #UnblockCuba
- Cuba battles COVID, defying 60-year U.S. blockade
- China succeeds while U.S. loses battle against COVID-19
- Año del tigre, año de luchas en Puerto Rico
- El bloqueo a Cuba cumple 60 años



From U.S. to Honduras: Socialism is

vital to Black Liberation

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In Honduras, however, although this was an electoral victory, it was made possible only by militant activism in the streets and growing organization of working-class and nationally oppressed sectors to challenge the frantic drive toward privatization that characterized the years since the 2009 coup.

The U.S. government supported the overthrow and kidnapping of then-President Manuel Zelaya with money and technical know-how. Zelaya, a socialist who was democratically elected in 2006 and is the husband of President Castro, defied U.S. imperialism by refusing to accept a cabinet chosen by the U.S. Embassy. He refused to abide by the policies of austerity and anti-communism demanded by Western

monopoly banking institutions.

Like President Castro, Zelaya sought to make qualitative changes in favor of the working class shortly after becoming president. He raised the minimum wage of workers by 60%, infuriating Wall Street banks, the Obama Administration and then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

U.S. support continued with the military coup's targeting and killing of progressive activists, while also making Honduras the poorest country in Latin America. Repression and economic devastation drove waves of emigration by desperate refugees, who were then demonized and brutalized when they tried to enter the U.S.

Still, a very strong youth movement grew in number and influence during the last 12 years, led by socialist youth. After the coup they put their lives in danger with militant protests. Many belong to the Libre Party and some are actually part of the Castro administration.

Their militance was an echo of that of the Indigenous communities, as represented by slain activist and Indigenous leader Berta Cáceres, whose photo was enlarged on the stadium walls in her honor during the inauguration.

Unity of workers and oppressed

It was that type of militancy in the streets and unity with the oppressed that culminated in the electoral victory of Xiomara Castro. And that unity continues. It will be needed, because the U.S. continues to occupy major military bases in Honduras, and is already plotting to undermine the new government with its right-wing allies.

At the inauguration, I spoke with a member of one of the Black community organizations that received a special invitation to attend and participate in the ceremony.

There are two groups in Honduras of African ethnicity. One is the Garifuna people, an Afro-Indigenous community. The other group lives near the Bay Islands and on the Honduran coast of the Caribbean sea. Because of British colonialism preceding the ownership of their lands by Honduras, these are English-speaking Black communities.

“We are the Black English-speaking people, we are located in the Bay Islands mainly, we are in La Ceila, Puerto Cortez and Puerto Castilla. We are actually the only group of Black English-speaking people in Honduras. And for many years many people didn’t even know we existed because we had been so excluded,” the community representative explained.

“But today, with the government of President Xiomara Castro, it was one of her goals that the Indigenous and Afro groups be present in this historical moment. It’s the reason we are here today showcasing a little bit of who we are, because many don’t even know that we are one of the nine ethnic groups that exist in Honduras, since we once belonged to the British government.”

About a week after the inauguration, it was announced that – for the first time – a member of the Garifuna community, Dr. Luther Castillo Harry, who studied at the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) in Havana, Cuba, was appointed secretary of Science, Technology and Scientific Innovation by President Castro.

Socialist activism in the U.S.

Claudia Vera Cumberbatch, who changed her name to [Claudia Jones](#), also had roots in the Caribbean. She was born in 1915 in Trinidad, and came to Harlem in 1924 where she began advocating for socialism. Jones’ advocacy was so threatening to the ruling class here that she was later deported for her communist activism before she could get citizenship.

She described her experience as a Black woman: “It was out of my Jim Crow experiences as a young Negro woman, experiences born of working-class poverty, that led me in search of why these things had to be, that led me to join the Young Communist League and to choose at the age of 18 the philosophy of my life – the science of Marxism-Leninism — that philosophy that not only rejects racist ideas but is the antithesis of them.”

