

U.S. imperialism unleashes global war on workers

written by Struggle - La Lucha
March 11, 2022



Protest against U.S./NATO intervention in Ukraine at the U.S. Embassy in Kiev, Feb. 9.

Time to declare war on capitalism

March 10 – One only has to look at who immediately benefits from the war.

As we write, oil and gas billionaires in Texas are clinking their champagne glasses. They are giddy over the price-gouging on gas and oil and the resulting avalanche of profits lining their pockets.

Ditto for the U.S. arms dealers, who drool over the destruction of weapons stockpiles and the rise in their stock prices.

The same is true on the political side.

Biden's State of the Union address before Congress turned into a frenzied war party, including the shameful chanting of "Fund, fund, fund the police" – their bipartisan answer to the Black Lives Matter movement's call for defunding murderous police departments across the country.

And while they weep in their media about the tragic deaths of workers and misery of refugees in Ukraine, not a word was said about the 14,000 people murdered by Ukraine in the Donbass region since the 2014 U.S.-sponsored coup, let alone the rest of the world.

But be assured that through their manufactured tears, they are finding time to celebrate, regardless of how many lives are lost.

Of course, this global war is not a brand new development. Ask the people of Yemen, Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Western Sahara, the Philippines and others who have suffered bombings, sanctions, destruction and death at the hands of the U.S. and the Pentagon – either directly or through proxies.

Sanctions have choked and strangled workers and children in Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Iran, North Korea and dozens of other countries.

But the capitalist celebration may turn out to be short-lived.

This is not the same U.S. imperialism that emerged triumphant from the Second World War, but rather an imperialism with a contracting capitalist economy that faces a new world situation. The potential for this war to become broader should not be lost on anyone. And the onus must be placed at the feet of the U.S. rulers.

What is celebrated today, in an economy marked by runaway inflation, may usher in a more significant global capitalist recession. There is a tipping point where sanctions will become deleterious to Western capitalism, especially if they strengthen the relations between those struggling against the stranglehold of the U.S. dollar on the world market.

Today may become a turning point for imperialism and the world's working class.

Lessons of Iraq War forgotten

As for the mainstream anti-war movement, it has forgotten the lessons of the Iraq War.

When the first Gulf War started in 1990-1991, with its attendant lies and demonizations, the anti-war movement was split. Significant sections called for "sanctions, not bombs," wanting to distance themselves from the embattled Iraqi government.

It turned out that as murderous as U.S. missile strikes were, more people died from the decade of sanctions that followed, designed to bring the Iraqi people to their knees. It would take a more expansive and continuing war, fueled by the lies of "weapons of mass destruction," to ultimately accomplish that.

Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was labeled a devil, as one lie after the other mounted to justify murderous U.S. bombings and the use of depleted uranium weapons.

This writer clearly remembers speaking at a debate against the Gulf War organized by Congressperson Kweisi Mfume, who at that time was a TV host. Mfume supported the war.

In the adjoining room sat a member of the royal family of Kuwait, who was being prepared to go on in a separate broadcast to build up the false narrative of herself as a nurse who witnessed Iraqi troops turning over baby incubators and throwing babies on the floor.

There are similarities but also important differences between that war and the current one.

The imperialists' goal is to plunder Russia's vast resources, just like in Iraq. They were happy, even if briefly, when Boris Yeltsin was doing their bidding in the 1990s, selling off Soviet assets and restoring capitalism. But it soon became apparent that the capitalist West had no intention to allow another competitor into its ranks; rather they viewed Russia's oil, gas and mineral resources as loot and Russia as a vassal state.

President Vladimir Putin, who followed Yeltsin, represented a block to these plans in the same way that Saddam Hussein did in Iraq, regardless of the capitalist character of Russia.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established as a military alliance to contain and threaten the Soviet Union. So why wasn't it dismantled after the counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, German Democratic Republic and other Warsaw Pact countries? Instead, NATO has grown and grown.

But there are also significant differences between Iraq and Russia. Russia has a

population of 144 million people. Its landmass is close to 40 times larger than Iraq. Most importantly, it inherited nuclear weapons from the Soviet Union and has developed formidable defenses.

Without these differences, the Russian Federation would likely have already shared the fate of Libya and Iraq.

(For more, see [“Is Russia imperialist?”](#) by Gary Wilson.)

War is continuation of politics by other means

Imperialism forces other countries to defend their borders. Russia not only shares a border in Eastern Europe with Ukraine, but it also shares an extensive 2,615-mile border with China.

