

STRUGGLE ★ LA LUCHA

for Socialism / por el Socialismo



From Buffalo to Uvalde: Racism, violence come from the top

By John Parker

From Buffalo, New York, to Uvalde, Texas, it all comes from the top.

It comes from the top and trickles down to us in bullets and death. That's the reality in a capitalist country that glorifies murder by drone of people we've never heard of, diminishing life into a decision of U.S. corporate interests.

War is a game that all of the Democrats and Republicans are playing – all who voted for more high-tech weapons of death sent to Ukraine, where many will land in the hands of those whose ideology promotes killing in the name of white supremacy.

And the games continue in Somalia, where more African lives will be sacrificed to the weapons carried by U.S. troops being sent there now – more racism at work and, as U.N. research shows, more extremists created, a byproduct of Pentagon terrorism.

The almost \$100 billion sent to Ukraine since 2004, first for regime change, now for war with Russia, has made it a manufacturing plant for Nazi propaganda by the likes of the Azov Regiment and Right Sector.

According to an in-depth article by Die Zeit in Germany, neo-Nazi and white supremacist international networks are growing and becoming more dangerous, and Ukraine has become their center. Their Black Sun symbol was not only on the white supremacist shooter in Buffalo, but can be seen tattooed on cops here as well.

2021 was a record year for deadly police shootings since the Washington Post started keeping track in 2015. The disproportionate number of Black and Brown victims tells another story of white supremacy spread through state bodies of repression.

Those who fall victim at an impressionable age to an ideology that makes them feel powerful and provides an outlet to blame others for the problems of capitalist alienation and economic despair are watching and listening. And some will act.

As tragic as those actions are, the racist institutions of the capitalist state will use them to continue their proliferation of violence and white supremacy.

Why are there no common-sense safety mechanisms in place that would make it harder to acquire assault weapons without some type of background check, evaluation, etc.? Because it gets in the way of profits and support from certain right-wing and racist forces. And it's the ruling class that supplies the racist police forces nationally with the most dangerous assault weapons. Police and military weapons often find their way into the hands of white supremacists.

The indoctrination of youth into hate, violence and white supremacy is not an accident. It is a consequence of putting profits over society's responsibility to protect our youth from fascist propaganda that should not be allowed to build and recruit amongst those whom society has failed. There needs to be a financial and structural commitment to fighting racism,

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People in Buffalo, N.Y., march on May 15 after racist murder of 10 Black people.



Brooklyn, N.Y., march for Black Trans Lives, June 2020.

Resist capitalist 'trans panic' strategy

PRIDE 2022

The Socialist Unity Party/Partido de Socialismo Unido and Struggle-La Lucha newspaper salute the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirit community as we mark the 53rd anniversary of the heroic Stonewall Rebellion. The spirit of fightback exhibited at Stonewall is needed today as much as ever.

First of all, we offer our solidarity to the Black community of Buffalo, New York, where a white supremacist massacred 10 African American people on May 14. And we extend our hand to the Latinx community of Uvalde, Texas, where the grief from the tragic May 24 school shooting is compounded by Gov. Greg Abbott's attempt to exploit it for his anti-immigrant crusade.

As we enter Pride Month 2022, the United States is in the grip of a "trans panic." Like the "gay panics" that have come before, this is an attempt to divide workers and oppressed people at a time when the capitalist system is in crisis.

The anti-trans campaign is fueled by the rich and powerful, who are desperate to keep us divided by scapegoating the most vulnerable, by convincing those lacking in class consciousness that transgender, non-binary and gender-nonconforming people are the root of their problems – not the profit system that exploits us all.

Among them are "enlightened" oligarchs and companies like Elon Musk and Netflix, Jeff Bezos and Starbucks. They fear the movement of workers to unionize and communities to hold their empires accountable. Queer people play an important role in these struggles.

Trans panic = more violence

State legislatures across the country have taken up more than 300 anti-LGBTQ2S bills so far this year, most of them targeting trans people and especially trans children and youth.

Bodily autonomy, at the heart of trans people's ability to live under this system, is at stake, as courts and legislatures seek to turn back the clock to reinforce patriarchal capitalist norms that treat the bodies of women, children, people of color and LGBTQ2S people as the property of rich white cis men.

