TELL BIDEN: No war! U.S./NATO hands off Russia and Donbass!

By Greg Butterfield

Jan. 24 – U.S. imperialism is playing fire in Eastern Europe. U.S. officials are toying with the lives of millions of people in Europe. A war, ideally, is best kept out of the entire world with their unprecedented campaign of threats, provocations and war propaganda aimed at the Russian Federation. The Biden regime and corporate media are lying when they warn of an “imminent” Russian invasion of Ukraine. The real danger of invasion comes from the U.S.-supported, NATO-armed Ukrainian government against the peoples of the independent Donbass republics of Donetsk and Lugansk on Russia’s Western border.

Wall Street, its bought-and-paid—for politicians and the Pentagon have long sought to dominate all of the former Soviet Union, including Russia. Big Oil is especially rabid to stop Russian oil and gas from reaching the European Union, so that Big Oil can sell its dirty coal products instead. The Biden regime and the Pentagon have long sought to dominate all of the former Soviet Union, including Russia.

Donetsk and Lugansk on Russia’s Western border. The People’s Militia of the Donbass republics has been fighting off Ukrainian invaders for more than a decade. Now the U.S. and its allies are instead rushing recklessly ahead.

Along with the move to pull embassy personnel out of Ukraine, the weekend of Jan. 22-23 saw a new propaganda barrage from Washington’s junior partner Britain, alleging that Russian President Vladimir Putin was planning a coup to replace the current U.S.-backed Ukrainian government of President Volodymyr Zelensky with one friendly to Russia.

Moscow immediately refuted the claim. But it was taken as gospel by all the big-business media, despite the fact that, as even the New York Times admitted, “The British communique provided no evidence to back up its assertion.”

Meanwhile, another provocation was carried out by Kiev on Jan. 22, as a Ukrainian military sabotage team illegally crossed the ceasefire “line of contact” into the Lugansk People’s Republic and kidnapped a soldier of the People’s Militia.

After a weekend at Camp David with his military and diplomatic advisers — when they were sent by Russian diplomats. At least, this would force Washington to declare its intentions in writing before the world rather than being shrouded in backroom negotiations and rumors circulated by unnamed sources in the Western media.

Instead of using this opportunity to step back from the brink of war, it now seems the U.S. and its allies are instead rushing recklessly ahead.

Panama City, Panama, May 2012.

National Days of Action Feb. 4-12

HONDURAS inaugurations Xiomara Castro

By John Parker

Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Jan. 26 — A delegation of activists representing organizations from various countries arrived in Tegucigalpa yesterday, at the invitation of the Libre Party, to celebrate with them the inauguration of President-elect Xiomara Castro, who is also a member of the Libre Party. President Castro’s overwhelming victory follows the rapid deterioration of life for the people of Honduras after the 2009 coup that kidnapped and overthrew the elected government of self-described pro-socialist President Manuel Zelaya. That coup — with technical, logistical and monetary support from the U.S. — was led by two Honduran military officers who had trained at the Pentagon’s notorious “School of the Americas.” The school made headlines in 1996 when the Pentagon released training manuals used at the school that advocated torture, extortion and execution.

After the coup, fraudulent elections were imposed on the country, seeking to give legitimacy to the coup regime. But the economy and social well-being of Honduras was destroyed by rapid privatizations, environmental destruction and brutal repression and torture targeting any supporters of Zelaya, especially those in the National Front of Popular Resistance (FNRP) which formed after the coup to bring back the legitimate presidency of Zelaya. Women and LGBTQ2S members were also severely targeted and tortured.

In spite of the repression, the courageous people of Honduras continued to grow their struggle.
Anti-trans bills threaten youth in many states

By Greg Butterfield

Struggle—La Lucha spoke with activist Erin Reed (she/her) about anti-trans measures currently flooding state legislatures, and how people are fighting back.

Struggle—La Lucha: Can you tell our readers a bit about who you are and your work for trans rights?

Erin Reid: I have been a longtime advocate for transgender rights, especially when it comes to accessibility of trans health care. I created the largest map of informed consent hormone therapy clinics in the United States. Informed consent is a method of obtaining hormone therapy that does not require years of expensive therapy to obtain hormones.

I founded the Maryland Equity Vaccine Hunters, which ultimately obtained nearly 100,000 vaccines for Marylanders in underprivileged communities, including transgender Marylanders and especially trans people of color.

I openly advocate for transgender legal rights and have been tracking bills this cycle that seek to determine transition youth and remove transgender people from public spaces like bathrooms and changing rooms, remove the ability of transgender people to access legal documents, and call those who affirm trans youth child abusers.