These facts are not lost on the People’s Republic of China. To weaken Russia, potentially overthrow Putin, in the guise of putting in a more “democratic regime” (meaning friendly to the West), would place China in an untenable military situation.

This also cannot be divorced from the Sept. 15, 2021, trilateral security agreement between the U.S., Britain and Australia, referred to as AUKUS, which included the delivery of a nuclear-powered submarine fleet for Australia. It undercut a deal worth \$90 billion for France. So much for Washington’s NATO allies!

At the same time, the United States Africa Command, AFRICOM, was busy involving itself in coups from Mali to Guinea and, more recently, Burkina Faso. Flooding the continent with billions of dollars in military hardware and training through AFRICOM is U.S. imperialism’s answer to China’s “Belt and Road Initiative,” which has taken up building needed infrastructure in Africa.

All of this speaks to the global nature of U.S. imperialism’s war in Ukraine. It is

aimed not just at Russia and Donbass but at China, Venezuela, Cuba, Iran, Nicaragua and any people on any continent struggling to determine their destiny for themselves.

The unintended consequence is that this may strengthen the ties between China, Russia, Iran and others. This is of no concern in the myopic vision of the imperialist rulers, who are driven by the inner workings of their own capitalist system to expand or die.

Fascism, Russia and Ukraine

It is an error to forget the history of fascism and the Nazi advance into the Soviet Union.

Hitler's war – World War II – is etched into the psyche of the Russian people and all former Soviet peoples. The Soviet Union was left to bear the brunt of the German invasion. Hitler's forces were not only bent on exterminating Jews, Roma people and queer people, but also communists and leftists. It was aimed straight at the heart of the fledgling Soviet socialist revolution.

The heroic resistance and sacrifices of the Russian people and their partisan communist allies are undeniable. There is not a single person in Russia today who does not have members of their family tree who died in the fight to stop the Nazis.

The Soviet Union bore the brunt of casualties – over 15% of the population. Belarus lost over a quarter of its people. It's estimated that over 27 million Soviet people lost their lives.

The United States is at the very bottom in terms of World War II casualties. Seldom mentioned is that China lost over 20 million people, far exceeding U.S. losses.

The sympathy of the Russian people for the people of the Donbass republics, Odessa

and others repressed inside Ukraine is not contrived but deeply felt. And the mass pressure on Putin on this issue should not be shoved aside.

It is a form of cynical, opportunist intellectualism for some who call themselves anti-imperialists or anti-war to dismiss the fascist threat inside Ukraine. One does not even have to go back to 2014, despite that being a mere eight years.

Days ago, on March 2, the U.S. puppet and created folk hero Zelensky named the fascist [Aidar Battalion's commander](#) governor of Odessa. Odessa is home to one of Ukraine's historic Jewish communities.

One month before Russia's intervention, the U.S. sent a specially-equipped satellite phone to allow Zelensky direct access to President Biden and, by extension, the Pentagon. He is receiving orders directly from Washington.

Why this is completely glossed over by so many is startling.

Even the shameful, racist sight of African and Indian medical students being blocked and abused by Ukrainians at the border did not stir the kind of protests it should have.

It should indeed serve as a lesson to those inside the U.S. who vehemently opposed the Jan. 6, 2021, white-supremacist coup attempt in Washington, D.C. The Democratic Party that has no problem quietly and not-so-quietly cozying up to neo-Nazi forces in Ukraine can hardly be depended on to dismantle them at home.

Imperialist-installed dictators and their murderous policies in oppressed countries, the growth of the repressive state apparatuses (the police and military, courts and prisons), including in the U.S., and the growth of neo-Nazi movements internationally, are all intertwined.

Ukrainian fascism, which is not only neo-Nazi but shares a lineage with the original

Nazi movement through Stepan Bandera, is real and dangerous.

Lenin and Second International

In the early years of the 20th century leading up to World War I, the socialist and communist workers' movement, which was strong in Europe, was staunchly anti-war.

But when war was actually declared, it collapsed.

The political agreements and resolutions for comrades to oppose their imperialist governments dissolved under the war fever and patriotic jingoism. Those who did oppose it were jailed, killed or forced into exile.

But V.I. Lenin and his co-thinkers refused to capitulate. These political battles prepared the Bolshevik communist party for the 1917 socialist revolution under the banner of "Land, bread and peace."

Lenin's slogan, "Turn the imperialist war into civil war," originated during this period.

It was not an abstract slogan, but rather a pragmatic preparation for 1917. Without that preparation, the Bolshevik Revolution likely would not have succeeded.

