Coronavirus surges in U.S.: Capitalism is the crisis

By Greg Butterfield

July 1 — As a consequence of bosses’ rush to “reopen the economy” for profit amidst the global COVID-19 pandemic — and the unwillingness or inability of bought-and-paid-for political “leaders” to stand up to their demands — infections and hospitalizations are surging throughout much of the United States. During late June, the rate of confirmed infections reached new highs every single day. The U.S. death toll now tops 127,000.

The surge of infections has especially engulfed states in the South and West, like Texas and Florida, whose leaders, following the lead of President Donald Trump, largely ignored measures to slow the spread and then quickly dropped any pretense of protecting public health as pressure to “reopen” grew from Wall Street right on down to the small capitalist on the corner.

California is another epicenter of the virus surge. That state had earlier taken relatively strong measures, but like other Democratic-governed states, caved in to capitalist pressure and began dropping public health measures at the end of May. Now, other states like New York, which had slowed the spread but is now barreling ahead with reopening amid the surge in the rest of the country, could soon face a new spike.

Appearing before Congress on June 30, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases director Dr. Anthony Fauci, stated that he would not be surprised if the surging rate of infections in the U.S. reached 100,000 per day. Currently, it is around 40,000. Experts say that this is not primarily a result of increased testing — which is around 40,000. Experts say that this is not primarily a result of increased testing — which is not wholly adequate in much of the country. In fact, Trump bragged at his poorly attended campaign rally in Tulsa, Okla., on June 20, that he had ordered that testing be slowed down.

Demand for testing is growing in the most affected states and far outstrips supply, even months into the pandemic. On July 1, the Washington Post reported “unprecedented demand for testing with lines stretching miles in the summer heat, supplies running out and medical workers left exhausted” in cities like Phoenix, Ariz., and Austin, Texas.

The rest of the world is watching, dumfounded, at the utter criminality and ineptitude of the U.S. ruling class and its officials. On June 30, as the European Union prepared to lift travel restrictions, it announced that people from the U.S. would not be permitted to visit because of the lack of control over the coronavirus here.

From panic to profit-driven ‘reopen’

There has not been a clear or consistent policy to combat the spread of the virus at the federal, state or local levels — just a hodgepodge of half-measures and no measures.

When it was finally acknowledged in March that the virus was quickly spreading, projecting

Socialism & Dignity

A job is a right!

By Stephen Millies

Over 20 million workers are unemployed in the United States. That’s a catastrophe. Joblessness hasn’t been this high since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Extended unemployment benefits under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act are set to expire July 31. The various state moratoriums on evictions and utility shut-offs are also scheduled to end soon.

What are people supposed to do then? COVID-19 infections are spiking in Arizona, California, North and South Carolina, Florida, and Texas.

Even when this pandemic ends, or at least slows down, many of the lost jobs are not coming back.

That doesn’t bother Larry Kudlow, President Trump’s $155,000 per year director of the National Economic Council. He thinks “recessions are therapeutic.”

This millionaire collects $3,557 a week from the feds but doesn’t want to extend the $600 per week federal unemployment benefit. Kudlow claims it’s a “disincentive” that will discourage people from going back to their jobs.

So people are staying home because they’re lazy? The continuing pandemic and massive job destruction have nothing to do with it?

Larry Kudlow is what white privilege looks like. He was fired from Wall Street’s now shuttered Bear Stearns bank in 1994, because of his cocaine addiction. But Kudlow never had to worry about being arrested for drug possession.

Lee Otis Johnson, the Black leader of Houston’s Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) chapter, wasn’t so lucky. He was framed in 1968 for allegedly having one marijuana joint and sentenced to 30 years in prison.

It was fear of what 6 of 9 millions of suddenly jobless workers might do that forced Trump and Congress to cough up $600 per week and a stimulus check, too.

The millions of people who are marching in the streets, chanting “Black lives matter!” are why unemployment benefits may be extended and an other stimulus check mailed out.