SLL: Can you give us an overview of the current anti-trans legislation?

ER: As of right now, multiple trackers exist showing dozens of anti-trans youth bills. The ACLU says 79 anti-trans bills have been filed so far in the first month of 2022. Step Up lists 65 active anti-trans bills being proposed.

These bills all share very similar language. Many go after those providing care, like doctors or doctoral parents as child abusers. Others seek to ban changes to identification documents. Some propose banning transgender youth from bathroom rooms. Others will ban transgender people from competing in sports, even youth sports and even for youth transitions.

Many of these bills have no enforcement mechanisms or outrageous enforcement methods like genital inspections. Many of these bills and organizing advocacy.

If you live in one of the states in the map or Step Up that track your representatives about these bills and show up for the hearings.

Sometimes trans youth as young as 11 are the ones that show up and make all the difference. Kai Shappley stood in front of Texas legislators and was essential to defeating anti-trans youth bills. She is now a finalist for Time Kid of the Year.

SLL: Reproductive rights and Black people’s voting rights are also under threat in many of the same states. Can you talk about the importance of building unity among all the communities under attack?

ER: Solidarity among all communities under attack is extremely important. Reproductive rights are intricately tied to transgender rights — anti-abortion laws are inseparable from anti-trans laws and represent an attack designed to enforce a gender hierarchy that reduces our gender and sexuality to a biological role of reproduction and control of our bodies. The same organizations that fight against abortion rights fight against trans rights and fund anti-trans organizations around the globe.

You can’t separate either of these from attacks on the Black community. Bills targeting trans youth in sports often get brought up when Black athletes perform well, regardless of if they are trans. In 2021, three cisgender women were banned from the Olympics in some sports categories for not taking birth control to lower their natural testosterone because of trans panic. Castor Semeny, Christie Mboma and Beatrice Masilingi.

And the latest attacks on education in the United States banning books often target “critical race theory” and “gender theory.” Both transness and Blackness are seen as dangerous and are constantly under attack by a white patriarchal society.

The Social Evolution of Humanity

This book focuses on Frederick Engels’ view of the social evolution of humanity, specifically on the changing social position of women, LGBTQ2S people and the human social/sexual relationship usually referred to as marriage.

Understanding the impermanence and transformation of all social phenomena, especially when it comes to accessibility of trans health care. I created the largest map of informed consent hormone therapy clinics in the United States. Informed consent is a method of obtaining hormone therapy that does not require years of expensive therapy to obtain hormones.

The book begins with a debate between early leaders in the field of anthropology — Bronisław Malinowski and Robert Briffault — that took place in 1931.

Malinowski professed the view that the family is a group unchanging throughout history, a father with his father and their children, legally united by a contract and surrounded by religious sanctions. Briffault presented Malinowski’s view as an example of the countervolution in anthropology that arose in response to Frederick Engels book Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.

High school students joined a Protect Trans Kids rally in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, on Jan. 16 to protest legislation that would ban trans kids from sports programs and restrict bathroom access in schools. Actions were held in six cities across the state.
For first time in 37 years
No cops, ICE or military in Los Angeles MLK Day Caravan

By Struggle-La Lucha
Los Angeles bureau

Los Angeles, Jan. 17 — More than a hundred cars and floats joined the MLK Day Caravan for Social Justice down Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, decorated with anti-racist, anti-imperialist, pro-people slogans reflecting Latinx struggles.

Organizations, including the Southern Christian Leadership conference, UCLA’s Martin Luther King Institute, the California Public Employees for Social Justice; African American Writers & Artists Inc.; Friends of Malcolm X Library; Harvard Blvd Block Club; Africa Town Coalition; Black PACT; Union del Barrio; Al-Awda – LA; Veterans for Peace; Topanga Peace Alliance; Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS); Socialist Unity Party; Health Care for All – LA; BAYAN USA and more raised the messages of Dr. King today and the various social justice issues that he championed.

One of the primary focuses of the day was voting rights, demanding that the Biden administration stop surrendering to white supremacists. The day before the caravan in Los Angeles, Dr. King’s son, Martin Luther King III — Andrea Waters King and their daughter Yolanda Renee King, who is 13, led a march in Arizona, demanding Biden do more than talk to stop the further disenfranchisement of Black people.

“This MLK Day we are finally able to be true to Dr. King’s vision of social justice and honor the wishes of his family today,” Jefferson Azevedo, a member of the Ad Hoc Coalition for the MLK Day event. “That is only because of the unity that over 25 organizations had in fighting to take this King Day back from those who would have the police, ICE and the military and corporate sponsors like insurance companies and fast food parasites in our communities, allowing them to stomp on the legacy of Dr. King with messages enabling capitalist exploitation and police terror in our communities.”

