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Indict Amazon for murder!

By Stephen Millies

The death of six workers at an Amazon warehouse in Edwardsville, Illinois, during a Dec. 10 tornado didn't have to happen. Workers died because Jeff Bezos is too cheap to build safe buildings.

The Amazon founder has a \$202 billion fortune. A day after the Edwardsville tragedy Bezos had one of his Blue Origin rockets lift off the launch pad.

Bezos is spending a billion dollars a year on his space toys. Workers' safety is another matter.

The Edwardsville facility, located 25 miles northeast of St. Louis, was built in a tornado alley. Between 1991 and 2011 four storms roared through the area with speeds of at least 136 mph. The Dec. 10 tornado was just as severe.

Like many warehouses — as well as Walmart, Home Depot and Target stores — the big box buildings are fabricated using “tilt-up wall construction” to save money. Concrete panels weighing dozens of tons are held together by the roof.

But if the roof is blown away the panels will fall and crush anyone underneath. That's what happened in 2014 to a Home Depot in Joplin, Missouri, where eight people were killed. The same thing occurred in Edwardsville.

The only emergency shelter available to workers in the Amazon warehouse were the bathrooms. Concrete blocks fell in one of them and crushed a worker to death. The warehouse employees received virtually no emergency training.



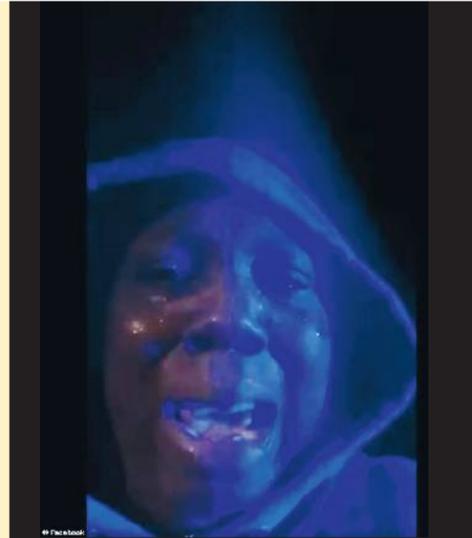
Kyanna Lou, one of the workers trapped at a candle factory in Mayfield, Kentucky.

Larry Virden, one of the workers who died, texted his partner that “Amazon won't let us leave.” He left behind four children.

Lack of concern for workers' health and safety is a company tradition. Fifteen workers collapsed during a 2011 heat wave at an Amazon warehouse in Breinigsville, Pennsylvania, 11 miles from Allentown.

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

The Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama — where Bezos spent millions to stop a union organizing drive — is another potential deathtrap. It too sits in a tornado alley.



Kyanna Lou begging for help, saying 'the wall is stuck on me' and that nobody can get to the factory to assist them.

Candle factory deathtrap

On the same day that six workers died in Edwardsville, another tornado killed eight workers in Mayfield, Kentucky. They made candles at the Mayfield Consumer Products factory.

Some of the workers who were rescued were found buried alive. Survivors are furious that the company didn't cancel the evening shift despite warnings that tornadoes were likely to strike the area.

Starting wage at this sweatshop located in Western Kentucky is \$8 per

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What right does the Supreme Court have to rule?

By Lallan Schoenstein

On Dec. 1, the U.S. Supreme Court heard the arguments from U.S. state attorneys supporting Mississippi's 15-week abortion ban.

A state law was passed in Mississippi in 2018 that would make most abortions illegal after the first 15 weeks of pregnancy — including those caused by rape. The Mississippi law hasn't yet been enforced due to a legal challenge by Mississippi's only abortion provider, the Jackson Women's Health Organization.

The Supreme Court is now considering the case.

The most conservative judges — including Donald Trump-appointed anti-woman bigot and serial abuser Brett Kavanaugh — pressed forward to raise the stakes to possibly overturning *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 decision that established a constitutional right to abortion.

Another Trump appointee, Justice Amy Coney Barrett, stated her position during the hearing: Why was abortion necessary, when women who do not

want to be mothers can simply give their babies up for adoption? Thereby, Barrett was arguing for cruel legislation that bans abortion for those who have been raped, whose health or the baby's health is at risk or a myriad of other legitimate issues, the most primary being control over one's own body.

As a member of the Indiana religious organization People of Praise, Barrett has served as a lay pastoral women's leader known as a “handmaid.” Barrett is a millionaire—among the richest of rich justices, with a lush income from the Catholic Church's Notre Dame Law School—and this removes her from the concerns plaguing most peoples' lives.

One of three judges in the minority supporting women's constitutional rights, Justice Sonia Sotomayor, asked whether the court would survive the stench of being considered a political institution, a point echoed by Justice Elena Kagan. Their attempt to defend a critical right to healthcare also implied support for the legitimacy of the Supreme Court.



What right does the Supreme Court have?

The U.S. Supreme Court was established 232 years ago by the U.S. Constitution with the passage of the Judiciary Act of 1789. At that time the U.S. Constitution did not extend equal rights to people kidnapped from Africa, the Indigenous population, oppressed

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Women's March in Washington, D.C., Oct. 2.



Who gets to claim self-defense?

By Stephen Millies

How did Kyle Rittenhouse justify killing anti-racist activists Anthony Huber and Joseph Rosenbaum, as well as wounding Gage Grosskreutz in Kenosha, Wisconsin? This white racist vigilante who worships Trump and the police claims that he was merely defending himself.

The right of self-defense was also claimed by Kenosha cop Rusten Sheskey for shooting Jacob Blake seven times on Aug. 23, 2020, leaving him paralyzed. The shooting of Blake, a Black father of seven children, led to the anti-racist protests in Kenosha.

Kenosha County District Attorney Michael Graveley refused to press charges against Sheskey. U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland declined to prosecute.

Four New York City police officers claimed self-defense when they fired 41 bullets at Amadou Diallo. The unarmed African immigrant was killed in the Bronx on Feb. 4, 1999. New York Gov. George Pataki moved the trial out of the Bronx to assure the cops' acquittal.

Sean Bell was killed by police on what was supposed to be his wedding day on Nov. 25, 2006, in the New York borough of Queens. After firing 50 shots at the unarmed Black man, the police claimed self-defense.

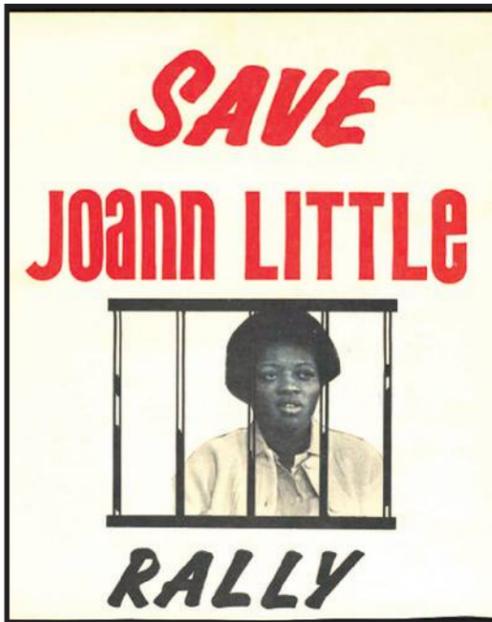
They were acquitted in a non-jury trial by Judge Cooperman.

Judge Schroeder in Rittenhouse's trial might as well have been his defense attorney.

Self-defense was the excuse for Cleveland cop Timothy Loehmann for killing 12-year-old Tamir Rice. The Black child was carrying a toy gun.

So was 13-year-old Nicholas Naquan Heyward Jr., who was playing cops and robbers in Brooklyn's Gowanus Houses on Sept. 27, 1994. Officer Brian George saw the toy gun and killed the honor student. The cop wasn't even indicted since this too was allegedly "self-defense."

Even the vigilantes who killed the Black jogger Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia claimed to be acting in



The people's movement fought to save Joann Little, a Black woman prisoner who killed a white prison guard rapist in self-defense.

self-defense. It was only because the Black community mobilized that these lynchers were convicted.

No right of self-defense for oppressed

Every legal system admits that people have the right to defend themselves. This right was never meant to apply to the oppressed.

Those who were enslaved didn't have the right to defend themselves against their slave masters. Serfs didn't have the right to self-defense against serf owners.

Celia was a 19-year old enslaved African who was continually raped by the Missouri slave master Robert Newsom since she was 14. Her two daughters were born because of these rapes.

Newsom crawled into Celia's cabin one last time on June 23, 1855. Celia defended herself with a stick, killing Newsom. Celia was indicted for murder for defending herself while she was pregnant.

Circuit Court Judge William Hall instructed the all-white jury that "if Newsom was in the habit of having intercourse with the defendant who was his slave and went to her cabin on the night he was killed to have in-

tercourse with her or for any other purpose and while he was standing in the floor talking to her she struck him with a stick which was a dangerous weapon and knocked him down, and struck him again after he fell, and killed him by either blow, it is murder in the first degree."

The jury found Celia guilty and the judge sentenced her to be hanged. Celia escaped but was recaptured. After her child was born stillborn, she was hanged in Fulton, Missouri, on Dec. 21, 1855.

One hundred twenty years later, Joann Little was acquitted of killing the white prison guard who attempted to rape her in North Carolina. The imprisoned Black woman took Clarence Alligood's ice pick and defended herself with it.

Even though Alligood's body was found naked from the waist down, Little, who had escaped, was declared an "outlaw." This allowed police to kill her on sight. The prosecutor claimed Little had lured Alligood to her cell.

Like the mobilization to secure justice for Ahmaud Arbery, it was only because people organized that Joann Little was declared not guilty. This was the first time that a woman was found not guilty on grounds of self-defense for defending herself against rape.