Why can’t everyone have a job?

Before it was destroyed, in the socialist Soviet

Demand what we need

5

Queer liberation, Colombia and Venezuela

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Outrage in Compton

BY JOHN PARKER

Los Angeles, June 21 — Today, outrage can be heard on the streets regarding the decision by the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department to place any findings by the coroner regarding the shooting death of sheriffs of 18-year-old Andrés Guardado on a “security hold.” That means the information could be withheld from the public for years. This, while the city of Compton and politicians including Reps. Maxine Waters and Nanette Díaz Barragán demanded that the state attorney general conduct a full investigation into the killing.

On Thursday, June 18, Andrés Guardado, working as a security guard at an auto body shop in Compton, was approached by police who drew their weapons, frightening the youth, who reportedly ran and ended up getting shot with 6 rounds of bullets from sheriff’s deputies. Some witnesses reported that Andrés was on his knees with his hands behind his head when he was shot.

The cops, of course, have another story and rely on their being in possession of the security cameras and the DVR that recorded the incident, and the fact that none of the sheriffs had body cameras recording the brutal assault, so they can spin whatever version of reality they like. However, the family of Guardado are demanding the footage.

The day after the shooting, Friday, June 19, there was a vigil held in front of the auto body shop with the family, including Guardado’s mother, father and cousins. The vigil was initiated by Unión del Barrio.

On Sunday, June 21, Unión del Barrio and the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice held a car caravan two weeks prior in protest of the

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tions of 100,000 or more deaths sent Washington and Wall Street into a panic. It was too late for areas like New York City and California where the pandemic was already out of control. But at last some stay-at-home measures were implemented in late March. But already in early April, the capitalist class — the bosses, bankers and landlords who hold true power over U.S. society — overcame their initial panic and decided that workers must be dragged back to their jobs. To keep this massive contagion or no, even as those same bosses laid off millions of others. They were more fearful of the capitalist crisis of overproduction that coincided with the pandemic, and were determined to scrap up whatever profits they could on the backs of the workers.

By the beginning of May, the mod- est measures to control the virus’s spread were beginning to fail across- wayside in most of the country. Only those early centers of the health crisis — New York City and New Jersey — the victims were largely Black and Brown people and elders — main- tained or strengthened public health measures. And by the Memorial Day holiday at the end of the month, those too were being loosened.

The virus spread in meat-process- ing plants in the Midwest and South, in Amazon warehouses, in newly reopened churches, restaurants and bars. The White capitalists and politicians alike flouted regulations meant to enforce mask wearing, social distancing and other safety practices. At meat-processing plants, mid- dle-class white “consumers” to do likewise.

The president — who can hardly be described as anything but a vi- rus himself — gleefully ignores any state or local public health measures that would inconvenience him, the very picture of a wealthy oligarch who has a team dedicated to protecting his own health. We will see now are the perfectly predictable and preventable conse- quences of a system that prioritizes profits above all.

U.S. capitalism, the wealthiest em- pire that has ever existed on planet Earth, could have pumped trillions to the Moderna, Pfizer and other drug companies. It could have done that to win any kind of effective measures to combat the surging coronavirus and stop the pandemic from claiming tens or hundreds of thousands of more lives. But that's not what capitalism is for. On the scale of the George Floyd pro- tests and beyond, inescapably linked with the increasing threat of most racist ter- ror, is urgently needed.

Capitalism is the crisis. In the bat- tle for public health, protests, uprisings, strike and socialism will be the solution!

Outrage in Compton
Justice for Andrés Guardado!

Continued from page 1

George Floyd killing in Minneapolis. Roe, who led the motorcycle con- tingent, said the group would con- tinue to work together to fight this and to protect the Black people of the city. The police car caravan two weeks prior was also initiated by Unión del Barrio and the Harriet Tubman Center and was led by Witness Justice.