When Texas Gov. Abbott failed to get a law passed to criminalize gender-affirming care for trans kids,

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John Parker at front line in Donbass n6



SLL photo

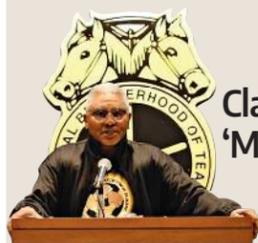
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One million people killed by capitalism

By Stephen Millies

One million people in the United States have died of COVID-19. Coronavirus was written on their death certificates as the cause.

But they were really killed by poverty, racism and capitalism.

Even compared to other capitalist countries, the U.S. has a much higher death rate from COVID-19. If the United States had the same number of COVID fatalities per thousand people as Australia does, 900,000 people would still be alive.

At the beginning of the pandemic, reactionaries scoffed at the coronavirus. The late, unlamented, bigoted windbag Rush Limbaugh told his 12 million radio listeners on Feb. 24, 2020, that the coronavirus was just the common cold.

The Wall Street Journal devoted an entire page of its March 25, 2020, issue to pour scorn on the risks. "Is COVID-19 as Deadly as They Say?" was the page's lead headline.

Two years later, over 84 million people in the U.S. were counted as having gotten the disease. The real number is much higher because of a lack of initial testing and unreported figures from home testing.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, half the U.S. population became infected with COVID-19. That includes 75 percent of children and adolescents.

Viruses don't discriminate, but capitalism does. In zip code 11369 — the East Elmhurst neighborhood of Queens, New York, where Malcolm

X lived with his family — one out of every 117 people died of COVID-19. That's a rate almost three times the U.S. average.

In the Navajo Nation, 1,771 people died of Dikos Ntsaaígíí-19 (COVID-19). Latinx people are 18% of the U.S. population while having 24% of the COVID cases.

Essential workers were deliberately put in harm's way. Nurses and other workers at Manhattan's Mount Sinai Hospital had to wear Hefty garbage bags as their personal protective equipment.

Over 150 transit workers in New York City died of the virus. Metropolitan Transit Authority chief safety officer Pat Warren initially forbade workers from wearing masks.

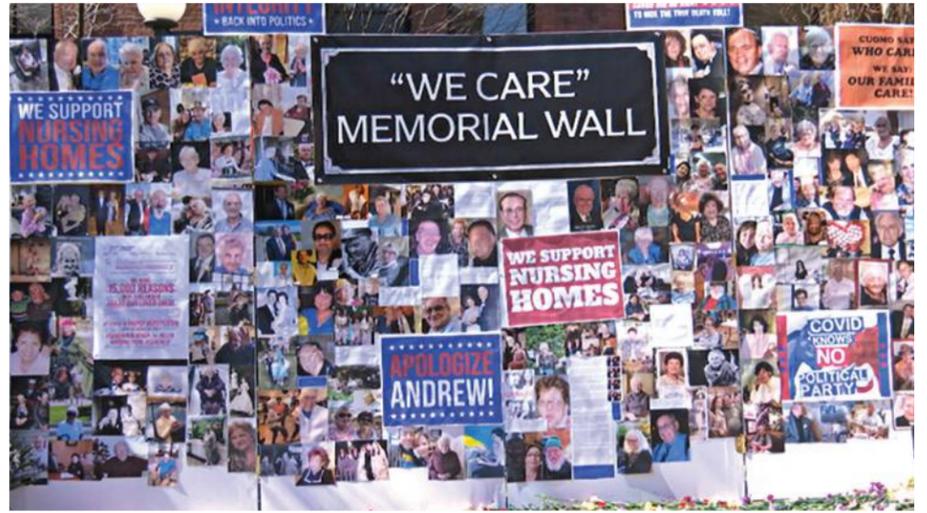
In the first 11 months of the pandemic, over 59,000 employees at the four biggest meatpacking companies became infected. At least 269 workers died in the industry.

Most of these workers were Latinx, Black and/or immigrants. John Tyson and other dead animal capitalists got Trump to sign an executive order that drove workers back to the unsafe plants.