This indeed was an unprecedented event. In Los Angeles for the past 37 years the “Kingdom Day Parade,” led by the California branch of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE – C4R), was a self-driven event, charging $500 for each grassroots, community organization to participate. Many felt this cost to the community was unnecessary, since corporate sponsors already paid thousands of dollars to attend. This year, however, there was no cost to participants since the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice filed for the permit last July on behalf of the Ad Hoc Coalition for the MLK Day March, and successfully fought the police to keep the permit.

“We tried to respectfully negotiate with CORE and were willing to share the permit,” said John Parker, coordinator of the Harriet Tubman Center. “Our only condition — which was naturally to be rejected by CORE — was to allow all Black organizations leading this effort along with other community organizations in the coalition — was to keep the police, military and ICE out of the parade. Unfortunately, the CEO of CORE, Dr. Adrian Dove, insisted the police be included.”

Parker continued: “Given the history of terror by the LAPD and Sheriff’s and especially considering the recent killing of a child by the LAPD, that was a non-starter. But our control over the permit, which we had to fight with the LAPD to keep, even threatening legal action, allowed not only greater access for the community to the King Day activities, it also banned the police, ICE and the military from having contingents or any representatives in the procession for the first time in 37 years.”

Ron Gocher of Union del Barrio said, “We’re proud to be here today standing shoulder to shoulder with our Black community and our African sisters and brothers taking the 14-year-old’s step to say that the LAPD, Sheriff’s, ICE and the military have no place in an event to honor Dr. Martin Luther King. We all know that Dr. King was against police brutality, against imperialism and all types of oppression of any kind of people. So, for us today as Latin American people it’s our duty and responsibility to be in solidarity.”

Gocher’s words reflected the tremendous multinational, multi-geneder, multi-age participation and especially Black and Brown unity at this event with Latin American, indigenous, Filipino grassroots organizations helping to organize this event, including the day-of live-streaming courtesy of the Filipino organization BAYAN-USA.

The livestream over Zoom was enceased by Andrew Mayton of the Peoples Power Assembly in Baltimore and Beto Ríos of Union del Barrio, allowing those who couldn’t attend the large car caravan to get a bird’s-eye view of the demonstration and commemoration of King.

All of the organizers said this was the beginning of the end for the corporate-sponsored event and that they would work together and gather more grassroots and community and progressive organizations, united in solidarity with each other’s struggles, to make this a yearly event.

Billion Godsun of the Africa Town Coalition said: “Having no law enforcement, military or big corporate involvements set a new precedent for how King Day events should be. Even though this first one was a little bit smaller than the traditional parade, a number of people shared that the overall energy was better. We will expand on this and grow next year.”

There were many hurdles to overcome, including the omicron variant and multiple broadcasts by the major corporate media that the King activities for the day were canceled, even though they were sent numerous press releases saying otherwise.

In spite of that, the caravan was the largest event in Los Angeles County on MLK Day, and the safest — turning the first proposed march into a caravan with plenty of masks and sanitizer for each float and participating cars. And defying the false news about cancellations, at least a hundred cars and floats participated, and organizers estimate that already thousands of people have seen the livestream of the event.

Rebecca Jackson, a member of the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice and the executive director of “Resist This Pac: Give Us The Ballot,” an initiative of Martin Luther King III, said: “For the sake of 14-yr-old Valentina Orellana-Peralta, murdered by the recklessness of the LAPD, we’re not going back. For the sake of George Floyd and Eric Garner and Breonna Taylor and all the victims here in LA of police violence and terror, we’re not going back. This is our day, this is our legacy, not the corporate sponsors, but our united us.”
MURDER AND VOTING RIGHTS

By Stephen Millies

It took 30 years to bring the as-sassin, Byron De La Beckwith, to justice. At this trial, Mississippi Gov. Ross Barnett em-braced Beckwith in the courtroom as a hero. World War II veteran Maceo Snipes was the first Black person to vote in a primary election in Georgia’s Tay-lor County on July 17, 1946. He was named by the “Bronze Titan” who helped lead the Cuban wars of inde-pendence.

The next day four Klan members confronted Snipes while he was eating dinner with his mother. Snipes was shot in the back by Edward Coo-per.

Snipes wasn’t operated on until six hours after he was wounded. He was denied a blood transfusion be-cause the blood supply was segre-gated and the hospital didn’t have any “Black blood.” As a result Maceo Snipes died on July 20, 1946. The coroner’s jury claimed Cooper was justified in kill-ing Maceo Snipes.

