

# Behind Southern governors' anti-union agenda

written by Melinda Butterfield

May 1, 2024



It pays to play. Pennsylvania billionaire Jeff Yass gives Texas governor Greg Abbott \$6 million to get his preferred policies enacted.

Southern politicians who sold their souls to the corporations and banks are a bit rattled right now, and who can blame them? Volkswagen workers won big in Chattanooga, Tennessee, when 73% of plant workers voted to join the United Auto Workers Union.

This is the first time that autoworkers have successfully unionized via election in the

South since the 1940s! What if more of us workers here in the South get an idea?

Before the vote even happened, six “anti-woke” southern governors put out a joint letter condemning the union. That should tell us how significant the unionization victory is.

Seriously. The Volkswagen vote is a big deal for all workers in the region. When economists compare workers of the same type, with the only difference being whether they’re union members, unionized workers earn 10-15% more in wages according to the U.S. Department of the Treasury. That’s just wages. Unionized workers have better benefits and working conditions, too.

And unlike with “trickle down economics” – the now totally disproven idea that tax breaks for the ultra-wealthy will trickle down to the rest of us – when it comes to the benefits of unions, the high tide really does lift all workers’ boats. The Treasury Department admits that the data is clear on this point. There is a spillover.

For every 1% increase in union membership in the private sector, that results in a 0.3% increase in wages for nonunion workers, and the benefits are greatest for workers without college degrees.

Workers in states that have extreme anti-union laws (misleadingly called “right to work” or RTW laws) make 3.2% less on average than those doing the same job in states with less restrictions on unions. That is to say, full time workers in RTW states like Louisiana or Mississippi make about \$1,670 less per year.

The letter written by the governors has a laughable graphic saying “Republican governors stand with American Auto Workers.” It’s signed by Kay Ivey (Alabama), Brian Kemp (Georgia), Tate Reeves (Mississippi), Henry McMaster (South Carolina), Bill Lee (Tennessee), and Greg Abbott (Texas). Every word of the statement is a lie. We should ask who they’re working for, because it ain’t us.

## Roster of shame

The governors' main claim is that all the jobs are going to leave if the workforce unionizes. But there is no correlation between whether a state has RTW laws, and thus low unionization rates, and employment. When you look at whether prime working-age people (ages 25-54) have a job in RTW vs. non-RTW states, there's no systematic difference. Fluctuations in employment follow the same capitalist boom-and-bust cycles (expansion followed by recession) across states.

Forbes looked at U.S. Census data for 2023 and ranked the states with highest and lowest poverty levels. Mississippi comes in as the poorest state, with 19.1% living below the federal poverty level. So there's Tate Reeve's state.

(U.S.-occupied Puerto Rico has a poverty rate of 43%, but the island is not a state, so is usually not included on these lists. It's being plundered by corporations and banks. U.S. out of Puerto Rico, now! Puerto Rico will be free!)

Louisiana has the second-highest poverty level, but our governor - Jeff Landry - didn't sign the letter; maybe because auto-manufacturing hasn't taken off here yet. Alabama is the 7th highest, so Kay Ivy gets an "F." South Carolina comes in at number 10; Henry McMaster is another loser.

So, three out of six of the signees govern states in the top 10 poorest. And since they're doing absolutely nothing to alleviate poverty, we can rest assured that they do not care about workers, only about making themselves and their big donors rich. There's no reason to trust them about unions.

Speaking of big donors, a Mississippi Today investigation in late 2023 found that Tate Reeve's top campaign contributors brought home a whopping \$1.4 billion in state contracts and grants, all from agencies Reeves oversees. It pays to play! Or is it pay to play?

## **Texas-sized hypocrisy**

According to Market Realist, Greg Abbott has a net worth of \$14 million. In December 2023, his campaign received \$6 million – “the largest single donation in Texas history,” in the campaign’s words – from Pennsylvania billionaire Jeff Yass.

Yass is thought to have \$29 billion. He’s the co-founder and managing director of investment firm Susquehanna International Group.

Why would a Pennsylvania capitalist be funding Texas politics? Because he champions the anti-public school voucher movement, tax cuts for billionaires, and all manner of other things that only benefit the rich. He’s making an investment in Texas.

The truth is that there is nothing unusual about these shenanigans, and Democratic politicians are no better. The Washington Post said it: “More than half of those who served in the House and Senate were worth more than \$1 million; many had net worths that stretched into the tens of millions.”

We should not be surprised where these capitalist politicians’ allegiances lie. Every time they try to stir us up about unions, trans people, immigrants, or some supposed foreign adversary, we should ask: “What’s in it for you?”

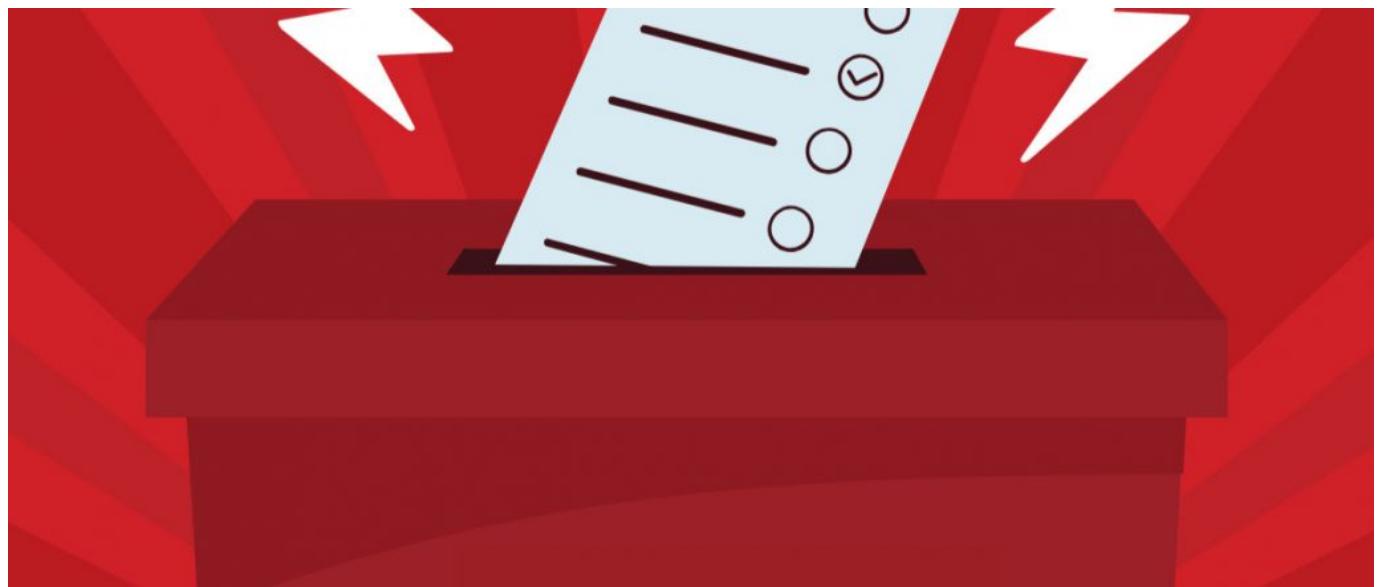


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# The scam behind 'free elections'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 1, 2024