Demanding Chinese people die

Another big killer during the pandemic is high rents. Behind the slumlord is the bank or insurance company owning the cockroach capitalist's mortgage.

Overcrowded housing makes social distancing impossible. Many are forced to double up in homes with their sister's or brother's family.



'We Care' memorial wall pays tribute to those who died of COVID-19 in New York nursing homes.

After the declining number of deaths in the last few months, there's been a new push to downplay wearing masks. Schools and colleges were reopened without adequate protection.

Then came the highly contagious BA.2 Omicron subvariant. U.S. COVID cases soared to 171,000 on May 18. That same day socialist Cuba, despite a cruel U.S. economic blockade, had 61 cases.

Also on May 18, the White House held its first pandemic briefing in six weeks.

One million COVID deaths in the U.S. means 30 people died in an average small town with a population of 10,000. Despite that miserable record, the capitalist media are attacking the People's Republic of China for doing too much to combat the coronavirus.

The Economist claimed in an April 16 editorial that "the zero-COVID policy has become a dead end from which the Communist Party has no quick exit." To this mouthpiece of the Anglo-American financial aristocracy, profits are always more precious than life, especially the lives of poor people.

Socialist China, with over four

times the population of the United States, has suffered 14,583 deaths from COVID-19. This figure includes the capitalist special administrative region of Hong Kong, which had 9,366 deaths.

Hong Kong lagged behind the rest of China in taking necessary safety measures against COVID. Now it's catching up.

Yet Hong Kong's death rate from the coronavirus is about a quarter of New York City's rate. Not only is the Big Apple the capital of capitalism. It's also a center of the \$4 trillion U.S. medical-industrial complex.

Eight medical schools are located in New York City, along with Rockefeller University, a leading research institution. That didn't help people in East Elmhurst too much.

In the first year of the pandemic, more than 3,600 health-care workers died of COVID in the United States. Despite these workers' valiant efforts, the capitalist medical system is unable to combat pandemics.

Socialist Cuba has the highest number of doctors per population in the world. But it doesn't have a single health insurance company.

We need what Cuba has: free, quality health care for all. 📌

Students march on Capitol in defense of reproductive rights



SLL PHOTO: KEVIN NIEMANN

By Kevin Niemann

Hundreds of Denver-area middle and high school students took to the streets on May 12 to resist the ongoing warfare against a woman's right to choose and reproductive rights generally.

"Hey-hey! Ho-ho! These sexist laws have got to go!" and "My body! My choice!" chants rang through the air as Denver youth and their parents marched on the Colorado State Capitol as part of a larger national student walkout in defense of reproductive rights and women's liberation. A recently-leaked draft opinion outlines plans for the Supreme Court to strike down the historic case regarding the right to an abortion.

The march was multinational in nature and led by Black and Brown student leaders. The students marched around the building for hours during an unseasonably warm day.

A 15-year-old woman from East High School in Denver did not mince words: "We're tired of these old white men deciding the future of our country when they'll be dead in 10 years." Another speaker, a Denver native attending Florida A&M University, testified to the horrors she has witnessed while attending college. Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis recently signed HB5, anti-abortion legislation, as well as the repressive HB1557 "Don't Say Gay" bill.

Student organizers noted that this would not be the last action planned in the city. 📌

From Buffalo to Uvalde

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white supremacy and the glorification of state-sponsored violence, including the numerous recruiting ads by the military. A federal requirement to teach history that includes the contributions of African and other non-European peoples is also a necessary step.

The resources and funding now going to imperialist war should instead be used for teachers, social workers and healthcare providers to be unencumbered in their most vital work — protecting our youth from those who would destroy their lives and end their potential to become loving, productive human beings.

What is needed is an end to the culture of militarism, war and violence, and the acceptance and encouragement of state-sanctioned killings of Black and Brown peoples by the Border Patrol and police. What is needed now is for working people to decide what type of procedures are necessary to keep their children safe, not only from mass shooting incidents but from law enforcement

as well. This needs to be done while we build a movement to get at the root cause of this violence.

It's curious that mass shooters like Dylan Roof in Charleston, South Carolina, and Payton Gendron in Buffalo — both white — were taken into custody alive, but not Salvador Ramos in Uvalde. Whatever the reason, that resonates with history.