A 17-year-old student at More-house College wrote a letter of pro-test to the Atlanta Journal-Constitu-tion. His name was Martin Luther King, Jr.

Without struggle there is no progress. Seventy-five years after Maceo Snipes was murdered, the Georgia state legislature made it illegal to offer a chair or a glass of water to people voting in line to vote, even if they were elderly or disabled.

What should be illegal are laws like that which try to prevent poor and working people from vot-ing. Hundreds of laws are being railroaded through state capi-tols designed to deprive people of their voting rights.

All of them violate the U.S. Con-stitution’s 15th Amendment, which guarantees the right to vote. Don’t look to the U.S. Supreme Court to en-force it.

In 2013 a majority of the high court threw out a key enforcement pro-vision of the Voting Rights Act in their Shelby v. Holder decision.

The 24th Amendment outlawed poll taxes. Yet the same court has upheld laws that often require mon-ey to purchase identification and are indeed taxes.

Most recently the right to vote was won on the battlefields of the Civil War and by the Reconstruction governments that followed. It was Black soldiers in the Union Army and the general strike of Black workers in the South that played the key role in defeating the masters’ confederacy.

The Reconstruction state gov-ernments, backed by Black voters, established the first public school systems in the South. These were the best governments poor white people ever had.

No one was ever convicted of these atrocity—President Biden’s spokespeople announced that the administration was likely plan-n ing the deployment of thousands of additional U.S. troops and more military aid to the region. A decision is expected from Biden this week, according to The New York Times.

The real invasion threat

While corporate media whip up fear and hatred, the administration has deployed approximately 100,000 troops to de-fend its Western border, they nev-er mention that 125,000 Ukrainian troops — that is, half the country — are at home, we are defending our land, so we have many more chances to resist.

And this time, the danger of direct inva-ders is real, not just theoretical like in 1989 when the Black room was a room in the Union and the general strike of Black workers in the South that played the key role in defeating the masters’ confederacy.

The Reconstruction state gov-ernments, backed by Black voters, established the first public school systems in the South. These were the best governments poor white people ever had.

“Horrific ultra-nationalist, neo-Na-to troops – that is, half the country’s防卫 forces – are being deployed to the region to defend its Western border, they never mention that 125,000 Ukarinean troops are at home, we are defending our land, so we have many more chances to resist. And this time, the danger of direct invaders is real, not just theoretical like in 1989 when the Black room was a room in the Union and the general strike of Black workers in the South that played the key role in defeating the masters’ confederacy.

The Reconstruction state gov-ernments, backed by Black voters, established the first public school systems in the South. These were the best governments poor white people ever had.

For weeks, U.S. media have pub-lished glowing accounts of how the CIA and other Western police-mil itary agencies have been training these forces for “resistance” in the event of a Russian invasion. In fact, these forces are armed and trained to launch a murderous attack on the population of Donbass.

Since Ukraine launched its war on the Donbass region in 2014, when its people voted overwhelmingly for in dependence, more than 14,000 peo-ple have been killed in the conflict.

Donetsk and Lugansk have warmed for months about the dangers of a new Ukrainian invasion as the build-up of troops and heavy weapons unfold. The last time Kiev invaded, in 2015, the People’s Militias routed the Ukrainian forces and handed them a humiliating defeat.

“In terms of the numbers, if we take personnel, then from the Ukrainian side (near the contact line) it is two-to-three times higher than ours,” explained Denis Pushilin, the Donets’ People’s Republic head of state. “The amount of equipment also exceeds ours. But we are at home, we are defending our land, so we have many more chances to resist.”

While the Donbass republics are confident in their ability to defeat the invaders again, as they did in 2015, the influx of NATO high-tech weaponry would mean massive dev-as tation to the civilian infrastruc-ture and high casualties in a region already suffering under a nearly eight-year economic blockade by Ukraine and the West.

And this time, the danger of direct NATO military intervention – for-cing Russia to defend itself and po-tentially igniting a new regional or even world war – is very real.

Alexander Skubchenko of the Housing Union of Ukraine summed up the situation: “What is happening now is not an attempt by NATO to protect Ukraine from a Russian invasion — it is an attempt by Rus-sia to protect the Donbass republics from Zelensky’s military adventure, which NATO is pushing him to do.”

Flooding Ukraine with weapons

A Jan. 22 Washington Post head-line screamed, “Military trainers, missiles and over 200,000 pounds of lethal aid: What NATO members have sent to Ukraine so far.”