Hillary Clinton went on a late-night talk show and told U.S. voters to “get over themselves” and choose between Genocide Joe and Donald Trump in this year’s U.S. presidential elections.

“Get over yourself. Those are the two choices,” she said. The smirk, the arrogance, and the “we don’t care about you” eye roll reminded me of psychopaths profiled in crime shows. The complete lack of empathy, the sense of superiority, the fake pleasantries and charisma. It’s the same attitude Biden displays when dismissing questions about Israel killing children in Gaza while casually licking an ice cream cone.

To be honest with you, she is right. Nobody should care about Biden or Trump because they both belong to the same ruling political and economic elite, they represent the interests of corporations, they are both professed Zionists, and share a profound love for imposing murderous sanctions against sovereign countries like Cuba and Venezuela.

The U.S. “democracy” is, and always has been, about the elite’s bipartisan rule. A circus that allows for the same warmongering government to continue spreading corporate greed and eliminating any resistance or political alternatives around the world.

Hillary’s words are a reminder, in case somebody needed it, that Washington does not care about democracy or freedom inside the U.S. or anywhere else. These are just tools to drive their neocolonial agenda. The formula is quite simple: Elections are only “free” and a country is only “democratic” when a U.S. puppet rules. Otherwise, collective punishment is coming for you until you capitulate.

For over two decades, Venezuela has been the target of the “free elections” broken record alongside regime change operations and economic sanctions, leaving a long trail of destruction behind. How does the U.S. get away with this “free elections” scam? With the unconditional support of the remorseless corporate media. Remorse, another emotion psychopaths lack.

For years, we have read the same lie over and over again: the 2018 presidential vote

was “fraudulent” because the U.S.-backed far-right opposition decided not to participate and called for abstention (although anti-Chavista candidates still ran and got a sizable amount of votes). The election was preceded by U.S. financial sanctions against Venezuela’s oil industry to cause economic instability and pressure people into voting Maduro out of office.

When that strategy failed, more sanctions came raining down in the form of a full-fledged blockade while media stenographers piled one lie on top of another to set up the stage for more intervention. For example, according to [The New York Times](#), the upcoming July 28 presidential vote is only happening because of a “commitment [made by Caracas] to the United States to hold elections this year in exchange for a lifting of crippling economic sanctions.”

There’s a lot to unpack in that small sentence.

The dialogue process and electoral agreement signed between Caracas and the U.S.-backed opposition in Barbados was entirely meant to steer the opposition away from fascist violence and into the electoral path. Presidential elections were constitutionally mandated for 2024, with or without the dialogue or the far-right participation.

While the government (and every human rights expert/organization) has demanded the lifting of sanctions, the relaxation was not a consequence of the Barbados Agreement. It was the result of a migration wave that came roosting home after years of economic aggression against Venezuela. Not to mention years of lobbying by corporations like Chevron that wanted to recoup debt from their Venezuelan joint ventures.

The “crippling economic sanctions” were also not lifted, just the energy and gold sectors’ [measures](#) were suspended for six months. As that period has now come to an end and Venezuela approaches another election we are once again tormented

with threats of reimposing all sanctions because electoral conditions are still not “free.”

This time, the “free elections” campaigners focus on María Corina Machado’s [ban](#) on running for office. Anyone might think people are rallying in the streets demanding this Venezuelan heiress and sanctions enthusiast candidacy, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Then why is she promoted as a crucial factor that would finally make elections “free” according to Western liberal standards?

First, she represents the elite that would guarantee two things: U.S. economic interests and the extermination of popular power that shows socialism is viable. It is no surprise that Washington would cheerlead for Machado, but it’s surprising to see the Latin American left or even the Venezuelan left that opposes Maduro choosing her political rights to take a stand.

Are we supposed to pretend we live in a classless society? For decades, if not centuries, the upper crust has banned the working class from political power. This was the case in Venezuela until Hugo Chávez arrived and with him, the wretched of the earth finally tasted and began to transform power.

From my point of view, nobody like Machado should ever be allowed to run for office, especially when they openly admit their intentions to exterminate a grassroots force like Chavismo. She is on the record calling for a foreign invasion of Venezuela. Should fascists and oligarchs have political rights? Doesn’t that completely contradict the struggle for social justice and humanity’s well-being and survival?

Haven’t we learned how the far-right instrumentalizes hate speech and the “othering” of the poor, the Black and Brown, the different and the left, to rally support to achieve power? False promises and manipulation to turn our countries into U.S. vassal states again. Just look at the recent heartbreaking examples of

Ecuador and Argentina. It seems to me that the only thing worse than being a country targeted by U.S. imperialism and resisting is being a U.S. neo-colony with no dignity.

I know that some might say, “But democracy means all political options should run and people can choose freely.” Venezuela is honoring that principle to the core. There are 13 candidates of which 12 are opposition, between newbies and old foxes, and they come in all flavors. You have free-market lovers, religious conservatives, businessmen, and libertarian comedians. Some might drop out of the race, but most will likely to plow ahead. Some have been pre-campaigning for quite some time now.

What is it about them that does not contribute to “free elections”? According to corporate media, they are Maduro allies because they don’t openly support U.S. sanctions and regime change. It’s either be a shameless servant or don’t even bother.