It's also curious that the fascist Alex Jones is allowed to continue to spread racism and anti-trans lies — this time falsely blaming a transgender woman for the shooting in Texas. Jones' right to "free speech" is vigorously enforced, just as the Azov Regiment's is on Facebook, while anti-fascist voices are silenced.

But it all comes from and is encouraged from ... the top. And it will only stop when capitalism, the generator of white supremacy and violence, is toppled.

John Parker is the Socialist Unity Party candidate for U.S. Senate in California on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket.

Million Worker March leader talks with Teamsters Roots of unity in the labor movement

Clarence Thomas — labor organizer, retired member of International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10, leader of the Million Worker March Movement and author of the recently released “Mobilizing in our Own Name: Million Worker March” — spoke at Teamsters Joint Council 16 in Flushing, New York, on May 14. Following are excerpts from his presentation.

By Clarence Thomas

Let me first say that I am glad to be here, on this part of a whirlwind book-signing tour. The Teamsters’ meeting is special and I’m going to get right into the reason why.

The Teamsters and Longshore Workers represent two of the strongest industrial unions in the nation, if not the world. We also share a radical rank-and-file militancy at the point of production.

Rise of industrial unionism

In May 1934, longshoremen on the West Coast and Teamsters in the Midwest took part in important struggles in the history of the U.S. labor movement: the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters Strike and the West Coast Maritime Strike led by longshoremen in San Francisco.

Local leaders associated with the Communist League of America led the Minneapolis Teamsters Strike. The strike paved the way for the organization of over-the-road drivers and the Teamsters union.

Bloody Friday is the name of the event which occurred in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on July 20, 1934, when police shot at truck drivers who were flying pickets, injuring 67 picketers and killing strikers John Belor and Henry Ness. An investigation determined, “Police took direct aim at the pickets and fired to kill.”

When solidarity strikes protested the shooting, the governor declared martial law and deployed 4,000 troops. On July 24, over 100,000 people lined the streets of the route of the funeral procession for Henry Ness.

The strike was pivotal to Minneapolis’ strong union tradition and is seen as a critical moment for the Teamsters and the labor movement.

This outcome led to the enactment of legislation acknowledging the right of workers to organize.

July 5, 1934, marked a turning point in the West Coast waterfront strike. One of the demands was to end the shape-up, where each morning longshore workers would gather in front of the ferry landing in San Francisco to beg for jobs and to pay bribes to get a day’s work.

The union demanded the right to a worker-controlled hiring hall to end the shape-up and a six-hour workday so that work could be shared on the West Coast with their union brothers during the Great Depression.

On July 5, employers tried to open the San Francisco port with scab trucks escorted by the police at Pier 38. The police tear-gassed unarmed strikers. At least 100 strikers and their supporters were injured.

Howard Sperry, a longshoreman and a World War I veteran, and Nick Bordoise, a union cook and strike supporter, were both shot in the back and killed by plainclothes police officers outside the union



PHOTOS: DELORES LEMON-THOMAS

Clarence Thomas, third from left, with Teamsters, Nest-er Cabassa, Victor Mojica, Wendy Peralton, Carlos Blanco, Richard Melinski and Kenneth Melinski in Flushing, N.Y.

Left to right, Joe Belmante, Ozzie Loverme, Clarence Thomas, Chris Silvera, Harry Nichols, Jesus Rivera, Barry Jackson, also pictured at Joint Council 16 hall on May 14.

headquarters. This date is known as Bloody Thursday. Teamsters had Bloody Friday; longshore workers had Bloody Thursday.

The following day, thousands of strikers’ families and sympathizers, including Teamsters, took part in a funeral procession down Market Street in San Francisco, stretching more than a mile and a half.

The city was paralyzed by a general strike. Six workers were shot or beaten to death on the West Coast by police or company goons during the strike, which lasted for 99 days.

These terrible events galvanized public support. Following Bloody Thursday, similar incidents up and down the coasts created a wave of rank-and-file unrest that conservative American Federation of Labor leaders were unable to stop.

This gives you some idea as to why our two respective unions are so strong. Brothers and sisters: this is our history and it is a hidden history.