Never forget Sammie Osborne!

No Indigenous person was ever given the right to defend themselves against the U.S. government that was committing genocide against them. President Abraham Lincoln had 38 members of the Dakota Sioux Nation hanged on Dec. 26, 1862, in Mankato, Minnesota.

Killer cops always claim that they had to make split-second decisions to save their lives. On the Sunday morning of Aug. 17, 1941, the Black sharecropper Sammie Osborne had to make a split-second decision in Barnwell County, South Carolina.

The day before his white landlord, William Walker, had forced him to work at gunpoint despite Osborne having an injured foot. Now, the drunken Walker barged into

the shack where Osborne had been sleeping.

He beat the 18-year-old sharecropper with a stick that he held in one hand while holding a .32 caliber pistol in the other. Seeing that his life was in mortal danger, Osborne grabbed a shotgun and killed Walker.

There was no right to self-defense for Sammie Osborne. According to the 1940 census, Barnwell County had a 64% Black majority population. But a jury of 12 white men found Osborne guilty.

Sammie Osborne was sentenced to death by Strom Thurmond, who later became South Carolina's governor and ran as the presidential candidate of the States' Rights Party in 1948.

Thurmond spent 48 years in the U.S. Senate as its most notorious racist. His friend, Joe Biden, spoke at his memorial service.

After being resented to death by another judge, the now 20-year-old Sammie Osborne was strapped in South Carolina's electric chair on Nov. 19, 1943. As the electrodes were placed on his head, Osborn's last words were, "I'm ready to go because I know that I am not guilty."

The next year, 14-year-old George Stinney Jr. was burned to death in the same electric chair.

The acquittal of Kyle Rittenhouse gives a license to kill for every other white racist vigilante. All those who defend Rittenhouse, like Jimmy Dore or The Militant "socialist news-weekly," put themselves on the side of white supremacy. 📌

Work should not be a death sentence

Multiple murders is what what happened on Dec. 10 at the Mayfield Consumer Products factory in Mayfield, Kentucky. and the Amazon warehouse in Edwardsville, Illinois.

This is murder, capitalist murder — as Frederick Engels pointed out in his "The Condition of the Working Class in England":

"When one individual inflicts bodily injury upon another such that death results, we call the deed manslaughter; when the assailant knew in advance that the injury would be fatal, we call his deed murder. But when society places hundreds of proletarians in such a position that they inevitably meet a too early and an unnatural death, one which is quite as much a death by violence as that by the sword or bullet; when it deprives thousands of the necessities of life, places them under conditions in which they cannot live — forces them, through the strong arm of the law, to remain in such conditions until that death ensues which is the inevitable consequence — knows that these thousands of victims must perish, and yet permits these conditions to remain, its deed is murder just as surely as the deed of the single individual; disguised, malicious murder, murder against which none can defend himself, which does not seem what it is, because no man sees the murderer, because the death of the victim seems a natural one, since the offense is more one of omission than of commission. But murder it remains." 📌

Indict Amazon for murder!

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hour with forced overtime. Workers are hired for 10-hour and 12-hour shifts.

Many of the workers are immigrants. Seven employees on the evening shift were prisoners from the local jail.

Survivors filed a class-action lawsuit because they were threatened with firing if they left work early because the tornados were coming.

Factory worker Elijah Johnson told CNN that he was told by a foreman that he would be fired if he left.

"I said, 'Man, you're going to refuse to let us leave, even if the weather is this bad and the tornado's not here yet?'" recounted Mr. Johnson. "He was like, 'If you want to decide to leave, if you want to leave, you can leave, but you're going to be terminated. You're going to be fired.'"

Behind the death of eight workers at the Mayfield factory are chain stores like Bath and Body Works that

purchase the candles. To these criminals the Christmas rush is more important than human lives.

Chairman emeritus of Bath and Body Works is the billionaire Leslie Wexner, who was a close associate of the late sexual predator Jeffrey Epstein.

Capitalism = death

To capitalists profits come first before safety. In 1869, 110 mostly Irish coal miners were burned alive at the Avon Mine in Plymouth, Pennsylvania. The owners refused to build a second entrance that would have allowed the miners to escape.

In 1911, Italian and Jewish young women jumped to their deaths at the Triangle Shirtwaist factory rather than be burned alive. One hundred forty-six workers were killed because the owners locked the doors in the building at Greene Street and Washington Place in Manhattan.

In the early 1930s, hundreds of

mainly Black workers were killed by silicon dust in building the Hawks Nest tunnel for Union Carbide in West Virginia. Fifty years later a leak at Union Carbide's pesticide factory in Bhopal, India, killed as many as 8,000 people.

In 1991, 25 workers choked to death in a Hamlet, North Carolina, chicken plant whose owner locked the doors.

Capitalist global supply chains kill more workers. In 2013, some 1,134 workers died when their garment sweatshop collapsed in Dhaka, Bangladesh. That's eight times the number of workers who were killed at Triangle Shirtwaist.

None of these disasters had to happen. They were all the result of capitalist greed.

The best way to remember those who were killed in the recent tornados is to organize. If the Amazon and Mayfield workers had a union to protect them, they could have walked off the job to save their lives. 📌

Stop Kellogg's strikebreaking!

By Stephen Millies

The 1,400 workers on strike against Kellogg's since Oct. 5 are fighting for all workers. Members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM) are battling the company's two-tier system of wages and benefits.

The cereal killers who run Kellogg's don't believe in equal pay for equal work. Newly hired workers — called “transitional employees” by the company — are paid around \$12 dollars less per hour than “regular” full-time workers but have to pay more for health insurance. Forget about pensions.

Kellogg's forced workers to accept two-tier in 2015 under threat of closing two of its cereal plants, including the one in Memphis, Tennessee. The year before, management illegally locked out workers in the city where Dr. King was assassinated.

Lower paid transitional workers now account for 30 percent of the workforce. Kellogg's wants to be able to increase their number while still denying them retirement benefits.

Unequal wages for the same work harms solidarity between workers while Kellogg's ran to the bank with \$1.76 billion in profit last year. It's to the credit of workers with more seniority and higher pay that they voted down Kellogg's contract proposal that would continue this rotten inequality.

Among them was Marvin Rush, an electrician and member of BCTGM Local 252G in Memphis who spoke to Jason Kerzinski of the “Progressive” magazine. “We are out here fighting against the two-wage system,” said Rush, “and for the next generation

of workers to have the same pay and benefits.”

Kellogg's doesn't believe in an 8-hour work day and a 40-hour work week either. Forced overtime is a rule, with many union members working 72-to-84-hour work weeks.

“The worst is when you work a 7-to-7 and they tell you to come back at 3 a.m. on a short turnaround,” said Omaha BCTGM Local 50G President Daniel Osborn in an interview with Stephen Rodrick at Rolling Stone. “You work 20, 30 days in a row and you don't know where work and your life ends and begins.”

In the runup to the strike Kellogg's stopped hiring workers to replace those that retired or quit. According to Osborn there were “times during COVID when we were 100 workers under what we should have.”

Many union members think Kellogg's did this to reduce the number of workers picketing to prevent scabs and strikebreakers from entering the plant.

Thank you Venezuela!

The workers at Kellogg's feed millions. The cornflake capitalists showed how much they appreciate these essential workers by announcing they're hiring 1,400 strikebreakers to smash the union.

When Kellogg's placed ads on social media for “replacement workers,” union supporters across the country flooded the company with phony résumés that gummed up recruitment.

Workers are on strike in Battle Creek, Michigan; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Memphis, Tennessee; and Omaha, Nebraska. They're engaged in a David vs. Goliath struggle.

The 1,400 union members at these

four plants are pitted against a corporation with worldwide sales of \$13.8 billion. Kellogg's has 46 manufacturing facilities in 19 countries on six continents.

With inflation soaring by 6.8%, Kellogg's offered only 3% annual wage increases. Meanwhile Kellogg's CEO Steven Cahillane's pay package is \$11,663,832. That's 279 times the typical salary of workers.

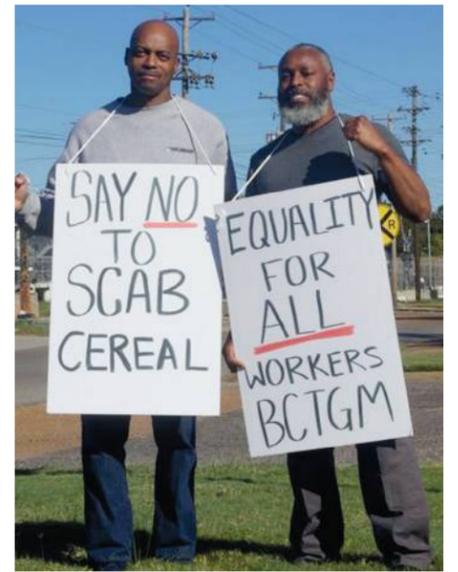
President Biden said that he was “deeply troubled” by Kellogg's attempted recruitment of strikebreaking mercenaries. Talk is cheap, Mr. President.

As the commander in chief of the armed forces, Biden could order the Pentagon to stop purchasing Kellogg's cereals and snack products.

Contrast President Biden's words with the actions of President Nicolás Maduro Moros of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. President Maduro supports the workers who took over the Kellogg's plant in Maracay City in May after they were locked out over a weekend. Milton Torres, a longtime worker, is the new factory president.

As FightBack! News reported, the workers now call the plant “Socialist Kellogg's” and are continuing to help feed people in Venezuela. “The basic principles of our socialist enterprise are to dignify the work of our working class, increase the levels of production, guarantee that the equipment is highly maintained, produce good quality products, in a fair price and to be a self-sustainable company to contribute to the economic development of the country,” said the plant's union president, Orlando Contreras.