“Last December, the White House authorized a $200 million securi-ty assistance package that provides Ukraine with small arms and am-munition, secure radios, medical equipment and spare parts. Other lethal equipment, including Javelin anti-tank missiles and other anti-armor artillery, as well as heavy machine guns, also were included,” according to the Post. “The U.S. Em-bassy in Kiev said Friday that a first shipment of nearly 200,000 pounds of lethal aid had recently ar-rived in Ukraine.”

“British Defense Secretary Ben Wallace told Parliament on Monday that a ‘small number’ of British per-sonnel would join an existing British operation to build up Ukrainian mil-itary capacity. ‘Light, anti-armor, defensive weapon systems’ also will be supplied.”

Caspian also has a military train-ing program with Ukraine, and Ot-tawa recently sent a small contin-gent of special forces to assist Kiev, according to The Star. The Department of National Defense declined to comment on potential troop deployments, citing operating security.

“The Baltic countries of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia also have received permission from their adminis-tration to send U.S.-made weapons, such as Stinger air defense systems and Javelins, to Ukraine, the coun-tries’ defense ministers said Friday. “Turkey, which has a sizable weapons manufacturing industry, has previously sold Bayraktar TB2 drones to Ukraine. The weapon has been used to strike Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine. That is, the Donbass republics – including the murder of 5-year-old Vladik Shi-klov by drone strike last April – GB.

“The Netherlands and Spain also have deployed warplanes and war-ships, respectively, to the region to support NATO,” the Post concluded.

“The United States and its al-lies have already delivered billions of dollars in military assistance to Ukraine, with Washington alone contributing $1 billion in the last year alone,” Sputnik News noted on Jan. 18. “Total U.S. outlays have topped $2.5 billion since 2014, and have included ‘non-lethal’ items, such as Humvees and artillery-locat-ing mobile radar, as well as lethal systems like U.S.-made sniper rifles.”
In response to capitalist economic turmoil, war funding soars

By Gary Wilson

Wall Street and the stock market have been like a roller coaster. On Jan. 24, stocks were falling, with the S&P 500 down 2.7% after the Dow Industrial Average down 2.7% and the Nasdaq Composite down 4.5%. The widespread sell-off for the S&P 500 even continued on the second trading day in January, and for the Nasdaq in November. The Nasdaq is down nearly 20% from its high in November.

Early 2022 is now, officially, the worst—ever start in the history of the S&P 500, which goes back to 1929.

Part of the stock market volatility is that inflation keeps jumping upward, pushing wages to new levels. “Although average hourly wages for German rose 4.7% last year, overall wages fell 2.6% on average for all workers, which shows the need for further action, according to the Labor Department,” the Jan. 22 Washington Post reported.

Cryptocurrency vaporized

Also part of the turmoil is the cryptocurrency crash. The dramatic sell-off in bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies has been even greater than the stock market fall. Bitcoin lost more than 12% on Jan. 21, with Ethereum losing 15%.

The two largest cryptos now trade at 50% below from their all-time high. As the Washington Post reported, “A two-month slide in the global cryptocurrency market has vaporized $1.4 trillion.” The losses are temporary.

The capitalist economy was pushed into a steep downturn by the pandemic.

No war! U.S./NATO hands off

Continued from page 4 and Javelin anti-tank missiles.

“NATO allies have provided hundreds of millions of dollars more, including Turkish Bayraktar drones, British-made Ajax armored combat centers, Czech 152 mm howitzers and Italian and German engineering and medevac vehicles.”

Stop a new war!

Significantly, Germany blocked Estonia from transferring German-manufactured artillery to Ukraine, as an incensed Wall Street Journal reported Jan. 21. NATO member Germany, the economic powerhouse of the European Union, is reliant on Russian gas and heating oil, and is eager for the completion of the Nordstream 2 pipeline to increase the flow of affordable fuel from the east — something the U.S. is desperate for.

Russia has made it clear that Ukraine’s takeaway by NATO is a red line for its security and independence. Washington refuses to even negotiate on the issue of NATO’s further eastward expansion, despite the promise made by U.S. officials at the end of the Cold War not to do so — some 14 new NATO members ago!

Poor and working people are wracked with crisis after crisis here at home. Rampant spread of COVID-19, also reaching 14.8% — or really 33.2% according to the Labor Department, in April 2020, that its industrial production index tumbled a record 11.2% in April 2020. Manufacturing output also posted a record drop — 13.7% — as the production of cars, trucks and auto parts plummeted more than 70%.

Production of aerospace and other transportation products, metals and furniture fell around 20%. Output dropped 61% at mining and 9.9% at utilities. The implosion of the U.S. industrial sector was known, but the scale of the collapse was stunning.

Industrial production remained depressed throughout 2020. This was not a capitalist crisis of overproduction, the usual boom and bust cycle of capitalism, but instead a capitalist production crash because of the shutdown to fight the pandemic.