The 1934 West Coast waterfront strike led by the Communist Party USA and Toledo Auto Workers strike led by the American Workers Party were catalysts for the rise of industrial unionism in the 1930s, much of which was organized by the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

International Workers’ Day

One of the things I want to talk about is International Workers’ Day — known as May Day — which the Million Worker March Movement pledged to reclaim.

As an African American, I know quite well what the enslavement of African Americans has meant to me, my family and many generations of African Americans who lived on these shores. We have been denied our names, our history, our culture, our traditions and our freedom.

Many people think May Day is a communist holiday. Yes, it is. It is an official holiday in socialist countries. But it started here in the U.S.

We don’t grow up understanding the importance of labor solidarity, or that whether a person is Black, white, Latino, trans or straight, we are all working people. If you are unemployed, you still are a worker. That’s a common bond.

The history of the labor movement is hidden because we didn’t learn how we got the eight-hour workday.

In 1886, workers in Chicago who manufactured the McCormick reapers were in the forefront of the struggle for the eight-hour workday. Children and women worked under inhuman conditions, while they and the men worked 12, 14, 16 hours a day.

Workers all over the world stood to attention when four men were framed up for throwing dynamite

at the police department in 1886 and martyred by a kangaroo court.

There is a common thread that runs through labor history. That is the role of police, who represent the bosses, the state and the privileged.

We must understand that history — and the role of the police department. Whenever we have a picket, when there is a labor beef, and the police come out, they aren’t in solidarity with us. They come out on the side of the bosses. That’s their job.

There is a reason why the government and big business did not want the working class to celebrate May Day. They gave us Labor Day. That has no connection to our struggle.

The reason why the Teamsters are who they are is because of the militant history that we share.

Class interests — theirs and ours

We are working-class people whose interests are separate from those of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. Their interests are not the same as ours and I can prove it.

Most people in this country would like to have national health care. Do we have it? No. Most working people in this country would like to have a living wage. A living wage today would really be calculated somewhere between \$25 and \$30 an hour.

The bosses want to make it appear as if there is something criminal about a worker making six figures, but they applaud the likes of Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates. They say the Teamsters and the Longshore

Workers make too much money because they figure that we should be making the same wages as they pay people in Walmart.

The Democratic and Republican parties are funded in the interests of the rich. If they had their way, there wouldn’t be any unions.

We did not get the eight-hour work day, pensions and vacations because the bosses loved us. We got that because people fought and died for that. There’s nothing wrong with us standing up for our own class interests.

We don’t have a labor party in this country. They have them in other countries. Have you ever thought about why? Because they want us to believe that our interests are synonymous with the Republican and Democratic parties.

Let’s look at that. People in other countries don’t have to pay for their children to go to college, because they believe that a nation that does not invest in the youth doesn’t have a future. A country that really serves everybody would not be one with tremendous examples of income inequality.

Why do we have homelessness and poverty? We must be very clear as working people that we have our own class interest and that is what led to the Million Worker March.

To learn more about the formation of the MWM, read Clarence Thomas’ entire presentation online or listen to his speech, go to MillionWorkerMarch.com. Struggle-La Lucha will be publishing more from his book tour.

From transcription by Gloria Verdieu.

Clarence Thomas on East Coast book tour ‘Mobilizing in Our Own Name: MILLION WORKER MARCH’

By Lallan Schoenstein

This May, Clarence Thomas, a retired member of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union Local 10 in San Francisco, is touring the East Coast to broadcast his book’s claim: “It is the time to advance our own demands, and to proclaim a political agenda in our own vital interests.”

Thomas talked about the struggle that culminated in the Million Worker March (MWM) at the Lincoln Memorial in 2004 and about the struggles tackled by the MWM movement in the years that have followed.

All of this is covered in his anthology “Mobilizing in Our Own Name.”

Thomas first spoke at the Al-Awda Conference on May 6.

On May 11 he spoke at The People’s Forum, joined by key organizers of the MWM: Brenda Stokely, Larry

Holmes, Johnnie Stevens and Sharon Black. Gloria Verdieu, an editor of the book, started the panel discussion.

Thomas spoke at the Teamster Joint Council 16 in Flushing on May 14, invited by Local 808 Principal Officer and MWM organizer Chris Silvera.