Just as these strikers are fighting for all poor and working people, so is



Jimmie Archie and Marvin Rush.

the company's strikebreaking being carried out for the billionaires and banksters.

Boycott Kellogg's!

Wall Street wants the workers defeated and humiliated. That's the answer of the one percent to millions of workers who want union protection, union wages, union health benefits and union pensions.

In 1887, the Haymarket Martyrs — labor leaders George Engel, Adolph Fischer, Albert Parsons and August Spies — were hanged in Chicago for demanding an eight hour work day. It's outrageous that over 130 years later, workers are forced to work 72 and 84 hour weeks.

Compulsory overtime is not only dangerous and life-draining. It also prevents the hiring of young workers.

The few hundred strikers at each of the four cereal plants are not only up against Kellogg's. They're up against all the super-rich yacht and private jet owners.

The strikers need our support. Don't buy scab cereals and other Kellogg's products. Victory to the workers! 📌

John Deere strike victory is a win for all workers

By Scott Scheffer

Ten thousand John Deere workers in five states, represented by the United Auto Workers, have won their five-week strike against the giant equipment manufacturer. The victory is unequivocal.

Their strike began during what was popularly called “Striketober,” when tens of thousands of workers walked out in strikes across the country. Exhausted and angry after being overworked and more underpaid than ever during the pandemic, strikers at unionized workplaces big and small are refusing more concessions.

The win at John Deere stands out as one that breaks from the pattern established by at least 40 years of anti-union offensive, exacerbated by the pandemic. It is the most significant union victory for a private sector workforce in years.

The success of the John Deere strikers was buoyed, at least in part, by dozens of other strikes and job actions.

During the five-week strike, the union members rejected two company offers before accepting a proposal. They won substantial wage increases and an \$8,500 bonus,



Striking John Deere workers picket in Davenport, Iowa, Oct. 14.

regained quarterly cost-of-living adjustments that were lost in the 2015 negotiations, held on to their healthcare paid 100% by the company, and improved pensions, including those for new hires.

Workers' rights to organize and fight back have been so eroded over the decades that Deere management negotiators were drunk with success. They thought they could continue to gain ground against their workforce as they have in past years.

The company's first offer of a 5% wage increase — less than the rate of

inflation — also proposed lowering pay hikes and axing pension plans for new hires. John Deere has used the two-tier wage system to beat down wages for more than 20 years.

The first offer was rejected by a whopping 90%. A second offer came closer on pay — an immediate 10% hike, 5% more in 2023 and 2025, an \$8,500 bonus and adding back quarterly cost-of-living adjustments.

It must have shocked the John Deere bosses that even their second offer, although a great improvement, was rejected by a 55% majority.

Over the years, the agricultural and heavy equipment company has been rewarded with government bailouts and tax credits as they shed workers by the thousands.

Like Amazon, Walmart and others, Deere — a Fortune 500 company — has profited from the suffering during the COVID-19 outbreak. The company's 2021 net income is projected to be \$5.9 billion. CEO John May received a 160% raise, bringing his pay to \$15.6 million. All of this contributed to John Deere workers' determination to turn things around.

After the second offer was voted down, support for the strike only grew. People from across the Midwest and from a variety of unions joined picket lines. A poll conducted by the Des Moines Register showed a spike in support of unions in general during the strike.

Unable to get the workers to buckle and with no prospects of finding 10,000 skilled equipment builders, John Deere was forced to make an offer that met most of the workers' demands and lifted the prospects for the entire working class. On Nov. 17, an agreement was reached and accepted by 61% of the membership.

Full report at tinyurl.com/y6hos4ud

Labor leader calls for action to free Mumia Abu-Jamal

On Dec. 9, the Free Mumia webinar began with a message from political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has been unjustly imprisoned in the U.S. for 40 years. Mumia, a journalist who was Minister of Information for the Black Panther Party in Philadelphia before he was framed-up, spoke about the U.S. military-industrial complex. The call was moderated by Gabriel Bryant and Sophia Williams.

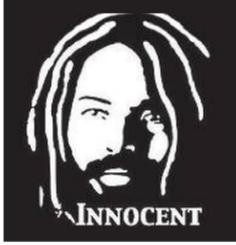
Clarence Thomas is a retired rank-and-file union leader who was part of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10's effort to free Mumia for over 30 years. He is also author of the anthology "Mobilizing in Our Own Name: Million Worker March." As the first speaker, Thomas established the historic roots and breadth of the worldwide campaign to free Mumia and all U.S. political prisoners. There was protest in Philadelphia to "Free Mumia!" on Dec. 11.

— Lallan Schoenstein

Call to Action: For international workers' action – Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and all anti-racist and anti-imperialist freedom fighters!

Statement by Clarence Thomas

Dec. 9, 2021



The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) has a long tradition of defending oppressed nationalities and political prisoners, such as Angela Davis in the 1970s. As a retired member and officer of ILWU Local 10, I have been a part of the Local's efforts to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners. For more than 30 years, the ILWU has been in the vanguard of the labor movement to free the award-winning journalist, "the voice of the voiceless" and former Black Panther Party member, Mumia Abu-Jamal.

In my recent anthology, "Mobilizing in Our Own Name: Million Worker March," there are many articles by Mumia that are featured, documenting his support of all labor (organized and unorganized), including ILWU Local 10 and the Million Worker March. Mumia describes himself as "a proud card-carrying member of the National Writers Union which affiliated with the United Auto Workers." During his forty years of imprisonment, his support for labor and the working class has been unwavering.

During the 1960s, the Black Liberation Movement awakened my political and social consciousness along with countless other Afro-American

youth. I joined the Black Panther Party which facilitated my anti-racist, anti-capitalist, and anti-imperialist activism and the need for Afro-Americans to have "self-determination."

Declaring the Black Panther Party "public enemy number one," the U.S. government sanctioned the murder of its leaders, vilified the organization in the press, and falsely imprisoned Party members. Mumia Abu-Jamal has always maintained his innocence of the murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner.

There are Black Panther Party members that were a part of the Black Liberation movement who have been languishing in prison for more than half a century. Native American political prisoner Leonard Peltier has been imprisoned since 1977. The horrific imprisonment and the abuse of these political prisoners represent the long legacy of slavery, Jim Crow, apartheid, and racial violence perpetrated against African Americans.

The labor movement can and must play a vital role in the release of all political prisoners. The ILWU recognizes that the prosecution of radical labor leaders such as Tom Mooney and Harry Bridges is directly connected to efforts by the U.S. government to use lies and frame-ups to put away these fighters for freedom and justice that was promised yet denied to African Americans and people of



PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

ILWU in 1999 protest for Mumia.

color in the U.S.

The ILWU Longshore Division shut down the entire West Coast in 1999 to demand: "Stop the Execution and Free Mumia!" On June 19 (Juneteenth), 2020, the ILWU shut down all 29 ports on the West Coast including Vancouver, Canada, to commemorate Juneteenth, to End Systemic Racism, and to Stop Police Terror. No maritime cargo was moved for 8 hours on the entire West Coast. This solidarity action on the part of West Coast dockworkers represents the power of labor at the point of production. It is this type of action that labor must find the courage to exercise on a global level to bring home Mumia Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners.

"An Injury to One is an Injury to All"
"Free Mumia Abu-Jamal"

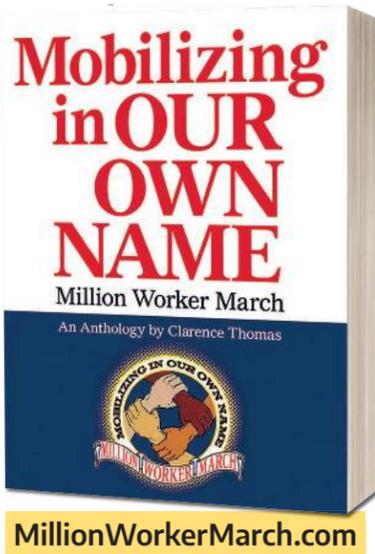
Clarence Thomas

ILWU Local 10 retired

Co-founder Million Worker March

Author of 'Mobilizing in Our Own Name: Million Worker March'

MillionWorkerMarch.com



MillionWorkerMarch.com

Organizers against police crimes meet: 'We have nothing to lose but our chains'

By Kobi Guillory

Chicago — Two years after the refounding of the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression (NAARPR) in November 2019, over 125 NAARPR members and affiliates from around the country convened for the second NAARPR conference in Chicago starting on Saturday, December 4. They shared updates about their work fighting against police crimes and for community control of the police, among other areas of struggle, then voted on resolutions and new leadership for the next two years.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic the conference was attended only by delegates from NAARPR chapters and affiliated organizations. The plenary sessions on the first day of the conference were livestreamed on the Chicago NAARPR Facebook page so people who could not be there in person could participate virtually.

Saturday morning began with an opening plenary on the purpose of the conference and the work of NAARPR. The meeting was facilitated by NAARPR co-chair Michael Sampson. Delegates heard speeches from SEIU HCII President Greg Kelly and NAARPR executive director Frank Chapman, as well as a video state-

ment from Angela Davis, a leader of the original NAARPR. Davis stressed that the fight to free political prisoners is an ongoing part of the struggle against systemic racism.

SEIU HCII played a key role in this fight by putting the strength of their 90,000 members behind the Empowering Communities for Public Safety legislation in Chicago, the most progressive police accountability ordinance in the country, and a step towards community control of the police. Kelly cited the murders of Michael Brown and Laquan McDonald as reasons why his union was motivated to get involved in the fight for police accountability.