Jones saw the crisis of working people as a direct result of capitalism in its modern stage of imperialism: “Imperialism is the root cause of racialism. It is the ideology which upholds colonial rule and exploitation. It preaches the ‘superiority’ of the white race whose ‘destiny’ it is to rule over those with colored skins, and to treat them with contempt. It is the ideology which breeds fascism, rightly condemned by the civilized people of the whole world.”

Jones, whose analysis is so relevant to today’s struggles against white supremacy and the rise of fascist forces, is just one of the many socialist voices of Black peoples in the U.S., starting as early as 1904 with the Rev. G.W. Woodbey in his books “The Bible and Socialism” and “The Distribution of Wealth.”

Woodbey, born in 1854, was a member of the Socialist Party of America, and saw the struggle for socialism as a next step after the struggle against slavery and key to fighting racism and economic exploitation.

Then there are George Jackson, Lucy Parsons, W.E.B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson, just to name a few of the Black historical figures from the U.S. who advocated the economic system of socialism.

So yes, Honduras provides further evidence that Black liberation is tied to the struggle for socialism.

Other examples include the independence of 17 African countries from European

colonial bondage during the 1960s, due to the military and financial support of the Soviet Union and China; or, here in the U.S., the rise in power of the union movement in the 1930s and 1940s, eventually greatly benefiting Black workers due to socialist/communist leadership and their growing influence; or the defense of Black workers in the South during the Great Depression by communists; or the fact that our very own Assata Shakur is alive and well, in spite of the U.S. bounty on her head, protected by Cuba's revolutionary socialist government.

Claudia Jones expands on this in her comments that take into account not only national oppression, but also women's oppression: "For the progressive women's movement, the Negro woman, who combines in her status the worker, the Negro and the woman, is the vital link to this heightened political consciousness.

"To the extent, further, that the cause of the Negro woman worker is promoted, she will be enabled to take her rightful place in the Negro-proletarian leadership of the national liberation movement and, by her active participation, contribute to the entire American working class, whose historic mission is the achievement of a Socialist America — the final and full guarantee of woman's emancipation."

Anyone who tells you that socialism is not relevant to our struggle as Black people either has no clue about our history or does not want to see any real struggle against this racist system of exploitation, poverty and war.

But, in spite of the lies the ruling class and their collaborators throw at us, the struggle for liberation will continue. Just ask the people of Honduras.

John Parker is the Socialist Unity Party candidate for U.S. Senate in California, running on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket. Learn more and how to get involved in his campaign at [Socialist4Senate](https://www.socialist4senate.org).



The terrible fate facing the Afghan people

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 16, 2022

On February 8, 2022, UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund) Afghanistan [sent out](#) a bleak set of tweets. One of the tweets, which included a photograph of a child lying in a hospital bed with her mother seated beside her, [said](#): "Having recently recovered from acute watery diarrhea, two years old Soria is back in hospital, this time suffering from edema and wasting. Her mother has been by her bedside for the past two weeks anxiously waiting for Soria to recover." The series of [tweets](#) by UNICEF Afghanistan show that Soria is not alone in her suffering. "One in three adolescent girls suffers from anemia" in Afghanistan, with the country [struggling](#) with "one of the world's highest rates of stunting in children under five: 41 percent," according to UNICEF.

The story of Soria is one among millions; in Uruzgan Province, in southern Afghanistan, measles cases are [rising](#) due to lack of vaccines. The [thread](#) to the tweet about Soria from UNICEF Afghanistan was a further bleak reminder about the

severity of the situation in the country and its impact on the lives of the children: “without urgent action, 1 million children could die from severe acute malnutrition.” UNICEF is now [distributing](#) “high energy peanut paste” to stave off catastrophe.

The United Nations has, meanwhile, [warned](#) that approximately 23 million Afghans—about half the total population of the country—are “facing a record level of acute hunger.” In early September, not even a month after the Taliban came to power in Kabul, the UN Development Program [noted](#) that “A 10-13 percent reduction in GDP could, in the worst-case scenario, bring Afghanistan to the precipice of near universal poverty—a 97 percent poverty rate by mid-2022.”