The Human Rights Alliance for Child Refugees and Families, Frente Indigena de Organizaciones, the National Lawmakers, and the North Sou- west, the Human Rights Alliance for Child Refugees and Families, Frente Indigena de Organizaciones, the National Lawmakers, and the North Sou- west, the Human Rights Alliance for Child Refugees and Families, Frente Indigena de Organizaciones, the National Lawmakers, and the North Sou- west.

In that vein, organizers at the June 21 march stressed demands that would inspire a direction that em- powers especially Black, Brown and Indigenous peoples towards their right to self defense against the cops and for the disarming and abolish- ing of cops and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Enforced disappearances and the demands echoed off of the streets and homes along the route with activists on the sound truck behind the En- forcement truck. At the police chief’s headquarters facing off against the militarized armed cops, the sound truck was the place where speak- ers gave powerful talks.

Rebecca Jackson of the Socialist Unity Party exposed the connection between the billionaires and the capitalists and the police they own. Jackson reflected on her recent visit to Minneapolis to report on the pro- tests there and about her much take- away from that experience was that the tremendous power of the people can be really realized only when we orga- nize and join an organization.

For the next couple of hours, marches, strikes and socialism will be the solution!
We must demand what we need

By John Parker

While this is happening now (from TIME magazine).

“On Wednesday, the George Floyd Resolution to Eliminate the Oakland Schools Police Department passed 7-0. The district will eliminate its police department by the end of the year and hire more social workers, psychologists or ‘restorative justice practitioners.’ In the coming months, the district will work with students, parents, teachers, and the BOP [Black Organizing Project] to create a new school safety plan. ... The public school board in Minneapolis voted on June 2 to terminate its contract with the city’s police department in response to Floyd’s death. Schools leaders in Portland, Ore; Denver and Seattle have since made similar decisions.”

Okay, are we supposed to be happy about the Los Angeles Unified School District rejecting the 90 percent cut and instead cutting just $25 million from their budget? The school police chief is resigning and told his cops to not show up at the schools, exposing how much these pigs care about our safety. Then they say they are essential to it.

So, the demand to take away some of the cops’ funds overshadowed the defeat of the cuts. Meanwhile, the current and winnable demands to abolish these armed and dangerous cops from threatening and terrorizing our Black and Brown children in school and replace them with appropriate and more effective guar- dians of their safety. That’s what happened, and is happening everywhere in the country where defund- ing is the only and main demand, sidestepping the demands to dis- band; or abolish and replace; or impose community control. The weak-
er demand that was accepted leaves the cops ready for their next kill.

Some demands create reforms that empower our class and others create demands that disempower our class and allow the status quo to remain. When a new police chief for the LAUSD is found, the cops will be once again roaming the school halls with guns at the waist and at eye level of our children. We must demand what we want and not just what is palatable to the ruling class. The ruling class is desperate to find a way to soften the effects of the militancy in the streets that is now making changes at the speed of light. Let’s not help them turn off the light.

#communitytakeover
#abolishthepolice
#communitycontrol
#weownthestreets
#communitypolice
#communitytakeover
#communitycontrol

What to a prisoner is the Fourth of July?

By Muminu Abu-Jamal


“At a time like this, scorching irony or convicting argument, is needed. Oh! Had I the ability and could I reach the nation’s ear. I would, today pour out a stream of words, full of ridicule, blasting of approach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed but fire, it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be pierced; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced.

“What to the American slave is his 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him more than all the other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty an unholy mockery; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass-fronted impudence. To the slave your shout of liberty and equality are hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are to him mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety and hypocrisy. I且 your very oath of anWAYS your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are to him mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety and hypocrisy. Your very oath of allegiance, your very respectful acknowledgment of the authority of the crown and the people, your very song of loyalty, are nothing but empty words and phrases, with which you would disgrace a nation of savages! There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices, more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States at this very hour.”

— Frederick Douglass July 5, 1852.