Chapman spoke on the necessity of the alliance between community organizations like NAARPR and unions like SEIU, saying "the objective is to build the biggest, baddest mass movement this country has seen in a long time."

The floor was then opened for delegates to report on the work their chapters have done over the past two years. Many spoke about the uprising in the wake of the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, the most massive uprising in U.S. history. NAARPR affiliates organized protests of tens of thousands of people in various cities around the

country, including cities like Jacksonville, Florida, which had never seen protests of that size before. Other initiatives described by delegates included fighting for justice with the families of people killed by the police, successful efforts to cut police budgets, actions in solidarity with anti-imperialist movements, campaigns to free survivors of police torture and wrongful conviction, defenses of protesters against political repression, and struggles for community control of the police.

The rest of the first day consisted of a plenary on community control of the police, one breakout session discussing the fight against political repression, one breakout focusing on the importance of the families of those killed or harmed by the police in the struggle, and a final plenary session summing up the lessons learned during the opening day of the conference.

The wide variety of speakers demonstrated the progress NAARPR has already made towards building the mass movement.

Sunday's sessions focused on electing new leadership and voting on the actions NAARPR would resolve to take over the next two years. Delegates voted on seven resolutions: to defend and expand voting

rights, to free political prisoners, to defend the right of immigrant families to stay together by fighting deportations, to free Alex Saab from the political repression of the U.S. empire, to continue to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian liberation struggle, to support the Filipino people's fight against U.S.-backed terror, and to build class struggle unionism. Delegates then ratified the NAARPR bylaws and formally elected the officers and executive board of the National Alliance. The leadership reflects the Black led, multigenerational character of the organization.

Delegates left the conference expressing feelings of pride in the work done since NAARPR's refounding two years ago, as well as optimism and excitement for the years ahead building the movement for community control of the police across the U.S. Monique Sampson, co-founder of the Jacksonville Community Action Committee and newly elected NAARPR national desk secretary, led the delegates in a chant written by freedom fighter and former political prisoner Assata Shakur: "It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love and protect one another. We have nothing to lose but our chains."

Source: FightBack! News

No support for Ukrainian Rittenhouses! Hands off Donbass, Belarus and Russia

By Greg Butterfield

Why is President Joe Biden's administration laser-focused on threatening war on the other side of the world, when the people of the United States are beset with life-threatening crises here at home?

Racist killer Kyle Rittenhouse was just acquitted, emboldening violent white supremacists across the U.S. Women's reproductive rights are under attack in many states and at the highest summit of the Supreme Court, which may soon overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

The COVID-19 pandemic is surging again, with the Delta and Omicron variants threatening new waves of death and further taxing the country's awful, mismanaged private healthcare system. Workers' rights are under attack from Amazon, Kellogg's and bosses across the board. The climate crisis continues to wreak havoc coast-to-coast.

These are a few of the life-and-death problems Biden needs to address. Workers and oppressed people did not give him their votes to start a war with Russia.

Biden's administration claims that 70,000 Russian troops guarding their country's Western border are a great threat to neighboring Ukraine. Seventy thousand Russian troops, that is, stationed on **Russia's own territory**.

On Dec. 3, Jeff Bezos' Washington Post, long an unofficial Pentagon mouthpiece, promoted a "declassified assessment" by national security officials claiming that Russia plans to invade Ukraine with 175,000 troops by the end of January.

This is at least the third time **this year** that Ukrainian and Western officials have made such a claim about an alleged Russian invasion. What sets this time apart is that the story started in Washington, not Kiev.

Last spring, NATO held its largest-ever war games in Europe, in regions bordering Russia, acting out scenarios that are now being promoted on computer and TV screens around the world.

The U.S. military has at least 750 military bases in 80 countries and hundreds of thousands of personnel stationed around the world. The U.S. spends more on its military than the next 10 countries combined. The Pentagon kills with impunity whenever and wherever it claims to see a threat to "U.S. national security" – whether in Africa or Western Asia or Latin America – destabilizing countries, often taking civilian lives intentionally or as "collateral damage."

Over the last 30 years, the U.S.-dominated NATO military alliance has steadily expanded eastward, swallowing 14 countries in Central and Eastern Europe, including several on Russia's Western borders. This despite a promise by the U.S. to Russia that NATO would not expand after the Cold War.

Ukraine is among three countries in the running to join NATO next. The U.S. first promised Ukraine NATO membership in 2008 if its government would join the anti-Russia crusade. Russia has made it clear that a NATO takeover of Ukraine is a

"red line" that threatens its sovereignty and security which must not be crossed.

Ukraine threatens Donetsk, Lugansk

Biden's spokespersons don't mention that up to 125,000 Ukrainian troops – half its total military! – are massed on the borders of the independent Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, small countries sandwiched between Ukraine and Russia. Ukraine has been at war with them since 2014.

Ukraine claims these countries as its own territory, despite an overwhelming popular vote in a democratic referendum in favor of independence.

Ukraine is a party to the internationally-negotiated Minsk II agreements, which prohibit it from targeting civilians, using heavy weapons against the Donetsk and Lugansk republics or invading. Yet Ukraine shells and shoots at the 140,000 inhabitants of frontline areas constantly, causing daily deaths, injury and destruction. Washington and Kiev deliberately block any progress toward a negotiated settlement.

Ukraine's war on the Donbass republics has gone on for seven and a half years, and has cost more than 14,000 lives.

The real danger of invasion is from Ukraine against Donetsk and Lugansk. Since 2014, Ukraine's military has been trained, armed and reorganized by the U.S., Britain, Canada and other NATO countries. That includes the neo-Nazi "volunteer battalions" integrated into its official military structure.

The people of Donbass suffer under a complete economic blockade by Ukraine and its Western allies. Russia has provided humanitarian aid and trade to Donetsk and Lugansk at great cost, supplemented by support from antifascist organizations in the former Soviet countries and the rest of the world.

A Ukrainian invasion of Donetsk and Lugansk would aim for maximum damage to infrastructure and civilian casualties – in hopes of provoking a military response from Russia. Then NATO would claim a "Russian invasion" to justify its war moves.

Antifascist resistance

Why did people in eastern Ukraine's Donbass mining region choose independence? It happened after a U.S.-engineered coup brought a far-right-wing government to power in Kiev in 2014.

The coup was carried out by fascist gangs that were then set loose on the people of Donetsk and Lugansk and integrated into Ukraine's military and security forces.

The U.S. wanted to bring NATO to Russia's border then and there. Most of all, Washington wanted to seize the strategic military base on the Crimean peninsula, which would give NATO control of the Black Sea. The people of Crimea rejected that. So did the Russian government.

In Soviet times, Russia ceded Crimea to Ukraine, with a long-term Russian lease on the military base. In 2014, the Crimean people voted to



return to Russia, and Russia agreed, thwarting the U.S. takeover of this strategic area.

Over 26 million Soviet people died fighting the Nazis in World War II. Seventy years later, they were not willing to live under neo-Nazi rule.

All of this happened during the Democratic Obama administration. Both Democrats and Republicans supported the far-right takeover of Ukraine and lied about a "Russian invasion" when the people of Donbass and Crimea asserted their right to separate.

And who was the Obama administration's point person on Ukraine? Who was calling the shots and handing out profitable favors to family members and business associates?

It was none other than Vice President Joe Biden.

Biden-Putin call

Biden held a widely-publicized two-hour secure video call with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Dec. 7. Biden threatened harsh economic sanctions, including cutting off Russia from the global banking system, as the U.S. has done to punish Iran.

Putin reiterated the Russian government's consistent position that NATO expansion into Ukraine is a "red line" for Russia's security. He said he hoped for further negotiations.

Why is Washington taking such a provocative stance toward Russia and making these threats now?

Big U.S. energy companies and banks want to stop the international Nord Stream II project that is set to bring Russian natural gas to Western Europe. U.S. capitalists are desperate to control energy profits and suppress any energy-supplying countries that defy Wall Street control – like Iran, Venezuela and Russia. U.S. companies want their European junior partners to buy energy from them and them alone.

That's the immediate play. But the U.S. has had its eyes on carving up the Russian Federation since the fall of the Soviet Union 30 years ago. A Pentagon document leaked in 1992 laid out a long-term plan to rip apart Russia, destroy its sovereignty and make it a docile market and supplier of raw materials and skilled labor for Western big business. That's still the goal.

And then there's the fact that Biden and the Democrats are deeply mired in political crisis at home – unable to meet the basic needs and demands of the workers and oppressed people who they claim to

represent, because they are beholden to the very capitalist system that thrives on racism, poverty and war.

Provoking a war is a time-honored U.S. method of distracting the masses of people in a time of great crisis.

Belarus, then Ukraine, next ... ?

The U.S. "warnings" (really, war propaganda) about a Russian invasion of Ukraine followed immediately on the heels of the November border crisis between Belarus and Poland.

Thousands of refugees from Western and Central Asia and North Africa, fleeing the wreckage of U.S.-European wars in their homelands, went to Belarus, seeking to enter the European Union through Poland. The U.S.-dominated Polish government refused to let them through. The EU countries supported Poland in this gross violation of international human rights.

Polish troops mobilized at the border and abused refugees. The right-wing regimes in Lithuania and Ukraine also sent troops to the border with Belarus. None of this could have happened without NATO's (and therefore, Washington's) express consent and encouragement.

Belarus is an ally of Russia. The countries recently strengthened their military ties after an attempted Ukraine-style coup failed in Belarus. The events on the Polish border had all the earmarks of NATO trying to provoke a war crisis.

The EU countries refused to even hold a conversation about the refugees. Finally, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko put his foot down. He said that if Poland and its allies provoked a war, Belarus would stop the flow of fuel oil to Western Europe.