The World Bank has not [provided](#) a firm calculation of how much of Afghanistan’s GDP has declined, but other indicators show that the [threshold](#) of the “worst-case scenario” has likely already passed.


When the West fled the country at the end of August 2021, a [large part](#) of the foreign funding, which Afghanistan’s GDP is dependent on, also vanished with the troops: 43 percent of Afghanistan’s GDP and 75 percent of its public funding, which came from aid agencies, [dried](#) up overnight.

Ahmad Raza Khan, the chief collector (customs) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan, [says](#) that exports from his country to Afghanistan have dropped by 25 percent; the State Bank of Pakistan, he says, “introduced a new policy of exports to Afghanistan on December 13” that requires Afghan traders to show that they have U.S. dollars on them to buy goods from Pakistan before entering the country, which is near impossible to show for many of the traders since the Taliban has [banned](#) the “use of foreign currency” in the country. It is likely that Afghanistan is not very far away from near universal poverty with the way things stand there presently.


On January 26, 2022, UN Secretary-General António Guterres [said](#) that “Afghanistan is hanging by a thread,” while pointing to the 30 percent “contraction” of its GDP.

Sanctions and dollars

On February 7, 2022, Taliban spokesperson Suhail Shaheen [told](#) Sky News that this perilous situation, which is leading to starvation and illness among children in Afghanistan, “is not the result of our [Taliban] activities. It is the result of the sanctions imposed on Afghanistan.”

On this point, Shaheen is correct. In August 2021, the U.S. government [froze](#) the \$9.5 billion that Afghanistan’s central bank (Da Afghanistan Bank) held in the New York Federal Reserve. Meanwhile, family members of the victims who died in the 9/11 attacks had sued “[a list of targets](#) ,” including the Taliban, for their losses and a U.S. court later [ruled](#) that the plaintiffs be paid “damages” that now amount to \$7 billion. Now that the Taliban is in power in Afghanistan, the Biden administration seems to be [moving forward](#) “to clear a legal path” to stake a claim on \$3.5 billion out of the money deposited in the Federal Reserve for the families of the September 11 victims.

The European Union followed suit, [cutting](#) off \$1.4 billion in government assistance and development aid to Afghanistan, which was supposed to have been paid between 2021 and 2025. Because of the loss of this funding from Europe, Afghanistan had to [shut](#) down “at least 2,000 health facilities serving around 30 million Afghans.” It should be noted here that the total population of Afghanistan is [approximately 40 million](#), which means that most Afghans have lost access to health care due to that decision.

During the entire 20-year period of the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan, the Ministry of Public Health had come to [rely](#)  on a combination of donor funds and assistance from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). It was as a result of these funds that Afghanistan saw a [decline](#) in infant mortality and maternal mortality rates during the Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010. Nonetheless, the entire public health

care system, particularly outside Kabul, struggled during the U.S. occupation. “Many primary healthcare facilities were non-functional due to insecurity, lack of infrastructure, shortages of staff, severe weather, migrations and poor patient flow,” [wrote](#) health care professionals from Afghanistan and Pakistan, based on their analysis of how the conflict in Afghanistan affected the “maternal and child health service delivery.”

Walk along Shaheed Mazari Road

On February 8, 2022, an Afghan friend who works along Shaheed Mazari Road in Kabul took me for a virtual walk—using the video option on his phone—to this busy part of the city. He wanted to show me that in the capital at least the shops had goods in them, but that the people simply did not have money to make purchases. We had been discussing how the International Labor Organization now [estimates](#) that nearly a million people will be pushed out of their jobs by the middle of the year, many of them women who are suffering from the Taliban’s restrictions on women working. Afghanistan, he tells me, is being destroyed by a combination of the lack of employment and the lack of cash in the country due to the sanctions imposed by the West.