The coronavirus depression

This sudden cutback in production threatened to cause a deeper crisis. That’s when the Federal Reserve, the central bank “expanded” the money supply, printing more money. This triggered a general collapse.

Congress distanced itself from some of this newly-created money to the general population to help with the coronavirus crash. This required Congress to pass three stimulus checks, one in April 2020, a second in December 2020—January 2021, and the last one in March 2021.

In the initial $4 trillion “relief” package passed by Congress, $884 billion went to workers and their families that is less than one-fifth of the money. The rest went to businesses, primarily major corporations like the airline industry that are part of the military-industrial complex, not just to producers of consumer goods and services.

But due to the efficacy of the stimulus checks, however, was a surge in consumer spending. This surge meant the industrial and merchant capitalists had to rebuild inventories, as well as rebuild raw material supplies and parts. This created a demand for goods and services throughout the capitalist world, which turned out to be highly inflationary.

“Coming out of the coronavirus depression has been bumpy in the U.S. The shutdowns ended premature, with industry reopening without controlling the spread of the coronavirus. With each reopening there has been a new wave of COVID-19 infections, followed by temporary reopenings and mandates that have so far failed to bring an end to the pandemic in the U.S.

Putting business demands first has been to the detriment of public health. In China, using a broad, socialist public health system, the coronavirus is under control. China’s manufacturing sector forms the backbone of the industrial and merchant capital in the United States, ensuring that the American workers and their families have not been starved during the capitalist crisis.

In China, there has been a broad and vigorous approach to fighting COVID-19 that includes testing, physical distancing and full meal delivery to anyone requiring isolation, masks, good ventilation, and full contact tracing as well as vaccines.

Build back better?

As with any capitalist depression, the economic impact has been hardest on working people.

The official unemployment rate reached 14.8% — or really 33.2% according to the Labor Institute — in April 2020 after the shutdown to fight COVID-19. That was the highest since the Great Depression of the 1930s. In October 2021, reports indicated that almost 10% of adults in the U.S. reported that their household didn’t have enough to eat.

The unemployment figures given by the government are way below the numbers reported in the big business media don’t include part-time workers who want full-time jobs or so-called discouraged workers who have been unable to find a job. The true rate of unemployment right now is 23.3%, says the Ludwig Institute.

The Ludwig Institute is a leading think tank reporting about “labor shortages” in the big business media, the jobs that aren’t being taken are at poverty-level wages and most often are dangerous to personal health and well-being, mainly from exposure to COVID-19.

To help revive the economy, President Joe Biden and the Democrats have proposed a set of legislative packages that together they call “Build Back Better,” at a projected cost of $2.2 trillion over 10 years. So far, they have been unable to enact any of this legislation, mainly because of two Democratic senators. Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) cut a deal in March with several Republican senators to block “Build Back Better.”

The other is Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), who got contributions from over 50 billionaire families, including the Koch network, to publicly oppose Build Back Better. Meanwhile the Democrats have been able to super-size the Pentagon’s budget to $768 billion for 2022. According to a projection by the Congressional Budget Office, military spending over the next decade will be about $8.5 trillion.

On Jan. 25, The Intercept reported that House Democrats are looking to bypass typical procedures and fast-track a vote on legislation that would send $500 million in military aid to Ukraine.

Why is Congress increasing military spending, when the alleged reason to block “Build Back Better” was because it was excessive?

The Pentagon buildup is a political manifestation of the capitalist economic drive to war caused by the need to subordinate other countries and peoples to the profit-making activities of U.S. big business.

The demands of imperialism are what’s driving Congress, determining what gets funded and what’s put aside.

Right now, the U.S. sees the confrontation with Russia as a way to cut Europe off from Russian gas and force it to buy U.S.-controlled gas — as well as blocking the “Silk Road” overland trade with China. That’s why the Democrats can pass the biggest Pentagon budget increase ever but can’t manage to fund Build Back Better.

Build Back Better.
China successfully battles COVID
While the U.S. targets China and loses the battle against COVID

By Scott Scheffer

The U.S. media is spreading a message that the omicron variant of COVID-19 may be the final wave in the pandemic that has taken 5.63 million lives globally, and 785,000 in the United States, the highest death toll in the world.

Even as the death count in areas of the U.S. is rising as predicted by epidemiologists, the pandemic is already waning, due to a pro-business push to herd people back to work and students back to in-person classes is underway. This push has been embraced by the Centers for Disease Control, and by Biden’s Chief Medical Adviser, Anthony Fauci.