That got a quick response. Angela Merkel, the German chancellor whose term has just ended, got on the phone to Lukashenko and agreed to cool things down.

Washington wasn't happy with that outcome. And it immediately switched gears to the "Russian invasion of Ukraine" fairy tale – even though Ukraine had just made threatening moves toward Belarus on NATO's behalf!

Let's stop new imperialist war

A day before the Biden-Putin call, an unnamed U.S. official told *The Guardian* that Washington could send troops to Eastern Europe. "It would certainly be the case that if

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Why Cuba does not have an anti-vaccine movement

By Marc Vandepitte
and Toon Danhieux

Increasingly, large sectors of the European population, and in the U.S. to a lesser extent, openly express their distrust towards their government's policies to combat COVID-19. The reaction of the traditional policy is one of panic and is characterized by paternalism and repression: general obligation to vaccinate and restricting freedom of movement. This is not the way to build support among the population. This will require, at the very least, listening to the fears and concerns of the unvaccinated. But there are other elements at play as well. The comparison with Cuba is interesting.

Distrust in the government

Many unvaccinated people rightly doubt the competence and/or good faith of their governments that now want to vaccinate everyone as soon as possible. It is not so incomprehensible.

European countries have been improvising since March 2020. There is no uniformity or logic in policies to attack the COVID-19 pandemic. With similar contagion rates the measures differ greatly from one country to another.

In Belgium, where we live, as in other countries in Europe, the improvisation was incomprehensible. The Belgian government waited until mid-March before taking action. That was a month and a half too late. If they had taken action earlier, the rate of spread would have been much lower and thousands of deaths from COVID-19 would have been avoided. And they don't seem to learn from their mistakes. The response to each new wave of COVID-19 comes too late.

Although experts had been warning about it for years, the Belgian government was not prepared for a pandemic. At first it said that the masks were useless, because they were not (yet) available due to mismanagement. Then, suddenly, they became mandatory.

In September 2021 the measures were relaxed in Belgium with worse figures, while in the Netherlands they were tightened with better figures. How does one explain that? In Belgium seven health ministers have to agree in order to implement a new policy. At the same time, governors and mayors introduce stricter or more permissive rules and party presidents polish their image at the expense of public health.

When that distrust reaches the streets and social networks, the far right just has to kick the ball upside down. They attract to their side those who are legitimately disgruntled just by showing empathy with their distrust of the government. Their goal, of course, is not to demand more democracy for the voiceless. History teaches us why the goal of the far right is to hasten the formation of an authoritarian regime that will completely shut out these people and push to the extreme the exploitation of everything and everyone by the 1%.

The anti-COVID-19 measures in many European countries were and still are a hugely chaotic. But, in reality, the distrust is much deeper. In the previous big crisis, the banking crisis of 2008, it was also the citi-



zens who paid the price. The banks that had speculated with our money got away with it and were saved. And we ordinary people paid the bill. It is obvious, and for good reason, there is such distrust in the government's ability to manage a crisis.

And in Cuba?

As early as January 2020, almost two months before the politicians in Europe got into action, the Cuban government launched a national plan to combat the coronavirus. Massive information campaigns were launched in working-class neighborhoods and on television. There were no contradictory governments, no seven health ministers who had to agree, and no discussions about mandatory masks.

The government acted decisively and did everything possible to nip the virus in the bud. No easy promises saying that we were going to regain the "kingdom of freedom" thanks to vaccines, no letting go of the reins too quickly, due to electoral motives or lack of political courage, but firm measures. Here are some examples. Tourism, the main source of income but also of contagion, was stopped immediately. Children from the age of six are obliged to wear masks. When it became clear that schools were also important foci of contagion, Cuba switched to home education, with very good support from school television, among other things.

"By properly informing the population about health risks, Cubans understand the importance of staying at home. They know how the disease is transmitted, and they take responsibility for their own health and that of their relatives and neighbors," says Aissa Naranjo, a physician in Havana.

Health care in Cuba focuses mainly on prevention and is highly decentralized. Each neighborhood has its own polyclinic and there is a strong bond of trust between the local population and health personnel. Since March 2020 almost 30,000 "contact tracers" have gone door to door, to the farthest corners of the island, to check each family to see if one of its members was infected. University students were mobilized to assist in this screening. In Belgium, the detection was carried out by anonymous people in call centers, which does not exactly inspire confidence.

In the meantime, everything was focused on the development of vaccines against the coronavirus. In March 2021, three vaccines were already in the testing phase. Cuba currently has five vaccines of its own, one of them for children as young as two years old.

The differences in COVID policies between Cuba and Belgium are also reflected in the figures. In Cuba there were 146 COVID-19 deaths at the end of 2020. In Belgium, with the same number of inhabitants, the figure was almost 20,000. That was before the Delta variant. Vaccines in Cuba did not arrive in time. Its own vaccines were only finished three months after the Delta variant began to proliferate. Rapid vaccination in Belgium, starting in late 2020, has significantly reduced the number of deaths caused by the Delta variant, at least in the early stages.

In Cuba the Delta variant actually arrived too early; there were no vaccines at the time. The peak of infection occurred in July. This caused many deaths and shook the health system. This precarious health situation added to the severe economic problems resulting from the U.S. economic blockade, loss of tourism and rising food prices. As a result, there was much discontent among the people. Through social networks, an attempt was made from the United States to stir up this discontent and channel it into protests. The attempt ended up failing.

Once the vaccination campaign began in Cuba, the results were spectacular. On September 20, at the beginning of the campaign, there were still more than 7,000 new infections and 69 deaths daily. Today there are around 60 new infections and one death per day. In Cuba, children from the age of two are also vaccinated. On December 2, 90% of Cubans had received their first dose. This is the second highest percentage in the world, after the United Arab Emirates, and the highest in Latin America. In Belgium we are at 75%.

Distrust of big pharma

Many unvaccinated people in Europe find it suspicious that the government provides vaccines free of charge. They have to pay more and more for other drugs. Health care costs patients more and more every year and now suddenly we all "have" to get vaccinated for free. Is there nothing behind it? Does it make you a conspiracy theorist if you ask this question?

People know that big pharma only looks at profits and does not always take people's safety seriously. Between 1940 and 1980 millions of expectant mothers took DES (diethylstilbestrol) against miscarriages and in the 1960s they were prescribed Softenon against the dizziness of pregnancy. These decisions produced thousands of disabled babies. In the United States, Purdue Pharma, owned by the wealthy Sackler family, until recently sold the potent painkiller OxyContin, knowing full well that it is highly addictive.

Purdue is responsible for the deaths of thousands of Americans and the addiction of millions. Fentanyl, invented by Paul Janssen of the Belgian pharmaceutical giant of the same name (now part of Johnson & Johnson), is also a highly addictive

painkiller that was freely available in the United States and heavily promoted. Johnson & Johnson was convicted of liability in this case.

People also know that pharmaceutical companies are charging too high prices for their COVID-19 vaccines and are heavily subsidized by the government, but are allowed to keep billions in profits. When these same companies then say that another booster shot is needed, this understandably arouses suspicion, even if the need is scientifically correct.

What about Cuba?

There is no private pharmaceutical industry in Cuba. All vaccines against COVID-19 are manufactured by government-owned biomedical laboratories. Eighty percent of the vaccines used in the country's vaccination programs are manufactured domestically. You won't find outrageous prices or usurious profits there.

From infancy, the entire population is vaccinated against a range of diseases, just as here in Europe. This is one of the main factors behind the very rapid increase in life expectancy in Cuba in recent decades. Life expectancy in Cuba is higher than in the United States and infant mortality is lower. In recent months it has been shown that vaccines are also very effective. So it is not surprising that any Cuban person not only trusts his or her national pharmaceutical companies, but is proud of them.

Distrust in science

Real science and pseudoscience are often used to advertise all sorts of things here in Europe: food supplements, perfect diapers, hair growth products, supersonic cell phones.... As a result science has lost much of its status for many people. Frequent research and large-scale frauds (think dieselgate) make people even more suspicious.

In addition, many people leave secondary or higher education without being able to understand statistics or their representation in articles. "There are as many vaccinated people as unvaccinated people in the hospital, aren't there?" All this explains why large groups of people are attracted to obscure theories or at least want to take them seriously because they think "they" are trying to make us believe something. That "they" want to force us to comply with a number of things: COVID passport, vaccinations, etc. "They" is, then, an amalgam of politicians, experts and the media.

And in Cuba?

In Cuba people face advertising publicity only very sporadically. Science reaches people through education — of high quality — and non-commercial media. Even before the first infection, it was explained to all Cubans on television what COVID-19 is, how the pandemic developed worldwide, what can be done about it and, consequently, what measures were to be taken.

The Cuban population knows that their scientists are working for the common good of their country. The population sees it almost every year, for example, in the preventive evacuations of towns and cities in hurricane paths, drawn by the best

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meteorologists in the world. It saw how HIV was quickly contained with a strong commitment to prevention, how dengue and Zika are treated in a scientific, efficient and transparent manner, resulting in a minimum number of victims.

Distrust in solidarity

Effective pandemic management presupposes solidarity. The majority of the population, who personally have little to fear from the disease, must show solidarity with minorities of (very) old and physically weak people. Vaccination is important for a normal man or woman, and also for children, to reduce the circulation of the virus in the community as soon as possible in favor of the vulnerable. Most people – also in Europe – consider that a sufficient reason to participate. This also applies to compliance with safety measures.