We discuss the Taliban personnel in charge of finances, people such as Finance Minister Mullah Hidayatullah Badri and the governor of the Afghanistan central bank Shakir Jalali. Badri (or Gul Agha) is the money man for the Taliban, while Jalali is an expert in Islamic banking. There is no doubt that Badri is a resourceful person, who developed the Taliban’s financial infrastructure and learned about international finance in the illicit markets. “Even the smartest and most knowledgeable person would not be able to do anything if the sanctions remain,” my friend said. He would know. He used to work in Da Afghanistan Bank.

“Why can’t the World Bank’s Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) be used to rush money to the banks?” he asked. This [fund](#), a partnership between the World

Bank and other donors, which was created in 2002, [has](#) \$1.5 billion in funds. If you visit the ARTF website, you will receive a bleak [update](#): “The World Bank has paused disbursements in our operations in Afghanistan.” I tell my friend that I don’t think the World Bank will unfreeze these assets soon. “Well, then we will starve,” he says, as he walks past children sitting on the side of the street.

This article was produced by [Globetrotter](#). Vijay Prashad is an Indian historian, editor and journalist. He is a writing fellow and chief correspondent at Globetrotter. He is the chief editor of [LeftWord Books](#) and the director of [Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research](#). He is a senior non-resident fellow at [Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies](#), Renmin University of China. He has written more than 20 books, including [The Darker Nations](#) and [The Poorer Nations](#). His latest book is [Washington Bullets](#), with an introduction by Evo Morales Ayma.



Virtual Tribute: Alicia Jrapko Vive |

A Life of Struggle for a Just World, March 5

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 16, 2022



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Biden's promise to appoint first Black woman to Supreme Court

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 16, 2022

During a Democratic presidential debate on March 16, 2020, candidate



Joe Biden said: "If I am elected president and have an

opportunity to appoint someone to the courts, I would appoint the first Black woman to the court. It is required that they have representation. Now! It is long overdue.”

[Biden first made the promise](#) at a press conference in South Carolina on Feb. 26, 2020, when he accepted Rep. James Clyburn’s endorsement. Biden said he would be honored to appoint the first African American woman to the Supreme Court.

There he said: “The corridors of powers [should] reflect what America looks like – that includes the White House, that includes the staff there. That includes the Cabinet and that includes the Supreme Court and the Congress.”

U.S. Supreme Court seats have historically been filled only by white men – 115 of the 121 Supreme Court justices, or 95% of all appointments. There have been only three white women, two Black men and one Latina. But no Black women.

At the time he made his pledge in early 2020, Biden was fighting for the Democratic Party presidential nomination and was losing the battle. The pledge was forced on this most conservative of establishment Democratic candidates by the struggle of the masses for representation, which intensified with the George Floyd rebellion a few months later.

Biden saw no choice but to promise to address the historic lack of representation of Black people, especially Black women, in this powerful institution.

Hundreds of thousands nationwide were screaming “Black lives matter, reparations now!” Black people were dying of COVID-19 at a higher rate than whites, police were killing Black people indiscriminately, jobs were being lost, student debt continued to grow, people faced evictions, and white supremacists were coming out of the shadows, led by number-one tyrant President Donald Trump.

Securing Black women’s support

What was Biden to do to win? He made promises to the people, specifically African American women, to choose a woman vice-president and appoint a Black woman to the highest court in the U.S. It helped him win the South Carolina Democratic primary, signaling a shift in his fortunes, even though there was no guarantee there would be a Supreme Court seat vacancy.

Bernie Sanders and other Democratic candidates began to drop out of the race. Biden won the nomination - which left him and Trump as the candidates of the two major capitalist parties. His promise was so profound that it helped ensure that an estimated 93% of Black women registered voters came out and cast their vote for Biden in November 2020.

Biden became the 46th president of the U.S. in January 2021. A year later, in January 2022, Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer announced his plan to retire.

Biden had an opportunity to wriggle out of his promise at a press conference, like he has broken so many of his other campaign pledges. Instead he announced: "The person I will nominate will be somebody with extraordinary qualifications, character, experience and integrity. That person will be the first Black woman ever nominated to the United States Supreme Court."

What was Biden thinking? Could it be that he does not really know how deeply seated racism and white supremacy are in the United States?