The reality is that Maduro is in a strong position to win the July vote, though not overwhelmingly, so Washington is preemptively delegitimizing the possible results. The United Socialist Party (PSUV) has superb electoral machinery and solid grassroots bases, while the far-right will most likely do what it does best: sabotage the election unless one of them, the creme de la creme of society, is set to rule. Otherwise, remaining out of power is better as they can continue to rely on U.S. funding.

As my mind continues to ponder the scam behind the “free elections” campaign and how it’s just a facade to impose Western-style democracy, I can’t help but wonder what would it feel like to participate in elections without having to worry about U.S. imperialist retaliation. Yes, we have learned to resist and we are in a much better economic situation than five years ago, but that does not mean that our situation is not PTSD-inducing.

Will the U.S. fascist agenda take more lives? How can we have (truly) free elections and free lives when we have a guillotine five millimeters from our already strangled necks?

I would love to be able to measure up Maduro's government without factoring in sanctions to make a decision as a voter based entirely on how well or badly people are living exclusively because of government policies. It has become an agonizing exercise of self-control not to make rash decisions about the future and trust our leaders.

A lot of people like me are not entirely happy with the government's liberal overtures in the name of circumventing the U.S. blockade that moves away from the socialist alternative. We have felt ignored when making criticisms or requesting information regarding salaries, socioeconomic data, and the real state of healthcare, education and the electrical system and what investment is going (if any) into them.

We don't want to surrender our country to the U.S., but we also need guarantees about the next six years if Maduro wins. Will the government continue trapped in its echo chamber? Will they weed out the opportunists and corrupt? Will the socialist project be revitalized?

No matter what goes down on July 28, only the Venezuelan people can save themselves and guarantee real democracy on the ground and hope for the future. As Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish once wrote: "Hope is not the opposite of despair. Perhaps it is the faith that springs from divine indifference that has left us dependent on our own special talents to make sense of the fog surrounding us. Hope is neither tangible nor an idea. It is a talent."

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*solidarity struggles.*

*In 2014 she joined TeleSUR, where in six years she rose through the ranks to become editor-in-chief, overseeing news, analysis and multimedia content. Currently based in Caracas, she joined Venezuelananalysis in March 2021 as a writer and social media manager and is a member of Venezuelan artist collective Utopix. Her main interests are popular and feminist struggles.*

Source: [Venezuelanalysis](https://www.venezuelanalysis.com)



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## **New York City: 79 Minutes for Leonard Peltier**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 1, 2024

Saturday, September 9 - 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Bronx Hub, 149th St. & Third Ave., Bronx

Tuesday, September 12 - 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Union Square, 14th St. & Broadway, Manhattan

## **79 Minutes for Leonard Peltier!**

The Bronx Greens, NYC Jericho Movement, and members of the Leonard Peltier Ad Hoc Committee are holding two Vigils in NYC commemorating Leonard Peltier's 79 birthday. This year marks 48 years he's been in prison for defending the rights of Native people, most specifically at that time, the Lakota people at Oglala (Pine Ridge).

**Leonard Peltier will be 79 on his Birthday,  
Tuesday, September 12, 2023**

**Join Us!**



**Saturday, September 9, 2023**

2:00 to 5:00 pm in the Bronx Hub (149 St. and Third Ave.)

**Tuesday, September 12, 2023**

5:00 to 7:00 pm in Union Square, Manhattan (14th St.)

Please come to support Leonard Peltier and Indigenous Rights. Bring your banners, flags and drums!

<https://www.freleonardpeltiernow.org/>



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# Axe handles and voting rights

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 1, 2024

There's nothing new about the attack on voting rights in Georgia. In 1868, the racists in the state legislature declared its Black elected members to be ineligible. ("Black Reconstruction in America" by W.E.B. Du Bois.)

One hundred fifty-three years later, the Black woman legislator Park Cannon was arrested and dragged out of Georgia's Capitol by police on March 25. Cannon was trying to witness the signing of the SB 202 voter suppression bill by Gov. Brian Kemp.

In 1966, Georgia's House of Representatives kicked out the Black human-rights activist Julian Bond for opposing the Vietnam War.

Lester Maddox closed his Atlanta chicken shack restaurant in 1964 so he wouldn't have to serve Black customers. The civil rights bill passed that year would have forced the bigot to do so. Maddox instead handed out axe handles to his white customers to beat Black people.

Two years later Maddox was selected to be Georgia's governor despite getting less votes than his opponent. When the chicken-bone fascist ran for president in 1976, he campaigned at the Allen-Bradley factory in Milwaukee, which is now closed.

The Bradley family wouldn't hire Black or Latinx workers at the factory despite other Milwaukee plants doing so. Today the [tax-exempt Bradley Foundation](#) greases voter suppression efforts with its \$850-million hate kitty.

Atlanta's ruling class claims the city is too busy to hate. Yet the initial reaction of Atlanta-based [Delta Air Lines CEO Ed Bastian](#) was to support the voter suppression bill. The act makes it a crime to give water or food to voters waiting in line for hours.

Delta boss Bastian was following in the tradition of former Delta CEO Carleton Putnam, who wrote the segregationist manifesto "Race and Reason." The book became a bible of the White Citizens Councils, which were an uptown version of the Ku Klux Klan. Neo-nazi David Duke promotes the book today.

But within a few days [both Delta and Coca-Cola](#) changed their tune and were instead speaking against the SB 202 anti-voting bill. These corporate giants didn't get religion. They were feeling the power of the people.

### **Blood libels and lynching**

The denial of voting rights allowed super-racist Eugene Talmadge to be "elected" Georgia's governor four times. Talmadge declared martial law to break the 1934 textile workers' strike. Almost all of the strikers were white.

Talmadge is believed to have [instigated the lynching](#) of two Black couples on July 25, 1946: Dorothy and Roger Malcom, and Mae Murray and George Dorsey.

A week before, the World War II veteran Maceo Snipes was [murdered by the Klan](#)

for having been the first Black voter in the history of Georgia's Taylor County.

The election of Rev. Raphael Warnock to the U.S. Senate enrages racists. Warnock is the first Black U.S. senator in Georgia's history. He's the senior pastor of Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church, where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once presided.

A century ago, Tom Watson occupied the senate seat now held by Raphael Warnock. According to the historian C. Vann Woodward, Watson arranged the 1915 lynching of Leo Frank, who was Jewish. It was Frank's lynching that marked the beginning of the modern Ku Klux Klan.