On this International Working Women's Day, it's essential to recognize Clara Zetkin, its founder, and Rosa Luxemburg. They played critical roles along with Lenin in opposing the capitulation of the social democrats.

Both were theoretical leaders in their own right. Zetkin later became a fighter against the rise of Nazism, and Rosa Luxemburg and her comrade Karl Liebknecht were executed during an uprising of German workers. Their heroism is etched in history.

It is critical for today's movement to go over this history. We refer readers to the article "[Lenin: How to Oppose an Unjust War](#)," Lenin's pamphlet "[Socialism and War](#)," and Sam Marcy's book "[The Bolsheviks and War: Lessons for today's anti-war movement](#)."

U.S. war on world's people

This is not a Russian war on Ukraine – or even a war by the fascist-sympathizing oligarchs of Ukraine – but a war by U.S. imperialism on the world's working class.

We dream of a world where people can lay down their swords and where borders separating humanity will dissolve. This can and will happen.

But it will take the dismantling of imperialism and capitalism and the building of revolutionary socialism to make that dream a reality.

Today's first but essential step is to stand up to U.S. imperialism!



Why North Korea resists U.S. threats with military readiness

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Among the statements from numerous countries and left organizations around the world that condemn the U.S. manipulations that cornered Russia into carrying out military action in Ukraine is one from the Foreign Ministry of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) or socialist North Korea.

The statement referred to the way that the U.S. empire employs every means from manipulation of proxies to direct military assault as it chases profits and leaves a path of destruction from one side of the globe to the other.

"The root cause of the Ukraine crisis totally lies in the hegemonic policy of the U.S. and the West," North Korea's news agency KCNA reported. The statement goes on to say, "The Iraqi war, the Afghan War and other 'color revolutions' which brought tragedy to the 21st century clearly substantiate the fact that the U.S. and the West would seek their policies of hegemony by fair means or foul."

Although the hypocritical outcry over Russia's intervention in Ukraine has disoriented many in the anti-imperialist and left movements, North Korean leaders understand full-well that military readiness is the only guarantee of survival against imperialism.

Based on their own history, having survived the brutality and experienced the treachery of U.S. imperialism, they know that the blame for the current crisis belongs at the doorstep of the White House.

In the 1950-1953 war that left the Korean peninsula divided in half, North Korea

endured one of the most brutal military assaults of the 20th century. Millions of North Korean people lost their lives. Pyongyang and other cities were leveled by U.S. bombers. Civilians were trapped in buildings set ablaze by the U.S. military.

It was a great military feat that North Korea and its allies not only withstood the assault but drove the imperialists back to the U.S.-imposed division at the 38th parallel.

Since 1953, the U.S. has refused to sign a peace treaty with North Korea, and has maintained bases, tens of thousands of troops and at times nuclear weapons in South Korea. U.S. Navy warships patrol the waters nearby and nuclear-capable B-52 bombers are stationed in Guam.

Still, the DPRK leadership has refused to give up its policy of prioritizing military preparedness, called “Songun,” which translates to “military first.”

Origins of Songun policy

On Feb. 8, North Korea celebrated Army Day, marking the foundation of the Korean People’s Army in 1948. There is also a second holiday, Military Foundation Day on April 25, that commemorates the day in 1932 when a brilliant Korean anti-Japanese resistance leader named Kim Il Sung founded its predecessor, the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army.

Songun is rooted in that 1910 to 1945 period when Koreans fought Japanese imperialism to gain self-determination. Kim Il Sung’s family were activists in the struggle and had to flee to Manchuria to escape heavy repression when he was a child.

Kim joined and fought alongside guerrillas associated with Chinese revolutionary leader Mao Zedong. His brilliance came to the attention of the Soviet leadership. Soon he became a major in the Soviet Red Army and led a division consisting

entirely of Korean resistance fighters that was simply called “Kim Il Sung’s Division.” Kim’s troops and the Red Army chased Japan down to the 38th parallel.

The U.S. had posed as Korea’s liberator. But it was apparent by the close of World War II that the U.S. was the new imperialist colonizer. Washington held the southern half of the Korean peninsula hostage.

In the five years preceding the Korean War, U.S. imperialism brutalized the people’s movement of the south, murdering hundreds of thousands, arming a brutal new regime and readying itself for the attack on the north.

After the north’s astonishing victory, the people of the DPRK rebuilt their cities and industry. With strong friendships with the USSR, China, the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and later Cuba and Vietnam, North Korea thrived for decades.