In 1995, Judge Fredrick Douglass speech as he accepted the Liberty medal along with South African President F. W. de Klerk. If the joint presence of Mandela and de Klerk were not enough to stir controversy, then the award presenters, Philadelphia Mayor, Ed Rendell and U.S President Bill Clinton, certainly stoked controversy amongst radicals. Hundreds of Bill and Hillary Clinton supporter while certainly admirers of Mandela, took umbrage at de Klerk’s presence. Although de Klerk the award- ers are known as “We the People—Philadelphia,” the actual everyday people of Philadelphia had lit- tle say in choosing the Liberty medal awardees and less say in rejecting the wide- ly unpopular honoree de Klerk. The choice of Liberty medalists was not made by the people, but by corporate Philadelphia, big business.

Why? Why were the people, many of whom have worked for more than twenty years against apartheid and for Mandela’s release, frozen out, their protests against de Klerk all but ignored? When the African majority takes power in South Africa, U.S big business wants friends there. If one reads the names of corporate spon- sors of the Liberty medal, it sounds like a roll call of the Chamber of Commerce: United Corp, Pennsylvania Bell and the like. Mandela, who has not voted in a government election in 74 years,* and de Klerk, president by way of an election counting only minority, nonblack votes, have only the hope of liberty, no more.

The white minority in South Africa has done its level best to stifle African liberation, from internal and external forces. The African majority even after the awards still isn’t free.

From death row, this is Muminu Abu-Jamal

Reprinted from “All Things Considered,” essays by Muminu Abu-Jamal.

* In 1994, after the first elections during which Black people could vote, Nelson Mandela was elected president of South Africa.

What we mean when we say ‘Defund the police’

By Greg Butterfield

Based on a talk given at a march and rally on Wall Street, June 19, 2020.

Thank you to the comrades of the December 12th Movement for orga- nizing this commemoration of June- teenth and putting some teeth in the call to “Defund the police.”

Millions of people have sincere- ly embraced the slogan “Defund the police.” But the problem is that it is such a vague demand. It can mean anything depending on who is say- ing it. We see pro-cop politicians like Mayor Bill de Blasio talk about “de- funding” the New York Police De- partment. It’s not serious. Defund is only a serious demand for change when it’s combined with demands for community control and to fund peo- ple’s needs instead — to fund a public health system, to pay reparations.

Defunding is not the goal. It’s a first step to the goal.

When we talk about defunding the police, we are talking about dis- arming the police. Take away their weapons. Not just the military har- dware, but their guns, tasers, bat- tons. That would be a serious step to stop the police murder of Black and Brown people.

When we talk about defunding, we don’t mean a small percentage of the budget. We mean take away all of their funding. We mean dismantle the NYPD. On Juneenth, it seems right to remember how the police in the U.S. came into being. They came out of the patrols that chased down escaped slaves. They were created to defend white supremacy and protect private property. Those two reasons are why they still exist today.

The essential workers who have kept us all alive through this pan- demic, the health care workers, all of us, are capable of defending and or- ganizing our own community safety. We say community control as a step toward abolishing the police.

When we talk about defunding po- lice, we don’t just mean the NYPD or police departments across the U.S. We also mean defund the global po- lice of imperialism, the Pentagon. We mean end the wars, close the military bases, bring all the troops home. We mean end the sanctions on Zimbabwe, Venezuela, Iran, Cuba, Korea and many other countries.

The police exist only to protect capitalism, the rule of the rich over the rest of us. The only way to really get rid of the racist police system is to abolish capitalism. The only way to get there is to fight for socialism, for self-determination for the Black nation, for the working and poor people to establish their own forms of government and self-defense. That’s what we mean when we say, “Defund the police!”

July 6, 2020
Queer Liberation confronts police violence

By Greg Butterfield

New York, June 28 — For the second year in a row, the Reclaim Pride Coalition held a protest march on the last Sunday of June, traditionally the day of the city’s massive LGBTQ2S Pride March marking the anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion. This year, according to the coalition, an estimated 50,000 people marched from Foley Square in Lower Manhattan, past the Stonewall Inn and ended in Washington Square Park.