Frank had been framed for killing a young white woman, Mary Phagan. The frenzied campaign against Frank was a blood libel, like charges in medieval Europe that Jewish people were responsible for the plague.

Today racists want to blame Asian people for the coronavirus. That's a blood libel, too. Six Asian women and two other people were killed by a racist shooter near Atlanta on March 16.

Georgia's master class never wanted Asian, Black, Indigenous, Latinx and poor people in general to vote. The resistance to the attacks on voting rights shows that the days of Tom Watson and Eugene Talmadge are over. Poor and working people won't allow their votes to be stolen.



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# Stop stealing Black votes!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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The whole world can watch Georgia state Rep. Park Cannon being arrested



on YouTube. As an elected official, the Black woman was trying to witness Gov. Brian Kemp sign a voter suppression bill on March 25.

For merely knocking on a locked door, Cannon has been charged with two felonies. Kemp was inside signing a 98-page-long bill that makes [giving free food or water to voters](#) waiting in long lines a criminal act. Offering chairs, even to elderly and disabled voters, will also be illegal.

None of this has anything to do with alleged vote fraud. It's all about preventing

poor people from casting a ballot under a hot Georgia sun.

[Other parts of the SB 202 bill](#) include allowing unlimited challenges to people attempting to vote. This gives a license for racists trying to stop Black, Asian, Indigenous and Latinx people from voting. [Voting by mail](#) will be made harder as well.

Kemp signed the bill surrounded by six white men. Behind the governor was a painting of the Callaway Plantation where a hundred enslaved Africans made its owner rich.

Meanwhile, Cannon was handcuffed and dragged by officers of the Georgia State Patrol, whose name is a reminder of the slave patrols that hunted runaway Africans.

The white supremacy seen inside and outside the governor's office was deliberate. Kemp was making an openly racist appeal to Trump supporters in order to avoid a primary challenge next year.

Kemp had [stolen the 2018 governor's election](#) from Stacey Adams by purging the election rolls of 700,000 voters, the vast majority of whom were people of color. At the time, Kemp was Georgia's secretary of state and illegally got to determine who could vote.

### **Attacking voting rights coast-to-coast**

Nine days before Gov. Kemp signed a bill to gut voting rights, six Asian women and two other people were killed in the Atlanta area by a racist gunman.

This atrocity came after a year of Trump and his supporters blaming Asian people for COVID-19. Thousands of Asian people have been attacked.

Kemp's racist voter suppression bill is aimed at Asian voters, too. The votes of Asian

people helped defeat Trump in Georgia.

The white supremacist drive to deny voting rights isn't confined to Georgia or the South. As of Feb. 19, at least [253 bills have been introduced](#) in 43 states to make it harder to vote.

After Trump lost Wisconsin last year, [three of the seven judges](#) on the state's Supreme Court wanted to throw out the election results.

Coordinating the attack on voting rights is the Heritage Foundation, whose founder Joseph Coors broke the union at the family's Colorado brewery. The lavishly funded outfit [defended the apartheid regime](#) in South Africa and declared "Nelson Mandela is not a freedom fighter." The Heritage Foundation is also a hate factory [against LGBTQ2S people](#).

For many capitalists, democracy is becoming dangerous. Too many poor people are voting.

[David Harsanyi](#), now a senior writer at the National Review, wants to "weed out ignorant Americans from the electorate." Harsanyi isn't talking about the millions of bigots who voted for Trump. He wants to force voters to pass a quiz in order to cast a ballot.

That's like the deliberately misnamed "literacy" tests that were used to stop Black people from voting in Mississippi just two generations ago. At the time, the National Review declared "[the South must prevail](#)" in denying human rights to Black people.

### **The rich can't tolerate democracy**

The [Washington Post](#) attacked the voting restrictions in Georgia. Yet the newspaper's owner, billionaire Jeff Bezos, doesn't want workers in his Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Ala., to vote for a union.

Capitalist elections have been used to bulldoze through cutbacks like Proposition 13, passed in a 1978 California referendum. This resulted in defunding the public schools there for over 40 years.

Yet when Baltimore voted for rent control in 1979, the results were thrown out by a judge.

If there really was democracy in the United States, people would be able to vote for a \$20 minimum wage. They could vote for the right to housing, jobs and health care, as well as for community control of the police.

These absolutely necessary demands will be won on the streets. That doesn't mean socialists sneer at the struggle for voting rights. V.I. Lenin — the leader of the Russian Revolution — declared in "What Is To Be Done?" that revolutionary socialists are the greatest fighters for democracy.

It's outrageous that voting rights can come under attack 70 years after Harriette Moore and Harry T. Moore were bombed in their home on Christmas Day 1951. They were murdered by the Klan for registering Black voters in Florida.

Fifty-eight years ago, Mississippi NAACP leader Medgar Evers was assassinated on June 12, 1963. Mississippi Gov. Ross Barnett embraced Evers' assassin at his trial. Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp is just a latter-day version of Barnett.

A few months after Evers was murdered, Malcolm X delivered his famous speech, ["The Ballot or the Bullet"](#) on April 3, 1964. Malcolm X pointed out that dozens of members of the U.S. Congress were there only because Black people couldn't vote.

The 14th Amendment called for these Dixiecrats to be expelled from Congress but the Democratic Party leaders refused to do so. They even refused to seat Fannie Lou Hamer and other Black members of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at the 1964 Democratic Convention.

It was the Black freedom struggle that won voting rights for all people. The 26 million people who demonstrated for George Floyd will not have their votes stolen.

If the capitalists don't want us to use the ballot, they may force people to use the bullet.



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## Only the people can find the truth

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 1, 2024

The U.S. House of Representatives didn't bolt its doors on March 4 because of a holiday. It was shut down by threats of a replay of the Jan. 6 fascist assault by Trump supporters.

On March 8, the trial of the Minneapolis cop Derek Chauvin began for the murder of George Floyd. People around the world saw the video of Chauvin keeping his knee on George Floyd's neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, killing the Black man.

Floyd screamed "I can't breathe" as Chauvin's fellow officers did nothing. They're just as guilty for George Floyd's murder.

Why was there no response by the Pentagon to the fascists in the U.S. capitol for 3 hours and 19 minutes? That's as much of a crime as the violence committed there.

Even the Washington Post, owned by Amazon union-buster Jeff Bezos, wants to know. Bezos' newspaper posted both an editorial and an opinion piece on March 3.