His final meeting was May 21, led by Charles Jenkins, vice chair Transport Workers Union Local 100, president of NY Chapter Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, and MWM organizer.

In between the meetings, Thomas spoke several times on WBAI and on a Zoom call celebrating Malcolm X’s birthday by People’s Organization for Progress in Newark, N.J.

Some of the urgent issues addressed in these forums have been organizing drives at Amazon, Starbucks and the labor fight against white supremacy after the murderous racist rampage in Buffalo, N.Y. 📄

Beyond abortion, a struggle to win our future

By Cheryl LaBash
Havana, Cuba

May 14 — When you have touched a woman you have struck a rock, says a South African proverb. It continues, you have dislodged a boulder, you will be crushed. The U.S. Supreme Court justices who penned the recently leaked draft majority opinion abolishing voluntary legal pregnancy termination should take heed.

Although the current debate centers on the issue of the women's right to make decisions over their own bodies, in fact much more is at the root. Today's political flashpoint holds within it the urgent need to overturn patriarchal gender norms, class oppression and the capitalist economic system that perpetuates them. The fight is really about life for the majority, not just for the few.

This is not political jargon. The combat between the past and the future can be seen in real time when Cuba's proposed Families Code and 2022 National Program for the Advancement of Women is compared with the hateful onslaught faced by women in the United States, where the Equal Rights Amendment is still blocked.

In the United States, rights that were thought to have been won, at least in part, are now being slashed, eroded or reversed like the right to legal, safe abortion, or like universal voting rights. It must be noted that the U.S. is still the only industrialized country without a national health plan, so payment for medical procedures even where legal may not be covered by private insurance and require out of pocket payment. A poll published by CNBC.com reported that "66% of Americans fear they won't be able to afford health care" in 2021.

All Cubans can afford health care

On the other hand, no Cuban need fear they won't be able to afford health care in any year. Despite the undeniable fact that the U.S. economic, commercial, financial and media war against revolutionary socialist Cuba hurts every aspect of daily Cuban life, all health care from organ transplants to abortion is the right of every Cuban who needs it. Not Obama Care, not Medicare for All — free, universal, community-based preventive health care.

Revolutionary Cuba leaves no stone unturned to provide these rights, even hampered by the laser-focused, intensified U.S. blockade. Somehow, through working together with solidarity, they do it: Witness the herculean COVID-19 vaccine development, now expanding to protect the six-month to two-



Photo: Bill Hackwell

year age group.

The right to health care and debate about abortion were settled in Cuba long before the recent green bandana advances in Argentina, Colombia and Chile. Nonetheless, the Cuban people, too, are in the midst of debating rights — but not the rights for capitalists and landlords to exploit and steal or Big Pharma extortion for medicines. The groundbreaking 1975 Family Code that codified gender equality in the home and in society is being updated, modernized, and strengthened with more equality and inclusion, more protection, not less. Significantly, even the title has been changed from Family Code to Families Code.

As presented by Teresa Amarelle Boué, Secretary General of the Federation of Cuban Women, at the March 2022 U.S.-Cuba Normalization Conference in New York City, the proposed revisions include the rights of children and seniors, as well as expanding benefits important to and sought by women workers such as in-workplace childcare. Even with resources severely stunted by the U.S. economic warfare, the code proposes to boost income 50% for working women with three or more children under 18. Six thousand one hundred and eleven of these women and their children already received a new home free of charge, fully resolving their housing needs. Even more could be done without the U.S. blockade, she said. Community laundries are a new win-win proposal that provides new jobs while alleviating some household labor.

Child poverty across the U.S.

Contrast this with the U.S. where a "right to life" banner is cynically used to restrict women's reproductive autonomy. In the U.S.,

right to life is purported to begin at conception, but stops before birth, sending Black maternity and infant death rates to scandalous heights in the richest country on the globe. In 2020, 16% of children under 18 years of age, 11.6 million, lived in poverty. Students graduate from university with unpayable student loans. Tickets to concerts and sporting events are out of reach for most. The right to health care, education, housing, sports and culture and a dignified life with the possibility of developing each human's potential are all constitutionally guaranteed in Cuba.