While omicron’s symptoms may be less severe than the delta variant, it is still a killer and is currently aver- aging 100 deaths a day across the U.S. In the United States, during the same period, there were only two coronavirus deaths.

Comparing population figures of the United States and China to the respective numbers of COVID-19 deaths, one arrives at a jaw-dropping conclusion. In China, 0.00041% of the population died, while in the U.S. 0.26596% of the population died. You would have to multiply China’s percentage by 653 to have it be as as the toll of death in the U.S.

This yawning gap of a difference has had the U.S. propaganda machine in the intelligence agencies, to the White House and State Department and the multi-millionaire spokes- models that serve as newscasters, spinning a defensive web of lies and all manner of slander against every aspect of China’s “People’s War” against the virus. The bogue “lab leak” theory has lost some steam, but the latest tirade is to rally around the case of Zhang Zhan, a right-wing, anti-communist crusader, championed by the Western media and by Amnestly International.

At the beginning of the pandemic
Zhang, who calls herself a “citizen journalist,” was arrested by Chi- nese authorities in May of 2020. She had traveled to Wuhan in February 2020, at the beginning of the pan- demic. She didn’t go there to help in any way. She reported on how the Chinese volunteers did at the risk of their own health. Instead, she went to Wuhan to do a story on Chinese volunteers and their sacrifice. She posted videos on YouTube accus- ing the government of “intimidation and threats” and claiming that peo- ple were going hungry and being ne- glected. The did so as scientists and government leaders were scrambling to understand and gain control of the virus. If she had arrived several weeks later she would have witnessed the beginning of the end for the initial short-lived torrent of death. For near- ly seven years now, 5.63 million people have died of Covid in China.

Zhang is a longtime participant of the U.S. system that chorns out lies and smears them as truth. The National Endowment for Democra- cy and other neo-CIA organizations have nurtured “protest” groups in Hong Kong and Taiwan to challenge anti-communist “protest” move- ment in mainland China, which Zhang is a participant in. They spout the usual laundry list of “issues” against the Communist Party leadership. Some- times their message is not subtle at all. While the U.S. pushed the anti-communist “protest” movement in Hong Kong in 2019, Zhang held up an umbrella in Shanghai em- bazoned with the symbol of the social- istic, Communist Party down.”

Her case has garnered sympathy from organizations and individuals based on anti-communism as they stand as opponents of human rights abus- es. Her history of engaging in “hun- ger strikes” gives her a façade that appeals to “liberal” media outlets like the Guardian and the New York Times, and nongovernmental organi- zations like Amnesty Internation- al.

China expands international medical solidarity
By Scott Scheffer

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has overseen a failed effort to combat COVID-19, and in fact, appears to be creating a new version of the virus to surrender. As of this writing, 851,000 people in the U.S. have died, and the omicron variant is now overwhelming hospitals with COVID patients, in- cluding thousands of children.

The symptoms may or may not be less severe – assessments in the media are contradictory. But in Chicago, hospitals with COVID patients, in- cluding thousands of children.

In spite of all this, capitalist gov- ernment institutions are pulling back control efforts. Millions of par- ents are worrying that the premature return to in-school learning will send their children to the hospital.

Two weeks ago, just days after a Delta variant patient was flying in the U.S. and in China on the same flight, a lack of coordination by U.S. Airlines requesting that the isolation period be lessened, the CDC did exactly that. The isolation guidelines were lowered to five days.

Had there been a higher level of global cooperation early in the pan- demic, it’s questionable whether omicron would have even come into existence.

U.S. capitalists block cooperation
The means to vaccinate the world through a cooperative interna- tional plan existed, and as the U.S. sank into its own bubble of anti-communist conspiracy theories, the Chinese government repeatedly called for global cooperation. In the chance to move forward was squandered by capitalist greed and vaccine nationalism promoted by U.S. big money.

Giant corporations that own health insurance companies, hos- pitals as well as the banks that invest in them, are so dominant in the U.S. economy that the availability of vaccines and treatments has been com- pared miserably even to other major capitalist countries.

That U.S. capitalism produced one of the most resourceful scientific and medical communities in history didn’t help, because it also has com- pleted all of science to an extent never seen before. Life-saving medical care and even preventive medi- cine is a privilege that communities of color and poor people in general are often denied.

Further, instead of going all-out to produce and distribute vaccines globally, the U.S. ruling class has been engaged in a rationalist and genocidal hoarding of life-saving science is what gave omicron its chance to emerge to contribute to health care and even preventive medi- cine is a privilege that communities of color and poor people in general are often denied.

U.S. capitalists block cooperation
The means to vaccinate the world production was funded by the U.S. government – points to the nation- alization of the pharmaceutical industry. Regardless of how effective they are, the required cold storage and trans- portation makes them impractical for a global vaccination campaign.