The [op-ed by Post columnist Dana Milbank](#) was entitled, "Did the Pentagon wait for Trump's approval before defending the Capitol?" The title of the [Post's editorial](#) was "The Pentagon delayed three hours in sending troops on Jan. 6. It still hasn't given a good reason."

What happened in Washington on Jan. 6 was a deliberate stand-down. It was like how police in Anniston, Ala., let Klansmen have 15 minutes to maim and attempt to kill the Freedom Riders on May 14, 1961.

The Black and white Freedom Riders were traveling together to protest Jim Crow segregation. Their bus was burned 80 miles from where Bezos is now spending millions to crush a union drive at the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Ala.

The federal government has an obligation to stop racist mob violence. Instead it broke strikes dozens of times, like the 1894 Pullman railroad strike, led by socialist leader Eugene Debs.

President John F. Kennedy's administration didn't investigate the links between Klan terrorists and racist elected officials. J. Edgar Hoover's FBI collaborated with local police to attack the freedom movement and slander Dr. King.

Hoover later pushed for assassinating Black Panther Party leaders, like Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in Chicago, as seen in the film "Judas and the Black Messiah."

We can't trust the capitalist government to investigate its own thugs among the

police and military brass. The Pentagon lied about [Lt. Gen. Charles Flynn's role](#) in tardily responding to D.C. National Guard Maj. Gen. William J. Walker's request for emergency assistance.

Charles Flynn is the brother of Trump's former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, who called for Trump to declare martial law in order to overturn the election results. Were these two brothers acting together on Jan. 6?

Only an independent People's Commission of Inquiry into the Jan. 6 assault can find the full truth about this fascist conspiracy.



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## **14th Amendment: a tool Congress should use to oust neo-Klan Reps and Senators**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 1, 2024

In the aftermath of the ferocious January 6th attack on the Capitol building as well

as the vote by most of the Republican House members and many of their Senators to discard the Electoral College result and allow Trump to retain power in a coup d'état, the Democratic leadership quickly drew up an article of impeachment against Donald Trump, chief instigator of this violent "insurrection."

However, President Biden, rather than condemning those Reps that voted before and even after the violent attack to disenfranchise voters in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. has signaled his message of "unity" and "bipartisanship" with those racists. The majority of Republican Senators have already voted that the impeachment of Donald Trump is "unconstitutional" because their delay tactic for opening the trial allowed Trump to leave office unscathed.

This makes Trump's acquittal a foregone conclusion. So Trump and his Congressional minions, who engineered the Capitol attack by falsely proclaiming the election "stolen", smearing Black people and officials in Detroit, Philadelphia, Atlanta and elsewhere as "illegal voters", face no consequences. Only a small fraction of the neo-Klan mob that rampaged through the building, threatening to shoot or kidnap Speaker Pelosi, Congresswomen Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, among others, and even to hang chief Trump minion Vice-President Pence, quite justly face trial.

This does not have to happen, even within the confines of the capitalist legal system, designed to be a brutal police state for the oppressed, while at the same time a "protective bubble" for the billionaire class and its political minions, whose crimes of corruption and exploitation are meant to be rewarded rather than punished.

### **The 14th Amendment: A tool to fight the Ku Klux Klan**

After the Union victory in 1865 in the Civil War, the Black "freedmen" and "Unionists" in the South came under relentless attacks from the newly formed terrorist Ku Klux Klan, made up largely of ex-Confederate soldiers and political

leaders. Black political meetings in Memphis and New Orleans were attacked, with dozens killed.

President Andrew Johnson, who blamed this reign of terror on the newly freed slaves themselves, moved to quickly allow the Southern states back into the Union under the control of ex-Confederate officials.

A small but powerful Abolitionist group in Congress, called the “Radical Republicans”, who had already engineered the passage of the 13th Amendment of the Constitution that outlawed slavery, composed the 14th Amendment to deal with this crisis and prevent the slavocracy from taking back power. The text of this amendment has five sections (source - Wikipedia):

**Section 1.** *All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.*

**Section 2.** *Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the Executive and Judicial officers of a State, or the members of the Legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.*

**Section 3.** *No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may, by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.*

**Section 4.** *The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.*

**Section 5.** *The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.*

Section 1 makes clear that all persons, including Black people, born, or naturalized in the U.S., are citizens, to be treated equally by the law. Section 2 makes it clear that it is unlawful to deny citizens the right to vote (unless, for example, they participated in the Confederate “rebellion”). This was written **before** the 15th Amendment, which gave all men the right to vote in all the states.

**Section 3 has the greatest implications for the current situation. It declares that any public official who was “engaged” with the Confederate “insurrection, shall never be permitted to hold public office, unless two-thirds of each house of Congress agrees to it. This excluded not only Confederate officers, but all the Confederate political leaders.**

Section 4 declares that all debts incurred by the Confederacy are “illegal and void”. Section 5 states that Congress has the power to enact legislation to enforce this amendment.

This Amendment was used by Congress and the Grant administration to not only smash the first iteration of the Klan, but also to allow the election of hundreds of Black local, state, and federal officials from the South, including Congressmen and Senators, replacing those racist white ex-Confederate officials.

Unfortunately, particularly after the Great Panic of 1873, the reformers within the capitalist class lost their clout, and with the racist “Compromise” of 1876, the northern and southern capitalists came to terms, Union troops were pulled out of the South, and the Southern ruling class was able to impose its horrible Jim Crow regime. But the 14th Amendment is still on the books. And it has been used to advance Civil Rights, women’s rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and more.

### **The timidity of the Democrats and the right of workers and the oppressed to have justice.**

It is clear that the Democratic Party leadership will acquiesce to the acquittal of Trump, and the Biden spirit of “bipartisanship” will prevail with the racist, Trumpist Republican Senators and Congressmen who acted to overturn the votes of 81 million people, in support of a violent fascist neo-Klan insurrection openly designed to do just that.

Why is that? It is because they are too afraid to offend the section of the billionaire class that supports Trump, as well as the other members of that class that opposes Trump because he has created massive disorder in the midst of the pandemic, yet want to keep the growing fascists militias in their “back pocket” in the face of the powerful Black Lives Matter movement that is challenging the power of their racist murderous police.