It is really surprising that there are not more people in Europe saying, “I am healthy and strong enough, I don’t need a vaccine, the rest has to do their own thing.” The whole commercial and neoliberal culture here reminds people on a daily basis of their duty to develop, to do better and better in life, i.e. to become richer. The ideal is absolute autonomy, not to depend on others; much less on the “State,” otherwise one is a freeloader. The unions are then seen as the protectors of these ‘freeloaders’. The State must be decreased, social and health care must be cut back. This is not exactly a culture that fosters solidarity.

And in Cuba?

Cubans are not in a situation of competition or “every man for himself.” The Cuban population knows from experience that only together can they face the country’s great challenges. Overcoming problems together is what they are used to, unfortunately today more than ever. Helping neighbors, cleaning the neighborhood together, holding meetings and making decisions together in the workplace, etc., is their way of life.

Solidarity is part of their DNA. For decades they have been sending doctors, nurses and teachers to the rest of the world. A small country of eleven million inhabitants, with ten times less resources than Belgium, sent doctors to fight COVID as far away as Italy.

This attitude and way of life is another reason why there are few or no anti-vaccine people in Cuba.

www.alainet.org/es/articulo/214581
 Source: Alainet, translation Resumen Latinoamericano – English

Want to know how to beat COVID? Look at China

By Scott Scheffer

The world is now nearing the end of the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The United States has the highest death toll in the world – 823,390 as of Dec. 16.

With all the scientific resources available, and billions of dollars in the vaults of the richest capitalist class in history, the U.S. should have been able to succeed in a vaccination campaign and treat everyone before they were infected. Vaccines should have made their way throughout the world, including the global south where the challenges of poverty magnify the horrors of the pandemic.

Instead, the White House and U.S. intelligence agencies have taken their cue from the Trump administration and continued apace with a manufactured narrative that slanders and blames China for the pandemic. Their goal is to cover up the global calamity created by the giant multinational corporations they serve and turn people’s attention away from the incredible success of the Chinese socialist public health system in fighting the pandemic.

An internet search for death statistics or other COVID related metrics outside China is heartbreaking. India lost 476,000 people, in Brazil 617,000 people died, and Mexico suffered 297,000 COVID fatalities. The list of countries that have suffered staggering loss and grief is a long one. Those countries that have been brutalized by imperialism for more than a century have been ravaged, as have oppressed and impoverished communities within the U.S. The pandemic has revealed the entrenched racism and neglect of people of color within U.S. borders, while vaccine nationalism has exposed the genocidal treatment of the global south.

To date since the beginning of the pandemic, only 4,849 COVID deaths have occurred in China. Since April 24, only three people have died. That is astounding. As of this writing there have been 265,713,467 cases and 5,260,888 deaths from COVID-19 worldwide.

China’s success was due in part to the great deal of research and experience that followed the outbreaks of the SARS and MERS epidemics. But even more, it is the reality of the Communist Party of China being in the leadership instead of a government run exclusively by and for a tiny handful of billionaires.

Guangzhou International Health Station, a complex built for accommodating international travelers, in southern China’s Guangdong province.



At the beginning of the outbreak in February and March of 2020, before COVID-19 became a pandemic, the CPC moved decisively and locked down the city of Wuhan, which has a population of 11 million people. The scale of the quarantine was unprecedented and set the tone for how the CPC and the Chinese people have carried out their incredible “People’s War” ever since.

The Western press often describes it as “authoritarian” and “ruthless.” Human Rights Watch attacked it as a violation of freedom. The campaign was and is, in fact, extraordinarily humanitarian, incredibly efficient and a technological marvel.

Drones for health, not war

The world’s first major deployment of drones — other than their use by the imperialist U.S. military to murder thousands of people in Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere — was launched in Wuhan. Drones and robots were deployed that could detect people with fevers while hovering, remotely disinfect hospitals, and make announcements to ensure quarantine restrictions were followed.

Robots delivered food and supplies to people’s doorsteps. No one lost pay or lost their job.

Two hospitals were literally constructed in a matter of days and other pre-existing buildings were modified and put to use for treatment of COVID patients. Here again, drones hovered over the construction sites to provide light so that construction crews could work 24-hours-a-day.

Thousands of medical volunteers traveled from faraway areas of China to help in Wuhan and other places as the disease spread. Videos were produced and spread on social media to update the population about safety measures and how to get help. Scientists mapped the genome of the virus and shared it with the world within 11 days.

After more than two months of sharply increased cases and more than 3,000 deaths, the casualty numbers diminished. But no one in China dropped their guard in the interest of reopening the economy as happened with successive waves of the outbreak in the U.S. Sporadic outbreaks saw more lockdowns – none at the same scale as that in Wuhan, but always announced quickly when there was an uptick in cases.

The lockdowns were a great economic sacrifice. But there were no demonstrations demanding the lockdowns end as there were in major capitalist countries. The Chinese leadership made sure everyone would receive income, there were absolutely no evictions, and there were no job losses.

The 5,000-room Guangzhou International Health Station

The CPC still maintains a goal of zero COVID infections as the Omicron variant is surging in many parts of the world. A 5,000-room quarantine facility in Guangzhou, equipped with 5G communication technology and a robot delivery system for food and other essentials, was finished last month.

The housing is spread over an area as big as 46 soccer fields and is the first in the plans for a chain of similar facilities to house people traveling from abroad. The entire complex was built in less than three months, a feat that would be astonishing anywhere else. Considering the construction of the hospitals in just days at the beginning of the pandemic, it is not surprising.

China’s determined campaign to beat the pandemic is international in scope. In spite of the astonishing success of this People’s War, Chinese leaders, researchers, virologists and epidemiologists know that defeating a pandemic requires complete global cooperation.

Protest U.S. sanctions Ethiopia and Eritrea

By Bill Dores

In more than 50 cities in the United States and hundreds around the world, marchers rallied on Nov. 21 to protest U.S. sanctions on Ethiopia and Eritrea and U.S. support for insurgents trying to overthrow Ethiopia’s elected government. In New York City, hundreds marched from CNN headquarters at Columbus Circle to Fox News to protest biased corporate media coverage of the conflict.

SMALL PHOTOS: BILL DORES



Destruction of the Soviet Union: a crime without statute of limitations

Statement of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the United Communist Party of Russia (OKP) in connection with the 30th anniversary of the unconstitutional liquidation of the USSR in December 1991.

By United Communist Party of Russia

In December 1991, the largest state on the planet, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the first ever socialist state of workers and peasants, disappeared from the political map of the world.

In the context of the general crisis of Gorbachev's "perestroika" policy, few people paid attention to the blatant violation of all conceivable and inconceivable constitutional procedures during the "dissolution" of the united socialist homeland. In its swiftness, it resembled either the shameful flight from the sinking ship of the completely bankrupt political elite of the "perestroika-reformers" headed by President Gorbachev, or the finale of a carefully planned action designed to put an end to the history of Soviet socialism, which was played out like clockwork before the eyes of the disoriented and disorganized Soviet people.

There is no doubt that at the time of the proclamation of "perestroika," Soviet society needed changes, but at every turn the rational renewal of the country on the basis of socialism was opposed by voluntarist innovations in the spirit of the convergence of the socialist and capitalist systems. Thus, instead of scientifically grounded improvement of the Soviet command-distribution planning system, experiments were imposed on society to introduce capitalist market mechanisms into the socialist economy with the orientation of the entire national economic complex of the country towards the priority of profit, and, consequently, the formation of a system of commodity relations.

This, in turn, created fertile ground for manifestations of individual and collective egoism, the shadow economy, the social differentiation of Soviet society — shameful social phenomena that discredited Soviet socialism in the eyes of the working people. Obvious failures in the ideological sphere and the transformation of the ruling Communist Party of Soviet Union from the political vanguard of society into a bureaucratic mechanism of government led to the depoliticization of communists and non-party people, to people's disbelief in the proclaimed slogans and ideals, and contributed to the growth of social apathy and cynicism.

Taken together, the above circumstances and phenomena contributed to the formation of conditions for internal counterrevolution, expanded its social base, thereby facilitating the subversive activities of the forces of international reaction and anti-communism against the USSR and the socialist bloc. The policy of "perestroika," designed to eradicate these tendencies according to Gorbachev's assurances, carried out without a proper systematic approach, by the empirical method of trial and error, quickly moved from the stage of renewal of socialism to its actual dismantling. The events of August 1991 removed the last barriers to the forces that openly advocated the elimi-

Eternal shame to the traitors who destroyed the USSR!

GRAPHIC: OKP



nation of the socialist system and the Soviet Union itself, which makes us speak not so much about the spontaneous disintegration of the system, but about completely controlled and clearly coordinated processes.

It is important to recall an extremely important circumstance, which proves in the most irrefutable way that the liquidation of the USSR was neither a historical accident, nor a natural consequence of the economic "bankruptcy of the system," as both "systemic" and "non-systemic" liberals like to say today. At the time of the signing of the unconstitutional "Belovezh Accords" [Dec. 8, 1991] and the resignation of Soviet President Gorbachev, practically all the top political and military leaders of the USSR were in the "Matrosskaya Tishina" pre-trial detention center facing charges in the case of the so-called "State Emergency Committee." [This refers to the failed August 1991 attempt to block the counterrevolution by administrative measures.]

In their absence, the entire operational leadership of the largest state on the planet passed to the "Russian center" in the person of President of the RSFSR Yeltsin and the leaders of the "democratic" Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, which from the standpoint both of the law and common sense was more like a creeping coup d'etat. The purpose of the latter was the final usurpation of the highest power in the RSFSR by the "group" of President Yeltsin, who by that time had entered into an open conspiracy with the national-separatist forces, which had seized key leadership posts in most of the union republics of the USSR.