That didn’t have to be the case. For instance, once the science, research, development and manufacture of the vaccines was accomplished, redirect- ing the resources normally de- voted to the U.S. imperialist war ma- chine might have made short work of COVID-19.

Many other countries with far fewer advantages than the United States have done a much better job protecting lives and controlling the spread of the disease.

Socialist countries’ achievements
Cuba and China have stood out as models of how a pandemic should be dealt with.

Every revolution of the 20th cen- tury that set out to build socialism, at its onset, exhibited an all-out effort to improve health care. This history of prioritizing health instead of profit is the foundation of the remark- able achievements by both countries during the COVID-19 pandemic.

China and Cuba used every re- source possible – to produce vaccines and treatments to protect their own populations. At the same time – be- cause a pandemic cannot be “won” by vaccinating within the borders of one country – they both have shared medical teams, vaccines, treatments and supplies internationally, even while their own people were going hungry and being ne- glected. As of this writing, 843,000 people in the U.S. have died, and the omicron variant is now overwhelming hospitals with COVID patients, in- cluding thousands of children.


While it is true that the Commu- nist Party of China has prevailed in many capitalist corporations oper- ating there to contribute to health care and even preventive medi- ine is a privilege that communities of color and poor people in general are often denied.

Schistosomiasis – a parasitic disease from freshwater snails – in- fected in million Chinese people in the mid-1950s. Mao was so elated at the eradication campaign began- ning showing signs of success that he wrote poetry about it and spoke about it frequently.

China’s Health Silk Road
While it is true that the Commu- nist Party of China has prevailed in many capitalist corporations oper- ating there to contribute to health care and even preventive medi- ine is a privilege that communities of color and poor people in general are often denied.
While there is still much to be done to safeguard the Global South from the global threats of poverty, disease, and the possible new variants, China continues its global vaccine distribution efforts. By June 2021, the foreign ministry said that Chinese medical teams went to hard-hit Iran and Italy. By June 2021, the foreign ministry announced that China had delivered more than 350 million vaccine doses to more than 80 countries.

The inauguration on Jan. 27 is sure to be a qualitative change from the ceremony after the November 2017 inauguration where the official supporter Juan Orlando Hernandez, whose government continued the policies of privatization, militarization and added a pledge of 2 billion dollars to the national Development Cooperation Agency, and expanded social programs that included wage increases and other benefits keeping their economies tied to capitalist economics with further privatization and depletion of social welfare programs and those moving toward socialist economics, as Castro has promised in continuing the programs like wage increases and expanded social programs that Marx and Lenin began shortly after becoming president.

Finally, Ulloa said, the functioning of the government is another one of the three priorities to ensure that people begin to get their lives back and counter the last 12 years of dysfunction, poverty and repression.
Aprobado Plan de Ajuste de Deuda

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

El martes pasado la jueza federal de bancarotta Laura Taylor Swain, con todo el cinismo del mundo, anunció que aprobó el Plan de Ajuste para reestructurar la deuda pública de PR, de 70 mil millones de dólares, recalculando que había tomado en consideración las muchas peticiones de personas jubiladas que le habían escrito objetando ese plan.

Muchos achichincles del gobierno local celebran esa aprobación porque según ellos nos ahorrará el 80% del monto de la deuda de 70 mil millones.

Lo que no dicen es que este plan llevará a PR a un desastre económi- co peor del que ya estamos viviendo, y a una segunda deuda mucho más peligrosa, porque aquí no hay la ca- pacidad para pagar los 3.150 millones al año que se requieren.

Tampoco dicen que todo este manejo de la deuda se hizo a esca- las del pueblo, que la Junta de Con- trol Fiscal impuesta en el 2016 por el Congreso de EUA bajo la Ley PROME- SA, rechazó auditoría – consideran- do que mucha parte de esos bonos fueron emitidos ilegalmente. No di- cen que rehusaron establecer cuáles son los servicios esenciales como salud, educación, vivienda y seguri- dad que deben estar resguardados en todo proceso de quiebra.

Este Plan en contra del pueblo sus- pende 40 leyes para poder imponer su austerioridad y ahondará la división entre ricos y pobres. Y aunque no re- corta las pensiones ahora, no se po- drán ajustar para compensar el alza en el costo de vida por los próximos 10 años. Incluso, prohibe que la legis- latura local legícele sobre las pen- siones por esos 10 años. ¡Esto es lo que significa ser colonia!

Por eso, la agenda del movimiento tiene que ser por obligación la des- colonización!

¡Que viva Puerto Rico Libre!

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