Despite the official Pride parade being cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Reclaim Pride decided that it was essential to mark this year in support of Black-led protests against racist police killings. This year’s protest was proclaimed the “Queer Liberation March on Black Lives Matter and Against Police Brutality.”

Tens of thousands gathered in Foley Square, where many of the city’s climate rallies have been held, including the United States Courthouse, where communists Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were sentenced to death 69 years ago. They marched out past New York City Hall, in support of a weekend-long occupation demanding defunding of the New York Police Department.

Many marchers held signs saying “Black Lives Matter” or proclaiming the role of Black and Brown trans people like Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera in launching the modern struggle for LGBTQ2S liberation. Giant puppet images of Johnson, Rivera and other LGBTQ2S leaders of color overflowed over the colorful demonstration.

Since mass protests began, following the police murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, the NYPD has been on a rampage of brutality. Today was no different. As the march approached Washington Square Park — just a few blocks from the Stonewall Inn — police charged into the crowd, hitting batons, punching and pushing protesters, and using pepper spray. They claimed to be trying to apprehend someone who had written an anti-racist slogan on a police vehicle.

Eventually, the massive, angry

Where are the statues of Viola Luzzo?

By Stephen Millies

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo doesn’t think the statue of Christopher Columbus in New York City’s Columbus Circle should be removed. Cuomo said the statue represents in some ways the Italian American legacy in the country, and the Italian American contribution in this country.

So where are the statues in honor of Viola Luzzo? She was a mother of four children in an Italian American family who was murdered in Alabama on March 25, 1965, by the Ku Klux Klan. Luzzo was supporting the Montgomery to Selma human rights march that led to the Voting Rights Act.

Four Klan members were in the car from which the fatal shot was fired. Two of the Klansmen — Collie Leroy Letherman and Fred J. Weyand — were sentenced to death in the Massachusetts electric chair on Aug. 23, 1927. They were framed for allegedly killing two persons in Scottsboro, Ala. All except 13-year-old Roy Wright were sentenced to death.

In 1936, Pope attended a tribute to Mussolini at Madison Square Garden. At the time, Mussolini was invading Ethiopia, killing a million Africans with bullets, bombs and poison gas. Hundreds of thousands of Africans were also killed in Italian-occupied Libya. Many Italian American workers hated Mussolini. On Aug. 3, 1935, the Rev. Adam Clayton Powell led over 25,000 people who marched in Harlem in solidarity with Ethiopians and the Italian American cause.

Pope was also champion of the Italian American cause. “Communists in Harlem during the Depression” by Mark Naison

Columbus statue in California’s Salinas to be removed. Governors in Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon and Vermont now celebrate Indigenous Peoples’ Day instead of “Columbus Day,” while South Dakota observes Native American Day. Governors in Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, New Carolina and Wisconsin have also proclaimed Oct. 12 as Indigenous Peoples’ Day.

The Connecticut cities of Middletown and New London have removed statues of Columbus, while Hartford and New Haven are doing the same. The Columbus statue in California’s state Capitol is coming down as well. New York Gov. Cuomo should follow their example.

For and against Mussolini

Exposing the crimes of Columbus is no more anti-Italian than being against Mussolini. The fascist dictator came to power as a strikebreaker who had Italian trade unionists beaten and socialists thrown in jail. That’s why he was adored by the ruling class in both the United States and Britain.

In 1937, Winston Churchill said that he was “charmed” when he met Benito Mussolini in Rome. Churlish praise, saying that “it proved the necessary antidote to the communist poison.”

Generoso Pope, the millionaire publisher of Il Progresso, the biggest Italian language daily newspaper in New York City, also thought Mussolini was a “swell guy.” Pope was a prime mover in making “Columbus Day” a federal holiday and was a longtime grand marshall of New York City’s “Columbus Day” parade.