But there is a pathway for the workers and oppressed to decapitate the leadership of this right-wing turn. Whatever the outcome of the impeachment trial, we can demand Congress enact legislation under Section 5 of the 14th Amendment that:

- Declares the violent attack on January 6th an insurrection with the proclaimed purpose to disenfranchise voters in several key states.
- Using Section 2 to declare unlawful Trump and the Congressional Trumpists attempt to disenfranchise the voters in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin
- Using Section 3 to declare that Trump can never hold public office again, and
- Using that same section, to declare that all Representatives and Senators who voted to overturn the electoral college results after the insurrection were in fact declaring that they were engaged in that insurrection, and thus must be removed from their seats and never be permitted to hold public office again.

There can be no compromise, no “bipartisanship”, with any of these Trumpists, since as the Amendment says, they violated their oath to the Constitution and defacto supported this white supremacist insurrection, the most serious since the Civil War. Such legislation would only require a majority vote in each house. Even the threat of passage could have a profound effect.

These neo-Klan militias and their representatives in Congress are a threat to all working people, particularly at a time when nearly 450,000 people have lost their lives to the Covid-19 disease, millions have lost their jobs, millions are threatened with foreclosures and evictions, all while 660 billionaires are stashing trillions in their vaults from their Wall Street stock speculations.

We have a right to use every tool at our disposal, even legal demands, to defeat these threats to our welfare and that of our families.

Source: [Fighting Words](#)



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# **Minnesota takes to the streets on Inauguration Day to demand a People's Agenda**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 1, 2024

Minneapolis - More than 200 people gathered near South High School in Minneapolis, January 20, to demand a People's Agenda that immediately reverses the policies of Trump and meets the demands of working people, immigrants and oppressed nationality communities. The protest rally started with the chant, "Indict, convict, send those killer cops to jail! The whole damn system is guilty as hell!"

Meredith Aby-Keirstead, a member of the MN Anti-War Committee, welcomed the crowd, "The Anti-War Committee and the Climate Justice Committee along with a coalition of many other organizations wanted to join together to say we are not

going home. Today, we are in the streets to send a loud and clear message to Biden from day one we need change. We are tired of the status quo and we are here to make demands on Biden. He is making a lot of promises and we will hold him accountable.”

Throughout the rally and march, many groups spoke about these issues and put demands on Biden and all elected officials.

Autumn Lake from the Anti-War Committee emphasized, “One thing is abundantly clear: the U.S. war machine will not stop with the departure of Trump. Biden has already stacked his cabinet with foreign policy officials that are committed to continuing the U.S.’s destructive campaigns of intervention and war. The Democrat’s own legacy of war and intervention continues with the inauguration of Joe Biden. We’re going to stay in the streets and keep fighting for an end to U.S. wars, no matter who is calling the shots.”

“Defeating Trump is a victory for everyone concerned about justice,” said Austin Dewey from the Climate Justice Committee, “but Biden’s track record shows that he is unwilling to make the radical changes needed unless there’s pressure from a strong people’s movement.”

Jaylani Hussein, the executive director of the MN chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations, rallied the crowd on the importance of staying in the streets, “They [the powers that be] want you to be scared to come out. But we are going to continue to be out in the streets until we get justice for all the stolen lives, until we bring back equality in all of our communities, until we free the wrongfully incarcerated, and until we protect water and our land from corporate greed that continues to rob people.”

With the chant of “Who’s streets? Our streets!” the marchers took to the streets, followed by a 50-car caravan down Lake Street to the former site of the 3rd Precinct

police building, which was set ablaze during the George Floyd uprising this past summer.

Marching down Lake Street, people chanted, “Take it to the streets and fuck the police! No justice, no peace” and “Too many stolen lives, we refuse to close our eyes.”

Speaking on the need for a people’s agenda, David Gilbert Pederson of MN Workers United stated, “As the elites gather in Washington to celebrate the changing of the guard, working-class people all across America are still in the trenches fighting a war against U.S. empire, fighting a war against the COVID-19 virus, fighting a war against greed and austerity, fighting a war against police brutality, against deportations, against pipelines through indigenous lands, and a battle of against horrors of American capitalism.”

Monique Cullars-Doty, representing Black Lives Matter MN, was the last to address the crowd before they marched back to South High School, “It’s great to be out here, we have to be out here. The people in power don’t care about us, they don’t care about people who don’t have a voice. We want justice for all the stolen lives. An important thing I do is to work in solidarity and come out to support other movements because we all are connected. We have to remember that. We can’t do it alone and you shouldn’t have to do it alone. This for all us to get together in the face of injustice. Now that we have Biden in office, we must remember who this man is, a father of mass incarceration. We want our people free.”

As the march was leaving the 3rd Precinct, Jae Yates, one of the emcees and an organizer with Twin Cities Coalition for Justice 4 Jamar, said, “Every time I see this place, I remember all of us together, watching it burn. It was a beautiful moment.”

The rally was initiated by the Anti-War Committee and the Climate Justice Committee. It was endorsed by AFSCME 34, AFSCME 2822, AFSCME 3800, Black

Lives Matter Twin Cities Metro, Brown Berets MN, Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR-MN), Families Supporting Families Against Police Violence, Good Trouble for Justice, Justice4MarcusGolden, May Day Books, Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee, MN Peace Action Coalition, MN Workers United, MN Youth for Justice, Native Lives Matter, Nukewatch, Racial Justice Network, Students Against Pipelines, Students for a Democratic Society at UMN, Student Movement Activists of South High (SMASH), Twin Cities Coalition for Justice 4 Jamar, Twin Cities Peace Campaign, UMN Climate Strike, Veterans for Peace Chapter 27, Welfare Rights Committee, Women Against Military Madness, and others.

Source: [FightBack! News](#)



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## **Was Trump ousted from the military chain of command?**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 1, 2024

An unprecedented development took place during the Jan. 6 coup attempt at the

Capitol building in Washington and in the days immediately after. It has big implications for people's democratic rights, as well as the expansion of U.S. military power in relation to civilian government bodies, and thus great importance to all workers and oppressed people fighting for their rights here and around the world.

Yet it has been carefully hidden from public view, with only a few veiled mentions in the most authoritative capitalist media.