No less strange and clearly contrary to common sense was the very justification by the president of the Soviet Union of his own decree to resign from his high powers: "Due to the current situation with the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States." This wording was voiced in Gorbachev's address to the nation on Dec. 25, 1991, that is, exactly 17 days after the separatist "Belovezh" conspiracy between the heads of three subjects of the USSR [Russia, Ukraine and Belarus], as a result of which its participants announced the "termination" of the 1922 Treaty on the Formation of the USSR. And this despite the fact that the USSR was founded by at least four subjects, not three, and since the adoption of the first Constitution of the USSR in 1924, the Treaty on the Formation of the USSR ceased to be an independent legal document, becoming an integral part of the Basic Law of the Union State (that is, in the "Belovezh" putsch, a document that had no direct legal force for a long time was "terminated").



PHOTO: OKP

In honor of the 80th anniversary of the Red Army's 1941 anti-Nazi counter-offensive near Moscow, representatives of the United Communist Party and other left organizations laid flowers at the "Moscow - Hero City" monument Dec. 6.

But more importantly, the actions of the three "Belovezh" signatories grossly contradicted the results of the March 1991 referendum on the preservation of the USSR, in which 76.4% of citizens strongly supported the preservation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. However, despite this, Gorbachev chose to "wash his hands" and not darken the celebration of the "victors" — on the afternoon of Dec. 25 (before Gorbachev's announcement of resignation) at a meeting of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, Yeltsin's henchmen pushed through the decision to remove from the official name of Soviet Russia the reference to soviets, the socialist nature of its socio-political system, and in the evening, just 38 minutes (!) after Gorbachev's statement, the state flag of the Soviet Union was hastily lowered from the main flagpole of the Kremlin, replaced by the "democratic" counterrevolutionary tricolor.

The Presidium of the Central Committee of the United Communist Party is convinced that such actions could not be the result of a historical "accident," just as they were not historically inevitable, of which both the direct initiators and ordinary pogromists of the USSR are trying to convince us. The deliberate, primitive anti-Sovietism, which has long since set the teeth on edge, which even thirty years after the liquidation of Soviet socialism and the USSR regularly breaks through in the speeches of the main plenipotentiary representatives of the ruling political class in the country, best refutes any fabrications by opponents of the Soviet project about its alleged historical failure.

In conditions when, according to most of the main development indicators — from the economy to culture to healthcare — the present "post-Soviet" Russia, as well as any other former republics of the Union, have not reached the level of the last year of the existence of the USSR, such fabrications of the current "effective managers" cannot be explained by anything other than a political inferiority complex. That is why their complex is now and then compensated for either by strictly dosed state anti-Sovietism and anti-communism, or — when it is politically expedient — by the cynical flirtation of representatives of the oligarchic regime with symbols of the great Soviet past.

The Presidium of the Central Committee of the OKP, noting the unconditional positive shift in public sentiment in Russia towards leftist ideas,

the Soviet project and the USSR, at the same time strongly disagrees with the attempt to turn such symbols and ideas into harmless icons to comfort the exploited. We are convinced that just as the very creation of the Soviet Union was the result of a real correlation of social and class forces of a particular historical period, so its potential for revival will also be due solely to the real struggle for the socialist reorganization of reality, which will be waged by the working masses themselves, both in today's Russia, and in any other now separated "post-Soviet" country.

The history of the destruction of Soviet statehood and the USSR, which ended exactly thirty years ago with the signing of the criminal "Belovezh Accords" and the no less criminal stance of President Gorbachev, is the clearest proof that one material force can be overturned only by a force similar to it, while law or constitution is nothing more than a reflection of the will of this or that ruling class in society. Exactly thirty years ago, in December 1991, such a force was on the side of the liquidators of the USSR and, as such, the subsequent denunciation (termination) of the "Belovezh" conspiracy, undertaken by the parliamentary opposition majority of the State Duma of the Russian Federation in March 1996, did not and could not change such an anti-socialist balance of forces in Russia or any other "post-Soviet" republic.

The era begun by the criminal demolition of the Soviet Union has been going on for three decades, and it can only be interrupted by a radical change in the balance of forces in modern Russian society. However, such a change is clearly not achieved by the mere "return" of Soviet passports or even "Soviet citizenship" alone. That is why the first step towards a real revival of the USSR is the return of property and power to the hands of the working majority in each of the states of the once united socialist space, the Sovietization and socialization of these states as a decisive condition for the new socialist integration of peoples.

The USSR is the future, but we need to fight for this future today!

Vladimir Lakeev

First Secretary of the Central Committee of the United Communist Party

Source: United Communist Party
Translated by Greg Butterfield

Protecting the waters of Moanalua, Hawai'i (underneath U.S. Navy's Pearl Harbor fuel storage tanks)

By Shelley Muneoka, Kepo'o Keli'ipa'akaua, and Wayne Chung Tanaka

The waters of what is now known as the Moanalua-Waimalu aquifer have long sustained the life of the plants, animals and people of the region.

Straddling the traditional boundary between the moku of Kona and 'Ewa, these waters have fed area streams and springs that supported ecosystems that our ancestors cared for and were fed by. The aquifer sits mauka of Ke Awalau o Pu'uloa (Pearl Harbor), an area once renowned for its bountiful seafood, like oysters (pipi) and awa (milkfish), as well as the sweet k̄ai kalo and 'awa — all made possible by abundant fresh water. These sacred waters were brought forth by the akua Kāne and Kanaloa in nearby Waimalu and Waiawa, their first stop in Hawai'i.

In 1940, just before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Navy began constructing a massive fuel facility in Kapūkakī, or Red Hill, above the Moanalua-Waimalu aquifer.

It took three years and the lives of 16 workers to construct 20 massive, 250-foot tall tanks to hold 250 million gallons of petroleum fuel. Despite the high costs, the Navy got what it wanted: an underground, protected facility that could use gravity to deliver fuel to its warships in Pearl Harbor.

In 1948, an earthquake hit O'ahu, spilling 1,100 barrels of fuel. Despite the Navy's continuous efforts, chronic leaks would plague the facility for the next seven decades, resulting in at least 180,000 gallons of fuel spilling from these tanks over time.

As decades passed, concern grew as more people realized that these aging, leaky tanks were located just 100 feet above what had now become the principal water source for hundreds of thousands of residents in urban Honolulu, from Hālawa to Maunalua.

In 2014, the Navy reported a massive release of 27,000 gallons of fuel from one of the Red Hill tanks, which had just been inspected. The Navy struck a deal with regulators to, among other things, assess the risk of future releases — a deal which seven years later it has yet to fulfill.

In 2019, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i, which had previously sued to require the Navy to obtain a state underground storage tank permit for the Red Hill facility, filed a legal challenge to the Navy's permit application. The Honolulu Board of Water Supply, having expressed its own concerns for years, also joined in this "contested case hearing."

The facts and evidence highlighted in the contested case hearing revealed that the Red Hill facility may be the biggest imminent threat to the aquifer that has been a foundation of life as we know it on O'ahu, from time immemorial to the present day:

Eight of the tanks, each containing millions of gallons of fuel, have not been inspected in over two decades; three of these have not been inspected in 38 years;

Leaked fuel and fuel components have already been found in the groundwater below the facility;

The thin steel tank walls are corroding faster than the Navy anticipated due to moisture in the gaps between the tanks and their concrete casing;

The Navy's system to test and monitor tanks for leaks cannot detect slow leaks that may indicate a heightened risk for larger, catastrophic leaks; cannot prevent human error that has led to large releases of fuel in the past; and cannot prevent an earthquake, like the one that spilled 1,100 barrels of fuel when the tanks were brand new.

Recent news regarding whis-



Protesting the U.S. Navy's Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, where leaking tanks have contaminated the groundwater.

PHOTO: SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAII

Aia i hea ka wai a Kane? Aia i lalo, i ka honua, i ka wai hu

tleblower e-mails has also indicated that Navy officials withheld important information during the contested case hearing, such as the existence of holes, active leaks from attached pipelines, and other potential vulnerabilities. And most recently, the Department of Health fined the Navy \$325,000 after a routine facility inspection found multiple regulatory violations.

The Navy cannot be trusted with the sacred water that sits a mere 100 feet below these massive fuel tanks. We owe it to the many generations who cared for this resource before us to protect this aquifer so that life can continue to thrive here for generations to come.

Freshwater is life-giving not only as a physical element but through its spiritual significance in frequent ritual invocation and offering. The last stanza of the well-known pule "Aia i hea ka Wai a Kāne?" reminds us that the freshwater, buried deep in the earth, is sacred to Kāne and Kanaloa and calls on us to protect these waters essential to life itself.

I ka wai kau a Kane me Kanaloa
He waipuna, he wai e inu
He wai e mana, he wai e ola
E ola no, ea! Aia i laila ka wai a Kane!
Where is the water of Kāne?
It's below, in the earth, in the water that gushes forth,
In the water placed by Kāne and Kanaloa
Spring water, water to drink
Water that imbues mana, water that imbues life
Life! There is the water of Kāne!

Shelley Muneoka is a board member of KAHEA: The Hawaiian Environmental Alliance. Kepo'o Keli'ipa'akaua is a member of the Kali'uokapa'akai Collective's 'Aha Kuapapa and is a WKIP Instructor with Huliauapa'a 501(c)3. Wayne Chung Tanaka is the Director of the Sierra Club of Hawai'i.

Source: Ka Wai Ola

The Supreme Court's rule

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genders or those without property — only white men with property.

The Court was set up as one of three branches of the emerging capitalist government, which included a president and a Congress made up of a House of Representatives and the Senate, reputed to be a balance of powers. However, during a dispute in 1805 it was determined that six appointed judges held supreme authority over the elected members of Congress and the president. (The U.S. Constitution grants Congress the power to determine how many "justices" sit on the Court. The Court started with six, but the number has been between 5 and 10. Since 1869 the number has been set at 9.)