In 1936, Pope attended a tribute to Mussolini at Madison Square Garden. At the time, Mussolini was invading Ethiopia, killing a million Africans with bullets, bombs and poison gas. Hundreds of thousands of Africans were also killed in Italian-occupied Libya. Many Italian American workers hated Mussolini. On Aug. 3, 1935, the Rev. Adam Clayton Powell led over 25,000 people who marched in Harlem in solidarity with Ethiopians. Hundreds of Italian Americans joined the protest. (“Communists in Harlem during the Depression” by Mark Naison)

Mussolini was executed by Italian communist partisans on April 28, 1945. His naked body was hanged upside down in Milan. The statues of Columbus deserve the same fate.

Always remember Sacco & Vanzetti

Where are the statues to honor Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti? The two Italian American anarchist labor organizers were burned to death in the Massachusetts electric chair on Aug. 23, 1927. They were framed for allegedly killing two persons in a 1920 payroll robbery.

Two former FBI agents — Lawrence Weiner and Fred J. Weyand — wrote that evidence exonerating the two Italian American heroes was suppressed. (“Twentieth-century Caesar? The Affair of the Italian Anarchists,” by John F. Neville)

Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted during a period of intense anti-immigrant bigotry. It was a decade when workers on strike were often killed. There was a fascist-like parade of the Ku Klux Klan, including a march of 30,000 through Washington, supported by wealthy bosses and landlords, including Donald Trump’s father.

Trump is building a wall on land stolen from Mexico and refers to Haiti with racist language. The 1924 Immigration Act sought to keep Italians and other workers from Southern and Eastern Europe from coming to the United States. Big Business demanded these restrictions because these workers were on the front lines during the post-World War I strike wave.

This bloody legislation was also deliberately crafted to keep Jewish people out of the U.S. If guaranteed more hundreds of thousands of people murdered in Hitler’s ovens.

It wasn’t a coincidence that this bigoted law was repealed in 1965, the same year that the Voting Rights Act was passed. Viola Luzzo’s martyrdom was not in vain.

Neither were the deaths of Sacco and Vanzetti. The worldwide defense campaign wasn’t able to save their lives, but it helped inspire the successful effort to stop the execution of the Scottsboro defendants.

Nine African American teenagers were arrested in 1931 on phony rape charges in Scottsboro, Ala. All except 13-year-old Roy Wright were sentenced to death.

Black communist leader William L. Patterson — who had fought to save the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti — led the defense campaign that stopped the executions of Olen Montgomery, Clarence Norris, Haywood Patterson, Ozie Powell, Willie Roberson, Charlie Weems, Eugene Williams and Andy Wright.

The real legacy and contribution

Father Jim Groppi should be remembered, too. The Italian American priest fought against racism in Continued on page 5
crowd was able to push back the police. Several people were detained by the police, and several vendors were hounding at a neighborhood fruit stand. Four people were arrested.

Protesters were outraged to learn that at the very same moment that the NYPD was attacking LGBTQ2S people, pro-cop Mayor Bill de Blasio’s Twitter account was sending out “congratulations” to the community!

For decades, Heritage of Pride, the nonprofit organization that heads the official Pride events, has been catering to Big Business and capitalist politicians. Many in the LGBTQ2S community grew weary of the commercialization, promotion of mainstream politics, and unformed police being allowed to march in an event that is supposed to celebrate a rebellion against police brutality.

So last year, Reclaim Pride called for a real protest march on the 50th anniversary of Stonewall. Some 35,000 came out to that historic event.

The real legacy and contribution of this year’s march made it clear: 5,000 U.S. troops to Colombia!

On July 6, 2020, then-White House National Security Advisor John Bolton made sure a notepad that had the words “5,000 U.S. troops to Colombia!” scrawled on it was visible for photographers. Pretending it was inadvertent, he signaled a threat to Venezuela’s President Nicolás Maduro. Three weeks ago, a brigade of specially trained U.S. troops began arriving in Colombia.