But the horrible economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. began to take their toll, and after the downfall of the USSR, the U.S. ruling class was confident that North Korea would collapse.

Bill Clinton’s nuclear extortion

Unable to obtain fuel for industry and home heating after the loss of its Soviet trading partner, North Korea turned to improving its nuclear energy capabilities. The U.S. demanded the DPRK stop processing plutonium, claiming that it was stockpiling weapons-grade plutonium from the nuclear energy by-product.

In response, the north, desperate to end the punishing sanctions, announced it would withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Agreement unless the U.S. ended the sanctions and stopped its war threats. The U.S. media banged the war drums louder, much the same way they have whipped up sentiment against Russia today.

The crisis very nearly led to a second war. President Bill Clinton's cabinet was already gathered in the White House war room with the generals, when another faction of the U.S. ruling class – led by those around former President Jimmy Carter – negotiated a deal that they thought would bring about North Korea's collapse without a costly war.

With the cooperation of other imperialist countries, the U.S. offered to construct two lightwater nuclear energy reactors and send shipments of fuel oil to help North Korea get through the harsh winters until the reactors were completed. Washington also offered to incrementally dial back the punishing economic sanctions.

Fuel for the new reactors would have to be provided by countries that were already nuclear powers. In return, the DPRK would remain part of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and stop processing nuclear fuel of its own.

The Clinton administration retreated from its war plans – not because it hoped to resolve the crisis peacefully, but because the deal that Carter's people negotiated was a ruse. The U.S. and other imperialist countries involved did not intend to live up to the obligations of the agreement. Their intention was to bide their time until the DPRK collapsed.

The construction of the two reactors went nowhere for years. The heating oil was never delivered on the promised schedule. Sanctions remained intact.

Finally, after eight years of delay, the “Agreed Framework” collapsed. It was only after this betrayal that North Korea unequivocally developed its nuclear defense program.

The imperialist treachery of today looks familiar to Kim Jong Un and the rest of North Korea's leadership. The DPRK's statement on the Russia-Ukraine conflict shows that they recognize the machinations that began with the fascist coup in

Ukraine in 2014, and that it was the U.S. that greenlit the new Ukrainian attack on the people of Donbass, forcing Russia to intervene.



Whose interest does it serve?

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The greatest weapon the colonial powers have used in the past against our people has always been his ability to divide and conquer. If I take my hand and slap you, it might sting you because these digits are separated. But all I have to do to put you back in your place is bring those digits together.

— *Malcolm X* —

AZ QUOTES

Proverb: a short pithy saying in general use, stating a general truth or piece of advice.

There are a couple of simple proverbs that have borne the wisdom of their meaning through the ages. Although limited, these two fit current developments in Ukraine.

- Divide and conquer
- Whose interest does it serve?

Everyone who has experienced the evil machinations of a boss who destroys unity between workers understands that the boss needs to “divide and conquer” in order to maintain dominance. Think of the sabotage of last year’s union drive of Amazon workers in Bessemer, Alabama.

Consider the history of the United States. Who benefited from the social construct of racism and why does it continue to play out in a myriad of lethal oppressions?

The militarization of the U.S. took root well before the U.S. Constitution was written. It began when settlers usurped the land of the original people. These settlers are still honored for stealing the homes of the Indigenous peoples.

The old colonial empires spanning the globe maintained their rule by creating divisions. Think of the history of Ireland.

In India, the seeds of the division between Hindus and Muslims were cemented by British colonialism. When the British were finally driven out, they left their former colony partitioned, with tens of millions displaced and more than a million killed.

Currently the power of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party rests on its campaign against Muslims.

In modern times, an endless list of U.S. imperialist wars have ravaged the world.

Beginning in 1980, the CIA-run contra war was designed to crush the liberation struggle in Central America. It was funded by traffic in guns and drugs. Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North – a member of Ronald Reagan’s National Security Council – was found to be one of those orchestrating this.

Those drugs flooded the streets of U.S. cities in an attempt to stifle the progressive movements fighting for jobs, housing, medical care and education.

Think of how the U.S. media portrays each new U.S. intervention as a “just fight” in wars where the social structures of the targeted countries are totally devastated. Then look at the deteriorating conditions within the U.S. itself.

There was a time when U.S. military expansion benefited the U.S. economy. Those who gained small privileges as a result were encouraged to support, or merely ignore, U.S. imperialist wars. Now very few enjoy the spoils, but the greed of the 1% is insatiable.

Much is gained by understanding the dynamics of the class struggle. Nothing is changed without a conscious struggle to change it.