It was first reported in a bulletin on the New York Times website's scrolling "Live Updates" on the Capitol attack. At 8:31 p.m. on Jan. 6, a short, four-paragraph article written by White House correspondent Maggie Haberman and Pentagon reporter Helene Cooper said, ["Trump rebuffed initial requests to deploy the National Guard to the Capitol. Pence gave the go-ahead."](#)

That day, pro-Trump white supremacists, led by a cadre of retired and off-duty military and police personnel, invaded the halls of Congress, egged on by President Donald Trump's call to overturn the results of November's election. The attempted coup sent elected officials inside scrambling for safety, including Vice President Mike Pence.

"President Trump initially rebuffed and resisted requests to mobilize the National Guard to quell violent protests at the Capitol, according to a person with knowledge of the events," Haberman and Cooper wrote.

"In the end, it was Vice President Mike Pence, defense and administration officials said, who approved the order to deploy. It was unclear why Mr. Trump, who is still technically the commander in chief, did not give the order.

"The order was initiated with the help of Pat A. Cipollone, the White House counsel, among other officials, according to the person with knowledge of the events.

"The Army activated 1,100 troops of the D.C. National Guard, an Army official said

Wednesday, and Virginia's governor dispatched members of the Virginia Guard along with 200 Virginia State Troopers to quell the violence in the nation's capital. The troops were sent to the D.C. Armory to be deployed to the Capitol and to other points around Washington."

Congress reconvened after the attackers were dispersed. They ratified Joe Biden's election victory in the wee hours of Jan. 7.

Given the day's dramatic events, most readers wouldn't have noticed Haberman and Cooper's fleeting update, or have given it a second thought if they had. But the implications for the U.S. political system are great.

Why? Because Vice President Pence, whose own life was put in danger by his boss, had overruled Trump on deploying National Guard troops in the capital city.

In U.S. states, it is the governor that calls the shots when deploying the National Guard. But the city of Washington, D.C. — a majority Black, super oppressed city — is akin to a colonial possession, not a state. Washington's mayor, city council and other local officials do not have any say in deploying the National Guard. The only person with that power is the commander in chief of the U.S. military: the U.S. president.

How then was it possible for Pence to deploy the troops, in opposition to Trump?

### **More evidence emerges**

Sometime after the initial report was posted, the Times' bulletin was updated to include this additional paragraph, which has the character of a blatant attempt to explain away what happened:

"Kash Patel, the chief of staff to Chris Miller, the acting defense secretary, responded: 'The acting secretary and the president have spoken multiple times this

week about the request for National Guard personnel in D.C. During these conversations, the president conveyed to the acting secretary that he should take any necessary steps to support civilian law enforcement requests in securing the Capitol and federal buildings.”

But the following day, more details emerged about the seeming break in the military chain of command. This information was buried deep in a Washington Post article under the headline, [“After inciting mob attack, Trump retreats in rage. Then, grudgingly, he admits his loss,”](#) written by the Post’s White House Bureau Chief Philip Rucker and two other reporters.

“As a mob of Trump supporters breached police barricades and seized the Capitol, Trump was disengaged in discussions with Pentagon leaders about deploying the National Guard to aid the overwhelmed U.S. Capitol Police, according to two people familiar with the talks.

“Vice President Pence worked directly with acting Defense Secretary Christopher C. Miller and the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, Gen. Mark A. Milley, as well as with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), concerning the unrest at the Capitol and military deployments, the people said.

“As for Trump, one of the people said, ‘he was completely, totally out of it.’ This person added, ‘He made no attempt to reach out to them.’”

This is important because it indicates that not only Vice President Pence and Pentagon officials, but also Democratic Party congressional leaders Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer and Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell were involved.

In a decision to break the military chain of command mandated by the U.S. Constitution, this makes sense. As speaker of the House of Representatives, Pelosi

would be next in line as acting president if Pence were incapacitated.

### **Hidden from the masses**

That Trump should be removed as commander-in-chief of the world's most powerful imperialist military machine is indisputable. It should have happened long ago.

But the problem, from the point of view of the class interests of the workers and oppressed, and of people's democratic rights generally, is how it was done.

Rather than invoke the 25th Amendment of the Constitution, which allows the vice president and a majority of the Cabinet to remove the president if they are unable to carry out their duties, the chain of command was broken behind the backs of the people, in secret.

Was there time to invoke the 25th Amendment during the crisis? Of course, we are not privy to the details. But it is indisputable that by the time the National Guard was mobilized on Pence's orders, the immediate danger was over and various local and federal police agencies had successfully cleared the far-right mob from the Capitol.

Even if the situation was so dire that the authoritative elected officials felt that it was impossible to follow constitutionally mandated procedure, they could have explained this publicly afterward while moving ahead to officially remove the president. But this didn't happen either.

Instead, Pence, Pentagon and White House officials, and congressional leaders of both capitalist parties have covered up what really happened.

### **The impeachment show**

Two days later, on Jan. 8, [Trump made a statement](#) condemning the Capitol attack,

in which he falsely stated that “I immediately deployed the National Guard and federal law enforcement to secure the building and expel the intruders.” Unusual for Trump, he read from a carefully worded script prepared for him in advance.

The same day, House Speaker Pelosi [wrote a letter](#) to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and spoke with its head, Gen. Mark Milley, about “available precautions” to prevent Trump from unilaterally ordering a nuclear strike or other military attack during his last two weeks in office.

Milley was said to reassure Pelosi of the many safeguards in place by which military personnel could refuse to carry out such an order if they felt it was illegal.

On Jan. 12, the House of Representatives formally requested that Pence invoke the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office. As expected, Pence refused, and the following day the House voted 232-197 to impeach Trump for “incitement of insurrection.” His impeachment trial in the Senate is not expected to begin until after Joe Biden’s inauguration on Jan. 20.

All of these developments amount to a show put on for public consumption and to assuage the anger of Congress members and others whose lives were endangered on Jan. 6.

The available evidence clearly indicates that Trump was removed from his role as commander in chief by the evening of Jan. 6, with the involvement of the Pentagon generals, Vice President Pence and congressional leaders.

A widely reprinted Jan. 15 Los Angeles Times article appeared under the title, [“Trump retreats from his job, and Pence fills the void as ‘acting’ president.”](#) While the article doesn’t explicitly address the military chain of command, it reports how Pence has taken on the role of visiting and thanking the thousands of National Guard troops deployed in the capital ahead of the Inauguration.