The troops are positioned in Bogotá and to the north of the state of Santander, close to the border with Venezuela. The brigade is part of a U.S. Department of Defense plan to send relatively small groups of specially trained U.S. troops and “advisers” along with significant numbers of U.S.-contracted mercenaries, called Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs). They hope to gain an edge in war zones where the imperialist military has been mired down and unable to defeat the people’s resistance. All under the command of U.S. Brig. Gen. Scott Jackson, similar brigades have previously been sent to Afghanistan and to Africa. This is the first in Latin America.

Their mission is touted by Trump and Secretary of Defense Mark Esper as “an enhanced counterterrorism mission.” For two decades the U.S. has used coca production and cocaine trafficking as an excuse to keep troops in Colombia and to supply the Colombian military with billions of dollars and advanced military equipment. The cover story couldn’t possibly be more hypocritical. The U.S. is the world’s largest cocaine market, and U.S. spy groups have been implicated in numerous drug trafficking scandals to finance other illegal operations ever since the 1950-1953 Korean War. The real mission of the SFAB being organized now is part of the overall U.S. plan: to defeat the armed revolutionary struggle in Colombia — the most enduring in Latin America — and to strengthen the Colombian military for an invasion of Venezuela. They aim to overthrow President Nicolás Maduro and destroy the Bolivarian revolutionary process that has given millions of Venezuelan people out of poverty.

The top brass in the U.S. and in the Colombian military don’t do all that much to conceal the true mission. The scam indictment of President Maduro and other leaders in Venezuela was handed down by a U.S. court in April. The indictment draws a phony link between Venezuela’s Bolivarian revolution and the drug trade.

That was meant to strengthen the imperialist narrative that the U.S. is fighting against drug traffickers. It’s easy enough to find more credible language about the true mission.

In the May 28, 2020 issue of Army Times: “U.S. officials have blamed Venezuela President Nicolás Maduro for failing to clamp down on mili
tagroupst and allowing their activities to continue unchecked.” They blame President Maduro for the Colombian revolutionary movement that preceded the Venezuelan revolutionary process by decades. Then, there is the May 2020 issue of Business Insider: “Experts believe the move is actually meant to keep an eye on neighboring Venezuela, where the U.S. has attempted to oust current president Nicolás Maduro.”

A long series of Colombian administrations have kept the Colombian military in the orbit of U.S. imperialism: harassing, trying to politically isolate and serving as a launching pad for violent attempts to end the revolutionary process in Venezuela on behalf of Washington. Just last month, 60 mercenaries that had set off from Colombia in boats with a plan to kidnap President Maduro were captured and arrested. One of their leaders, Jordan Goudreau, had met with Trump and with Secretary of State Pompeo. That was denied by the White House, of course.

The attempted coup was easily defeceted by the Venezuelan military and by a local group of fishers who were armed. The mercenaries were arrested as they landed along the northern coast of Venezuela. But there were additional mercenaries already in Venezuela, waiting for the invading armed unit with arms and vehicles. Over the ensuing weeks, the Bolivarian forces captured them all.

Previous to that, in the summer of 2019, President Maduro revealed that they had foiled another coup attempt that the Colombian government, Israel, and the government of Chile were all backing. John Bolton was named as one of the co-conspirators and was more likely than the driving force. Venezuela operatives had infiltrated their planning meetings and had learned that their plans included the assassination of President Maduro.

Colombian people don’t benefit in the least from their government’s collaboration with the U.S. empire. As COVID-19 has spread through cities and the countryside in Colombia, the poor hang red cloth out their windows as a signal to ask for food donations, or go door to door to ask for food. The government claims it has distributed food that is supposed to alleviate hunger during the pandemic, yet hundreds of thousands are desperately hungry.