Fifty years later, in 1857, the Court affirmed slavery with the Dred Scott decision. If there was any doubt as to where the real power was, it was right there in affirming the rights of the slave owners as against a majority of the people opposed to slavery.

In the years following the Civil War to end slavery, there was a gradual democratization of the political process. The right to vote had previously been denied to the Native people, to Black people, to women, to the youth. But these groups have won voting rights through years of struggle. (See Sam Marcy's "A Marxist View of the Supreme Court.")

Supreme Court erodes rights

In the 2000 presidential election, the Supreme Court exercised its authority by selecting George W. Bush to be president. Bush appointed the conservative John Roberts who is currently Chief Justice.

Last June, the Court released a wave of decisions, as it does every year at the end of its session. Among them was a ruling giving the responsibility for decisions on partisan gerrymandering to state governments — a big attack on voting rights for Black and other oppressed peoples and all workers.

Along with reproductive rights, other decisions currently on the courts docket include:

- **Gun control.** The political arguments surrounding this issue never take into account official U.S. policy of militarization or the violence of other armed wings of the state against Black people and other workers, employed and unemployed.
- **Religious freedom.** Under the guise of religious freedom the court is attacking public education by allocating funds to private institutions. This further infringes on the separation between church and state — an issue, we were taught, that laid the basis for the American Revolution.
- **State secrets.** This year, two lawsuits concern the kind of informa-

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Hands off Donbass, Belarus & Russia

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Putin moved in, there would be an increasing request from eastern flank allies, and a positive response from the United States, for additional forces and capabilities and exercises to take place there to ensure the safety and security of our eastern flank allies in the face of that kind of aggression in Ukraine."

This threat didn't come up explicitly during the official conversation, but hung over it.

Then, shortly after the presidential call, CNN filed a report that preparations were underway at the Pentagon for a possible evacuation of U.S. civilians from Ukraine in the event of war.

These stories aren't objective journalism. They are thinly veiled and very public threats.

If the situation at the Ukraine-Russia border cools, it will only be temporary.

That's the real message behind NATO's one-two punch in Belarus and Ukraine. The antiwar movement, anti-imperialists and the whole working class must stay alert and get ready to stop a war that could quickly

expand to engulf the whole world.

The U.S. keeps pushing harder and harder. Officials in Russia, Belarus and Donbass have so far managed to skillfully deflect and blunt NATO provocations. But Washington does not let up.

And whatever Biden, the Pentagon generals and big capitalists behind them desire at this moment, they are playing with fire. The Ukrainian, Polish and Baltic fascists are just as volatile as the white supremacist who killed two Black Lives protesters and wounded another in Kenosha. And they are far better trained and armed than Rittenhouse — thanks to Washington.

There are no guarantees that they will continue to follow their bosses' orders if they grow impatient. And that could set off an international conflagration with tragic consequences for workers all over the world.

Now is the time to organize, educate and get ready to take the streets against the next U.S. war — whether it begins in Europe, Asia, Latin America or Africa. 📌

Corrupción, privatización y colonialismo

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Buenos días audiencia,
El neoliberalismo ha impuesto las privatizaciones de servicios esenciales alrededor del mundo y Puerto Rico no es la excepción. Es más, al ser una colonia dependiente del líder neoliberal, Estados Unidos, Puerto Rico ha servido una vez más de conejillo de indias donde se practican las más crueles medidas neoliberales sin importar el daño que le hacen al pueblo y al mismísimo futuro del país.

Son muy pocas las agencias aquí que no se han impactado por esta política, ya sea porque se ha vendido a un ente, generalmente extranjero, o se les imponga la subcontratación de empresas con ánimo de lucro.

Pero con los contratos privados, llega la corrupción, y esta semana, la noticia prevaleciente ha sido la gran corrupción, esta vez de alcaldes y contratistas que están siendo investigados por el FBI. Porque nuestro estado como colonia nos priva de ejercer una verdadera justicia en este campo y esta agencia del gobierno federal estadounidense, a quien no le importa la transparencia de las transacciones en PR, se adjudica este poder solo cuando son los intereses de Estados Unidos que están comprometidos.

Regalos de lujo, sobornos o coimas, y presiones de todo tipo acompañaron la contratación de una



Los maestros puertorriqueños protestan contra la privatización.

FOTO: FEDERACIÓN DE MAESTROS DE PUERTO RICO

compañía de basura y otra de asfalto, por lo cual se señaló al alcalde de la próspera ciudad de Cataño, quien acaba de renunciar y colaborar con el FBI.

Aunque esto desencadene una serie de arrestos y renunciaciones, la corrupción continuará hasta que el pueblo salga masivamente a las calles para der-

rumbar este sistema colonial. Y esperamos que sea más pronto que tarde.

¡Viva Puerto Rico Libre! 🇵🇷

Desde Puerto Rico, para Radio Clarín de Colombia, les habló Berta Joubert-Ceci.



Corruption, privatization & colonialism

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Neoliberalism has imposed privatizations of essential services around the world and Puerto Rico is no exception. Moreover, as a dependent colony of the neoliberal leader, the United States, Puerto Rico has once again served as a guinea pig where the cruelest neoliberal measures are practiced regardless of the damage they do to the people and the very future of the country.

There are very few agencies here that have not been impacted by this policy, either because they have been sold to an entity, generally foreign, or because they have been imposed with the subcon-

tracting of companies with profit motives.

But with private contracts comes corruption, and this week, the prevailing news has been great corruption, this time of mayors and contractors being investigated by the FBI. Because our state as a colony deprives us of exercising true justice in this field and this agency of the U.S. federal government, who does not care about the transparency of transactions in PR, claims this power only when it is the interests of the United States that are compromised.

Luxury gifts, bribes or kickbacks, and pressures of all kinds accompanied the contracting of a garbage company and an asphalt company, for

which the mayor of the prosperous city of Cataño, who has just resigned and collaborated with the FBI, was fingered.

Even if this triggers a series of arrests and resignations, corruption will continue until the people take to the streets en masse to overthrow this colonial system. And we hope it will be sooner rather than later.

Viva Puerto Rico Libre!

From Puerto Rico, for Radio Clarín de Colombia, Berta Joubert-Ceci.

Translated by Walter Lippmann for CubaNews.

What right does the Supreme Court have to rule?

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tion the U.S. government can withhold in the interest of national security.

The first involves Guantanamo Bay detainee Abu Zubaydah, who is seeking information about U.S.-run interrogation torture sites and the Central Intelligence Agency contractors he is suing for allegedly torturing him.

The second is related to a suit from a group of Muslim men in California who allege the Federal Bureau of Investigation engaged in religious discrimination when it monitored members of their community for possible terrorism connections.

The shadow docket

The court has increasingly relied on what's been called an emergency "shadow docket" — these are short, frequently unsigned, opinions issued without full briefing and argument — used to take significant steps in a conservative direction with less opportunity for scrutiny.

Three recent examples of the "shadow docket" trend involve Supreme Court action on (1) the extremely restrictive Texas abortion law, (2) a Trump-era policy requiring asylum-seekers to stay in Mexico and (3) throwing out a presidential-ordered temporary moratorium on home evictions.

While the court's traditional rulings take months of work — from legal briefs to oral arguments to a decision — and this term's big cases probably won't be announced until May or June of 2022 — the shadow docket can unfold quickly and move in unpredictable directions.

In an article titled, "Texas lawmakers: Why you

gotta be so cruel?" Gloria Verdieu writes about the Texas abortion law that the Supreme Court supported through the shadow docket: "'The Heartbeat Law' bans abortion after five-and-a-half to six weeks of pregnancy, before most women are aware that they are pregnant. The law threatens any individual or entity who 'knowingly engages in conduct that aids or abets,' including paying for or reimbursing the costs of an abortion through insurance or otherwise, with a civil lawsuit. Any civilian who sues that person will be awarded \$10,000 plus court costs and attorney fees."

Invalidating the rights of the people

A clear majority of people in the U.S. support upholding Roe v. Wade, guaranteeing a constitutional right to abortion. According to an ABC News/Washington Post poll, some 60% say Roe v. Wade should be upheld. Three out of four Americans say that the decision of whether or not a woman can have an abortion should be left to the woman and her doctor.

It's no accident that the power to make a legal decision on reproductive rights is ultimately exercised by the Supreme Court. It's the most reliably conservative, anti-democratic arm of the government, responsive only to those who have appointed them.

During the Depression the Roosevelt administration was forced to institute the National Recovery Act in order to save capitalism. It granted workers the right to organize — union rights

— and established some forms of social insurance including social security and unemployment benefits, all under pressure from the working class actions countrywide.

As soon as it became clear that the capitalist recession was slowly ending, in one day the Supreme Court nullified this whole mass of legislation in the infamous Schechter case of 1935 and began to roll back the progressive legislation. To this day the Supreme Court has upheld the anti-labor strike-breaking policies of the National Association of Manufacturers, of the multinational corporations and of the banks. The plight of labor today, at least from the point of view of legality, can be shown to come from this — that in the last resort the ruling class relies on the Supreme Court, an instrumentality that is as undemocratic as it is reactionary.

Concerning the court's decision in 1989 to uphold a Missouri law prohibiting the use of public facilities to provide abortion services and to restrict physicians who provided abortions, Sam Marcy wrote: "The abortion decision confirms that whenever the bourgeoisie is in a crisis, they will let nine people, unelected, appointed for life, decide the most critical issues concerning life in the United States." 🇺🇸

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