‘The blood in Ukraine is on Washington’s hands’

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Press TV, March 3, 2022

Political analyst Bill Does says Washington engineered “the Ukraine crisis in order to hurt not only Russia but the emerging bloc of countries seeking economic independence from the United States.”

“The corporate shills in Washington know that only war and destruction can maintain the outsized hold of Corporate America and the dollar in the world economy. It is part of a 30-year war to regain a stranglehold on the world’s energy resources,” he stated.

Does, a writer for Struggle-La Lucha and longtime antiwar activist, said, “Ukraine’s blood is on U.S. and NATO hands.” He made the remarks in an interview with Press TV on Thursday after U.S. President Joe Biden praised the Ukrainian people as a

“wall of strength” against Russia’s military action in their country, in his State of the Union address on Tuesday.

“Six days ago, Russia’s Vladimir Putin sought to shake the foundations of the free world thinking he could make it bend to his menacing ways. But he badly miscalculated,” Biden said.

“He thought he could roll into Ukraine and the world would roll over. Instead, he met a wall of strength he never imagined. He met the Ukrainian people,” he continued.

Putin last week announced a “special military operation” in Ukraine’s Donbass region to “defend people” subjected to “genocide” there against government forces, stressing that Moscow has “no plans to occupy Ukrainian territory.”

Biden called the Russian action an “unprovoked and unjustified attack,” and the U.S. media described it as the biggest assault on a European state since World War Two assault by Russia.

U.S. engineered ‘the Ukraine crisis to hurt Russia’

“I definitely think the United States engineered the Ukraine crisis in order to hurt Russia and by extension the entire emerging Eurasian economic bloc. The U.S. didn’t leave Russia much choice but to act,” Does said.

He said, “The striking thing about the ‘hate Russia’ rally Biden led on Capitol Hill on March 1 was its triumphal character. It was nauseating to watch Democrat and Republican politicians, every one of them on the corporate pad, decked out in blue and gold of Ukraine.”

“Every one of them had voted for the murder of millions in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Palestine, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Western Sahara, the Philippines

and elsewhere. Every one of them had voted to plunder working class and oppressed communities in the United States to pay for endless wars for corporate profit,” he stated.

“Indeed that very day, the Saudi kingdom attacked Yemen again with U.S.-made planes, missiles and bombs. Nearly 400,000 people have died in that US-sponsored war. Biden promised to end it when he came into office. He lied,” he added.

“Also March 1, U.S.-funded Israeli occupation forces invaded a refugee camp in Jenin, murdering three people. Two 13-year-olds are among those martyred by Israeli troops on the West Bank in the past few days. Every single politician on the Hill that night has voted to fund the endless war against the people of Palestine,” he continued.

“With a straight face, Biden praised US troops who are still illegally in Iraq and Syria while condemning Russia’s military operation in Ukraine,” he pointed out.

“On Tuesday the Capitol Hill gang was happy. War stocks were up. So were the stocks and profits of the energy monopolies. West Europe was back under Washington’s thumb. Congress had an excuse to deny even more money to people’s needs and spend it on war,” Does noted.

U.S. politicians don’t care for the people of Ukraine

“They cared nothing for the people of Ukraine except as cannon fodder in a proxy war against Russia, a war that Washington has engineered deliberately and carefully. And their proxy war against Russia is also aimed at China, Bolivia, Cuba, Ethiopia, Iran, Nicaragua, Syria, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe — at the emerging bloc of nations seeking economic independence from U.S. banks and corporate monopolies,” Does said.

“In his speech, Biden couldn’t help but take credit. ‘We were ready,’ he said. ‘We

prepared extensively and carefully.’ Last summer, in violation of the Minsk agreements, the U.S. and other NATO countries resurrected a plan to bring Ukraine into NATO. That would mean U.S. and West European troops and missiles on Russia’s border,” he stated.

“On Feb. 17, the Pentagon ordered its Ukrainian mercenaries to launch a full-scale offensive against the independent republics of Donetsk and Lugansk. They knew Russia would have little choice but to respond,” he said.

“The Western corporate media hides the fact that this battle did not begin last week. It has raged for eight years. 14,000 people have died in the Kiev regime’s war against the mostly Russian-speaking people of Donetsk and Lugansk,” he pointed out.

“It began in 2014, when a coup organized from the U.S. embassy installed a rightwing, Russophobic regime in Kiev. Neo-Nazi groups like Pravdiy Sektor and Svoboda Party were part of the U.S. operation. Their militias began an ‘ethnic cleansing’ campaign against the Russian-speaking people of Donbas in eastern Ukraine. At least 50 protesters were burned to death in Odessa when these gangs set fire to the trade union headquarters,” he said.