By contrast, Venezuela has canceled rent payments and credit card payments, ordered that telecommunications could not be cut off, has banned layoffs and has taken other measures in the face of the pandemic. This is on top of the tremendous achievements in housing, medical care, literacy and other areas since the late President Hugo Chávez wrenched Venezuela from the grip of U.S. imperialism and empowered the Indigenous, Afro-Venezuelans and the poor.

U.S. troops and weapons out of Colombia!
Un Nobel verdaderamente merecido

Por Ángel Guerra Cabrera

Un grupo de importantes per- sonalidades ha propuesto la iniciativa de pedir el otorgamiento del Pre- mio Nobel de la Paz a las brigadas médicas cubanas que combaten la covid-19. A ese propósito, y que a lo- largo de los años han intervenido he- róicamente en el enfrentamiento a numerosos desastres naturales y epidémicos, llega una idea que es muy justa y oportuna pues los médicos internacionalistas cubanos son, en estos tiempos de pandemia, desigualdad externa e insoportable injusticia social, un paradigma difícilmente igualable de solidaridad humana y entrega a la causa de sal- var vidas. Ello, en marcado antago- nismo con el desenfrenado egoísmo de América First enarbolado mo de America First enarbolado, gana para apoyar la propuesta, firmar en www.signapetition.org/cuba-peace

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Cubanos quien han acercado el galardón a los galenos cubanos jun- to a los Premios Nobel Adolfo Pérez Esquivel y Alice Walker, el líder del Movimiento de los Sin Tierra de Brasil João Pedro Stédile, el periodista Iga- cia Ramonet, los actores Danny Glover y Mark Ruffalo, los músicos Chico Buarque, Silvio Rodríguez y Tom Morello, los escritores Luis Brito y James Early y los realizadores Oliver Stone y Pedro Costa. Una campaña de apoyo a la iniciativa ha sido lanzada en Brasil por el teólogo Leonardo Buff y el capítulo brasileño de la Red En- defensa de la Humanidad y existen convocatorias semejantes en Fran- cia, Alemania e Italia. El movimien- to se expande velozmente mientras desde Washington, con Pompeo a la cabeza y un odio irrefrenable, se vi- etan veneno y amenazas contra la cooperación médica cubana un día sí y el otro también. Es natural que a un grupo filoísta, como el que hoy detenta el gobierno en la potencia del norte, le provoque rabia una activi- dad de tan hondo contenido humani- tario. Sin embargo, no hay un acto más digno de un cubano que el que dice Chomsky con un discurso tal cual queda de las vanguardias de América. Un verdadero sacrificio para la humanidad.

Chomsky es precisamente uno de quienes aboga por la entrega del galardón a los galenos cubanos jun- to a los Premios Nobel Adolfo Pérez Esquivel y Alice Walker, el líder del Movimiento de los Sin Tierra de Brasil João Pedro Stédile, el periodista Igna- cia Ramonet, los actores Danny Glover y Mark Ruffalo, los músicos Chico Buarque, Silvio Rodríguez y Tom Morello, los escritores Luis Brito y James Early y los realizadores Oliver Stone y Pedro Costa. Una campaña de apoyo a la iniciativa ha sido lanzada en Brasil por el teólogo Leonardo Buff y el capítulo brasileño de la Red En- defensa de la Humanidad y existen convocatorias semejantes en Fran- cia, Alemania e Italia. El movimien- to se expande velozmente mientras desde Washington, con Pompeo a la cabeza y un odio irrefrenable, se vi- etan veneno y amenazas contra la cooperación médica cubana un día sí y el otro también. Es natural que a un grupo filoísta, como el que hoy detenta el gobierno en la potencia del norte, le provoque rabia una activi- dad de tan hondo contenido humani- tario. Sin embargo, no hay un acto más digno de un cubano que el que dice Chomsky con un discurso tal cual queda de las vanguardias de América. Un verdadero sacrificio para la humanidad.

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