Once Biden's promise became a reality, the haters came out. Biden could have said he was going to nominate the best person to succeed Justice Breyer and then appointed a Black woman. Did Biden make a mistake by reiterating his campaign promise, or was all this media attention part of the plan?

The arguments being made in the media against affirmative action in relation to Biden's announcement are purely based on racism, trying to sell this as a reasonable

argument to the masses of people. The burden of all these racist attacks is going to fall on whichever Black woman Biden appoints, during the confirmation hearings and possibly long after her confirmation.

The truth is, Supreme Court appointments have always been primarily political appointments, not based solely on merit or experience as a judge. The president can appoint whoever he or she wants, and the Senate has the power to approve or disapprove. It is rare that the Senate does not approve a presidential appointee.

The Black woman Biden chooses will surely possess all the qualities required of a Supreme Justice. The number-one qualification required of the appointee is to “uphold the Constitution at all costs.” No one would do this with more sincerity, honesty and conviction than Black women, who have so long been denied their rights.

Constitution and slavery

For its time, 230 years ago, the U.S. Constitution was “one of the most revolutionary documents, that ... affirmed a form of government never seen before in the history of humanity, that ... was the very paragon of democracy and accorded equal rights to all” under the law – at least in theory. (Sam Marcy, [“Two contradictory trends in U.S. politics”](#))

Yet how is it that a key institution of this new government was the Supreme Court, which can invalidate the rights of the majority of the people in this country?

As Marcy explained, it was established as a court of last resort for the rich and powerful. “Whenever the bourgeoisie is in a crisis, they will let nine people, unelected, appointed for life, decide the most critical issues concerning life in the United States.”

The first seven Supreme Court justices appointed by George Washington were slave

owners or came from slave-owning families. This is no surprise since Washington was a slave owner himself and in that period chattel slavery was legal. For the elite of this new state, slaves were needed to carry out the hard labor, keep up the living quarters and tend to the needs of the rich whites. No way could they function without slaves.

The “Founding Fathers,” including some who would number among the original seven justices, struggled with how to address slavery. They did not explicitly write the word “slavery” in the Constitution, but included key clauses protecting the institution, including the fugitive slave clause and the three-fifths clause.

Harriet Tubman knew that President Abraham Lincoln was not an abolitionist. His main interest was preserving the Union. Tubman knew that she had to continue to free as many enslaved people as humanly possible.

She had the opportunity to meet Lincoln, to wait in line to meet with him. This would have been an historic moment recorded in history, but she chose not to go. Harriet Tubman, a fugitive slave, served in the Union Army during the Civil War. In the end she had to fight to get compensation in the form of a small pension for her service.

Throughout history, Black women have fought to truly extend the rights stated in the Constitution to every person in the U.S.

A political institution

We know that the appointment of a liberal Black woman will not tip the scales while six right-wing justices stand firm in their opposition to women’s reproductive rights. The U.S. Supreme Court will remain in the position to give a heavy blow to the women’s movement. Reversing *Roe v. Wade*, agreeing with the narrow option of abortion only up to 15 weeks, or leaving the decision up to individual states, will place a heavy burden on all oppressed and working-class women in the United

States.

We need to change the way Supreme Court justices are chosen. These individuals should be democratically elected by the people with defined qualifications and term limits.

The bottom line is that this is all political. We all know that the time is long overdue for a Black woman to be on the Supreme Court and that the words Biden spoke are true.

Biden's long political career includes his role in the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee. I remember the 1991 confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas, especially the awful treatment of Anita Hill, who testified about Thomas' history of sexual harrassment.

Biden chaired the confirmation hearings and had an opportunity to do the right thing, but he did not want to subpoena the two additional women that could have brought more evidence to support Hill's claim.

Now, in 2022, he had an opportunity to appoint a Supreme Court justice with extraordinary qualifications, character, experience and integrity; to make history without all this drama.

Instead, he may find himself apologizing to another Black woman for stealing the fire and dampening the spirit of the first Black woman associate justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