“In response, the people of Donetsk and Lugansk declared independence. Like the people of Gaza, they are under siege for their choice at the ballot box,” he explained.

“Had Russian troops simply gone to defend those areas, Washington and Kiev would still scream invasion, and they would be attacked with all the weapons systems the U.S. has given Kiev. Had Russia allowed a massacre to happen and Ukraine to join NATO, they would face a much bigger war in the near future. Because the only reason for NATO expansion is war,” the analyst said.

“The Russian military operation is not like the U.S. invasion of Iraq, which Joe Biden

supported. Russia is not destroying water pumping stations, power plants, sewage systems, telephones. Despite unsubstantiated headlines in Western media, they are targeting military infrastructure. Nonetheless, war is hell,” he pointed out.

“The corporate pawns inside the Beltway want war. They know that only war and destruction can maintain the obsolete position of U.S. banks and the dollar in the world economy. Ukraine’s blood is on their hands,” he said.

“The people of the world want peace. We need to demand an end to U.S./NATO intervention in Ukraine, bring home all troops and weapons, abolish the NATO alliance and allow Russia, Ukraine and the people of Donetsk and Lugansk to negotiate a solution. Russia is not our enemy. People in the U.S. need the corporate/Pentagon war machine off our backs,” he concluded.

Source: [Press TV](#)



France withdraws from Mali, but

continues to devastate Africa's Sahel

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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On February 17, 2022, French President Emmanuel Macron [held](#) a press conference in Paris just ahead of the sixth European Union-African Union summit in Brussels along with Senegal's President Macky Sall and Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo as well as European Council President Charles Michel. At the conference, Macron [announced](#) that the French forces would be withdrawing from Mali. This means that France and its European allies will start to [wind down](#) "Barkhane and Takuba anti-jihadist operations in Mali." The [protests](#) in Mali against the presence of the French troops seem to have finally succeeded.

Macron [said](#) that France had to withdraw its troops because it would no longer like to "remain militarily engaged alongside de facto authorities whose strategy or hidden objectives we do not share." A [statement](#) appeared on the French government website signed by the European Union (EU) and by the African Union (AU) that made the same point, namely that "the Malian transitional authorities have not honored their commitments."

The language used by Macron and included in the AU and EU statement shows a lack of transparency about the real reasons behind the withdrawal of troops from Mali. The government of Mali ("de facto" and "transitional") came to power through [two](#) coups d'état in recent years: Colonel Assimi Goïta, leader of the National Committee for the Salvation of the People of Mali, carried out the first [coup](#) in August 2020 against the elected government and installed Bah Ndaw, who was a military officer, as the interim president of Mali. Ndaw was then overthrown in a second coup in May 2021, when Goïta took over the [position](#) of

interim president himself. By June, the European countries insisted that the new military junta hold elections by February 2022. Goïta [said](#) that he would honor this timeline. He did not do so, which gave the EU and the AU the excuse to break links with Goïta's government.

That's the excuse being used by these regional powers to wind down operations in Mali. Matters become far less clear, however, when it comes to the statements that were made by France in this regard. Macron [spoke](#) about Goïta's "hidden objectives," but did not elaborate on that accusation. What could these "hidden objectives" be?

Mali's Troubles

Mali's troubles do not start and finish with the unrest in northern Mali nor with the military coup. If you were to ask Alpha Oumar Konaré, the president of Mali from 1992 to 2002, he would tell you a different story. When Konaré took over the presidency in Mali in 1992, the people were exhausted by the debt crisis produced by International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies and by military rule. They wanted something more. One of Konaré's close advisers [said](#) during his time in office, "We service our country's debt on time every month, never missing a penny, and all the time the people are getting poorer and poorer."

Konaré's government [asked](#) for relief from the IMF so that it could marshal resources toward ensuring the development of the northern part of the country; the insurgency, Konaré argued, would be better confronted by development than by war. The United States government and the IMF disagreed.

From Konaré's time in office as president to now, Mali's governments—whether civilian or military—have been unable to craft a policy framework to tackle endemic social and economic crises. It is true that there has been a long-standing [rebellion](#) in the north that has brought together the Ifoghas aristocrats among the Tuaregs and

the Al Qaeda factions that came out of the Algerian civil war (1991-2002) and the destruction of Libya (2011-2012); none of the many peace agreements have worked largely because there is simply no money in Bamako, the capital of Mali, to promise the kind of development needed to undercut a million frustrations. Less remarked, but equally true, are the devastatingly poor social indicators in the rest of Mali, where [hunger](#) and [illiteracy](#) appear normal in Bamako's *bidonvilles*.