## **What's the quid pro quo?**

Why was Trump allowed to remain president for two weeks after the coup attempt, until his term expires at noon on Jan. 20?

Because, as Struggle-La Lucha has previously explained, Trump doesn't only represent himself, but a significant and increasingly desperate group within the capitalist ruling class that has deep roots in the state apparatus — that is, in police agencies and the military itself.

In removing Trump from the military chain of command, it was necessary to make a deal — not only with Trump, but with the class forces he represents. This is what makes the behind-the-scenes character of the events especially dangerous.

Some aspects of the deal are obvious. Trump read a scripted statement condemning the Capitol attack and didn't publicly expose his removal from the chain of command. In exchange, he was allowed to serve out the rest of his term without being removed under the 25th Amendment, which could have immediately subjected him to arrest for his role in the coup attempt.

Trump will instead be seen off with pomp and circumstance on the morning of Jan. 20 before flying to his base of operations at Mar-a-Lago in Florida.

The bigger question is: What guarantees and deals were made with the fracking billionaires and other Trump backers, who have been pushing for war with Iran to drive up their profits?

Whatever deal was made to subvert the military chain of command could paradoxically increase the danger of a U.S. war with Iran, Venezuela or other oil producing countries, to appease the pro-Trump bosses.

## **Militarism breeds fascism**

It's also important to ask what the Pentagon brass got out of the deal.

Trump appointed several loyalists to key positions in the "Defense" Department and National Security Agency after his election loss. No doubt they played key roles in various coup schemes and scenarios, including the Capitol attack. But so far, no one is officially asking questions about that — only about [individual military personnel and police](#) who participated in the assault.

There is instability inside the Pentagon, just as there is in all U.S. capitalist political institutions. The year 2020 saw the greatest mass uprising against racism in generations after the police murder of George Floyd. Then came a violent racist backlash by the police and neofascist groups, which culminated in the events of Jan. 6.

Trump and his backers pushed hard to involve the military in domestic repression, beyond the militarization of local police that has gone on for decades under Republicans and Democrats alike. His first [coup attempt on June 1, 2020](#), included direct involvement by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Milley, who later got cold feet.

At the same time, the global capitalist economic crisis, in tandem with the pandemic, is pushing the bosses toward ever more desperate measures to save their system. Historically, military expansion and war is their go-to solution.

That a struggle ensued inside the Pentagon for days after the Jan. 6 coup attempt is shown by the fact that it took another six days — until Jan. 12 — for the [Joint Chiefs to issue a statement](#) condemning the Capitol attack, affirming Joe Biden as the incoming commander-in-chief and reminding military personnel of their obligation to uphold the Constitution.

Only then, when the Pentagon had spoken, did the FBI and other sources begin to reveal the true intentions of the leaders of the Capitol assault to capture and execute

Pence and members of Congress, the key role of military and police personnel, etc.

This was also the cue for an extraordinary military occupation of Washington by [25,000 National Guard troops](#), repressive agencies and police departments from across the U.S. While this massive armed presence may deter another fascist incursion at the Inauguration, it could also expose the ongoing instability within these state forces — perhaps violently so.

The occupation certainly poses a threat to the oppressed residents of D.C. It is unlikely that the military will retreat from the streets after Biden is sworn in.

The colossal expansion of the U.S. military, police and prisons over the last 40 years has been the breeding ground for the growth of the fascist movement in the U.S. Further expansion of military power won't stem the tide of fascist violence. It will hasten it.

An independent people's investigation of the Jan. 6 coup attempt is urgently needed. At the top of its agenda must be to uncover and expose the deals that were cut behind the backs of the masses to stave off the collapse of the crisis-ridden U.S. political system.

Impeach the Pentagon and the police state!



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# Trump and the Pentagon in coup attempt

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 1, 2024

Make no mistake about it: Trump and the Pentagon played key roles in the Jan. 6 coup attempt at the Capitol in Washington, D.C.

The Pentagon was deeply involved. Members of the U.S. military, both active and veterans, as well as from numerous police forces across the country, were leading participants. But that fact is being quickly covered up.

Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D-NJ) recognized it: “We can’t have a democracy if too many members of our police and our military are acting to overturn it and undermine it,” Sherrill said in a video posted on Facebook.

Sherrill knows the military. She was a U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander serving at the U.S. Navy command center in Europe before she became a Congress member.

Sherrill also said that Congress members gave “reconnaissance” tours” the day

before the Capitol raid. “I was told later that members of that mob had zip ties, were wearing body armor and were looking to take prisoners … members of Congress.”

Many at the scene observed the military character of the assault on the Capitol.

A Black officer in the U.S. Capitol Police who was on duty during the attack [told BuzzFeed News](#):

“That was a heavily trained group of militia terrorists that attacked us. They had radios, we found them, they had two-way communicators and earpieces. They had bear spray. They had flash bangs … They were prepared. They strategically put two IEDs, pipe bombs, in two different locations. These guys were military trained. A lot of them were former military,” the officer said.

[The Appeal reports](#) that least 28 sworn members of U.S. law enforcement agencies from at least 11 states have been identified by law enforcement agencies and local reporting as attendees of the Jan. 6 rally.”

The [“Insurrection Timeline – First the Coup and Then the Cover-Up,”](#) published at “Moyers on Democracy,” details the central role played by Donald Trump and his new Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller.

Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser asked Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy — who reports to Miller — for more federal help to deal with the mob that had broken into the Capitol. McCarthy and Miller denied the mayor’s request and blocked deployment of the National Guard until hours later, after the insurrection had already been put down.

From the “Insurrection Timeline”: “Who is Christopher Miller?

“By Nov. 9, every news organization declared that former Vice President Joe Biden had won the election. On that day, Trump fired Acting Secretary of Defense Mark

Esper and replaced him with Miller, an Army retiree who worked for a defense contractor until Trump tapped him as his assistant in 2018.

“Miller’s promotion began a departmental regime change that embedded three fierce Trump loyalists as top Defense Department officials: Kash Patel (former aide to Rep. Devin Nunes (R-CA)), retired army Gen. Anthony Tata (pro-Trump Fox News pundit) and Ezra Cohen-Watnick (former assistant to Trump’s first national security adviser, Mike Flynn).

“At such a late date in Trump’s presidency, many asked why the shake-up at the Department of Defense? We may be learning the answer.”