Western intervention in much of Africa has not resulted in beneficial economic assistance in the region. This assistance has come through IMF austerity policies and military aid.

France's 2013 military intervention into Mali came alongside its construction of a military project across the Sahel belt [called](#) G5 Sahel (including Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) in 2014. The military in each of these countries received aid, and its officers received training. It is no surprise that Goïta, for instance, received [training](#) from the U.S. armed forces in Burkina Faso alongside Colonel Mamady Doumbouya, who carried out a coup in Guinea in September 2021; it is no surprise either that Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba of Burkina Faso trained alongside these men and carried out his [coup](#) in Burkina Faso in January 2022; and no surprise that in Chad, "General Kaka" (Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno), the son of the former president, was [installed](#) as the president by the military in what was effectively a coup in April 2021. Three of the G5 Sahel countries—Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali—are now led by a military government (Niger's authorities [thwarted](#) a coup in March 2021).

All the handwringing about why there are so many coup attempts in Africa these days fails to connect the dots: no agenda out of the IMF-austerity model is permitted by the Western states, which prefer to build up the military forces in the region rather than allow a genuine social democratic process to open in these key African countries.

Discomfort With the Western Interventions

In October 2021, Mali's current Prime Minister Choguel Kokalla Maïga [told](#) a Russian news outlet that his government had "proof" that the French are training terrorist groups such as Ansar Dine. According to his interview, France had created an "enclave" in the Kidal region in 2013. "They have militant groups there, which were trained by French officers," Maïga said. Kidal is in Mali's north, not far from its borders with Algeria and Niger.

Nothing Maïga said should have raised an eyebrow. France's former ambassador to Mali, Nicolas Normand, made some similar [comments](#) in 2019 when he released his [book](#) on the continent, *Le grand livre de l'Afrique*. Normand told Radio France Internationale that Macron's government forged ties with the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad and with the aristocrats of the Ifoghas region to prevent them from making a rapid advance toward Bamako. France wanted to play the "good armed groups" against the "bad armed groups," but in the end failed to see that both these groups were terrible for Mali. This approach, combined with the civilian casualties of the French military operations (22 civilians died when France [bombed](#) a wedding in Bounti in 2021, for example), turned the people of Mali away from France.

French troops have now begun to leave Mali, but they are not returning to France. They will be [deployed](#) to next-door Niger, where they will continue their mission to prevent migration to Europe and to fight off the radicalized victims of IMF austerity (which often come in the form of frustrated young people, some of whom turn to terror). Macron's [eyes](#) are on the French presidential elections, which are expected to take place in April this year, and on the rising tensions in response to Russia's military intervention into Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the people of Mali came to the streets to celebrate the departure of the French. Interestingly, many of the signs thanked the Russians. Perhaps the [entry](#) of

Russian aid and mercenaries are the “hidden objectives” Macron was referring to?

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.



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

written by Struggle - La Lucha
March 11, 2022



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

Sunday, February 20, 2022, 5 pm ET, 4 pm CT, 2 pm PT

Exciting guests at this webinar also included Dr. Luther Harry Castillo, featured in the film “Revolutionary Medicine: A Story of the First Garifuna Hospital,” and Dr. Samira Addrey, both graduates of ELAM (Latin American Medical School) in Cuba.

Dr. Castillo is the newly appointed Secretary of Science and Technology of Honduras, and Dr. Addrey is the ELAM coordinator for IFCO Pastors for Peace.

Panelists included: John Parker, Berta Joubert, Hernan Amador.

Webinar participants saw the film “Revolutionary Medicine: A Story of the First Garifuna Hospital.” Award-winning documentary! “A truly moving story of the courage of the Afro-Honduran community and Garifuna Dr. Luther Castillo who graduated from the ELAM medical school in Cuba”

You can see the film viewed at the webinar on [YouTube](#):

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:

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, who lives in Puerto Rico, founded Women in Struggle/Mujeres En Lucha. Joubert 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.

See John Parker's report at [Struggle-La-Lucha.org](https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/around-the-world/page/46/)

Please subscribe to [Struggle-La-Lucha.org](https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/around-the-world/page/46/)



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

written by Struggle - La Lucha
March 11, 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



From U.S. to Honduras: Socialism is vital to Black Liberation

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 11, 2022

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 Xiomara 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 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

March 11, 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.



‘Freedom Convoy’: a dangerous

movement for the working class, but useful for the ruling class

written by Struggle - La Lucha
March 11, 2022



**TRUCKER
CONVOY:
USEFUL
FOR THE
RULING
CLASS**

The Communist Party of Canada views the “Freedom Convoy” as a public expression of the increasingly organized and assertive far right. The clear links between the organizers of the convoy and far-right networks indicate that this is not a spontaneous working-class demonstration. On the contrary, it is part of a global phenomenon: the rise and mainstreaming of the far right, which is demonstrated by the strong support (ideologically and financially) from the US far right and circles close to Donald Trump and the Jan. 6 insurrection. The convoy is filled with Nazi and Confederate flags, election signs for Bernier and all sorts of far-right symbols. The

\$10 million raised through GoFundMe for this convoy also showcases that this was planned by ultra-right networks. It is certainly not the meagre earnings of the working class that is funding this effort.

We understand the frustrations of a growing part of the population. They are justified. Since the beginning of the pandemic, both federal and provincial governments have been busy ensuring that corporate interests are placed firmly ahead of public health. The deaths we mourn from this deadly pandemic are victims of decades of privatization of our public health system. Emergency financial aid programs, whether it be the emergency wage subsidy or the CERB/CRB, have not served to raise the standard of living of working people, but only to barely keep 7 million people afloat. Over 880 000 people were cast adrift last October after CRB was ended. These programs have also benefited big business, big retailers, banks and lending institutions, and real estate speculators. After spending most of the CERB/CRB payments for groceries at Metro, Sobeys or Loblaws (whose CEO's wealth rose by \$4.5 billion after the first year of the pandemic), after paying rent to big real estate speculators such as Timbercreek, after paying off interest on credit cards, not much of the meagre \$500 per week was left for people to make ends meet. Just as dangerously, while living and working conditions are deteriorating for the working majority, the government and the political parties in the pay of big business have agreed to increase military spending.

However, these self-proclaimed "spokesmen of the people" refuse to address these questions. They substitute a populist and anti-scientific discourse in order to funnel the anger of the working people towards other workers, particularly immigrants, women, Black and Indigenous People, Muslims, healthcare workers (who've been attacked), teachers and other public organizations. Racism, misogyny, violence and hate speech are commonplace in this convoy, which seeks only to divide workers and instill the idea that the enemy is not the bosses, but working people themselves.

This is far from a “freedom” convoy. This is a convoy of hate which has threatened and attacked the civilian populations in Ottawa and everywhere it has passed through.

They don’t say a word about the central issue of defending and expanding our public services, especially our public health care system; about raising wages and controlling the prices of basic necessities; not a word about nationalizing the pharmaceutical industry to stop Big Pharma’s profiteering (which is contributing to the proliferation of variants), about military spending and the danger of war to guarantee corporate profits. Far from attacking the system, they attack the workers struggling to deliver essential services that will save lives, despite systemic underfunding, privatization, and more.

Communists recognize the interests behind this demonstration very well: big business and the far-right (white supremacists, fascists, fundamentalists, the People’s Party, etc.) We know what it means when the far right organizes itself and tries to take root among the unemployed, the unorganized and the bankrupt. We also know that it will take mass political action by the labor and people’s movements to force Parliament to legislate hate groups as criminal organizations, to enact and enforce hate speech laws, and to defeat the rise of the ultra-right.

This is why we call on the most conscious workers, the trade union movement, but also on all progressive and democratic forces to block these reactionaries by unmasking them, and to oppose them by fighting for a genuine people’s recovery that includes:

- A \$23 minimum wage and general wage increases, improved working conditions including decent pensions and retirement at 60, stable job creation especially in the manufacturing and value-added industry as well as expanded labour rights;
- EI reform that is non-contributory and accessible to all workers, including

first-time job seekers, covering 90% of previous income and that is available for the whole duration of unemployment;

- Price controls and price roll-backs on food, fuel, rents and housing;
- Reverse privatization and make a massive public investment in healthcare and social services;
- Expand Medicare to include long-term care, dental, vision, drugs, and mental health care;
- Create a universal, quality, public childcare system;
- Public ownership and democratic control of banks, insurance companies, energy and natural resources, and the pharmaceutical industry;
- Tax the corporations and the rich; tax relief for working people and the unemployed;
- Strict civilian control over the police, the expansion and enforcement of anti-hate laws, and the designation of hate groups as criminal organisations;
- Reduce the military budget by 75%.

Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada

Source: communist-party.ca