Gender reassignment has notably been free in Cuba as part of medical care. Now free fertility assistance including surrogacy under certain conditions is included in the proposed Families Code, something unthinkably unaffordable to many in the U.S. who are unable to have children.

The Families Code provides legal rights for the various family formations that actually exist in Cuba today — officially married, or committed relationships without formality, same-sex relationships, grandparents or other close relatives raising children and more. Rights are expanded, not restricted, so each family choice and need is respected. Amarelle explained the improvements this way:

"This is a code of opportunities and alternatives, of adding and multiplying, that recognizes and guarantees rights for those who didn't have them. In no way does it affect or limit the rights already recognized for others.

"It does not establish molds nor does it require anyone to choose a family model that is not the one desired by each family.

"It is a broad and comprehensive code, revolutionary and modern." (transcript of simultaneous translation by Martin Koppel, <https://youtube.com/wjJfDeVi3gI>)

Cuba expands rights of children

The rights of children are expanded. The term "patria potestaria" or parental authority was replaced with parental responsibility, meaning physically and psychologically capable to guarantee and protect the rights, well-being and the happiness of the daughters and sons, provide participation, to listen to them, pro-

tect them, bring them love, foster their growth and independence in an atmosphere of affection.

The discussions are not pro-forma to check off some abstract requirement, but take into consideration the comments, additions, suggestions and proposals gathered through multiple opportunities in 78,000 assemblies. As of the March conference, the version under discussion is the 24th draft. After approval by the National Assembly the final product of the consultations will then be voted on by the people in a national referendum, where as a result of the consultation processes, voters actually understand what they are voting on.

The secret weapon of socialist Cuba

Equality and development of the potential of each human being is the secret weapon of socialist Cuba. The current U.S. efforts to push women back into some past family form conflicts with development of technology and our globalized world.

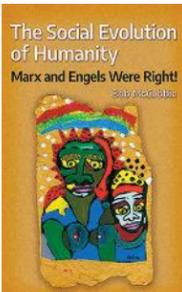
This equality was fundamental in the revolutionary process itself, recognized and promoted by the historic leader of the 1959 Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz. Women clandestine leaders like Celia Sanchez, Heidi Santamaria, Melba Hernandez and Vilma Espin also joined Fidel and the July 26 Movement in the Sierra Maestra.

Fidel also supported the formation of a battalion of women combatants, the Marianas, named after Mariana Grajales, mother of five sons including Antonio Maceo who fought and died for an end to slavery and Cuban independence from Spain. Weapons were scarce, but Fidel prioritized arming the Marianas, who were regarded as the best fighters. After the victory over the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship Fidel and Vilma Espin founded the Federation of Cuban Women to erase the legacy of colonialism through education and job opportunities. Tradition's chains were severed when thousands of young women joined Cuba's historic Literacy Campaign, teaching the country to read and write in a year. The success of this process is evident today where women scientists and technicians are integral leaders in the development and production of Cuba's five COVID-19 vaccines.

The following statistics were presented by the FMC delegation to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66):

Women: 67.4% of workers in education, more than 70% of judges and attorneys general, 62% of doctors and 64.2% of those working in international collaboration in countries around the world. Participation in decision-making is increasing. As of the end of 2021, women held 51.6% of State and Government positions including 52.3% of the State Council, 52.7% of Municipal People's Power Assemblies, 53.22% of parliamentary representatives, 54.35% of the Municipal Assembly presidents and vice-presidents.

So what are we fighting for? The Supreme Court has forced the question. Let's answer it. Cuba represents our future. 🇨🇺



Paperback or Kindle: <https://tinyurl.com/vwarcv7>

The Social Evolution of Humanity Marx and Engels were right! by Bob McCubbin

This study of the evolution of humanity focuses on human social/sexual relations and, in particular, the changing social status of women. It offers a selection of scientific evidence that updates and augments the viewpoint expressed in Frederick Engels' masterful work, *'Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.'*

McCubbin is the author of 'Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View.' Published in 1976, during the first wave of the modern LGBTQ2S movement, McCubbin's unparalleled achievement was to offer a historical analysis of how LGBTQ2S oppression developed.

‘U.S.-NATO proxy war in Ukraine is extension of the war against us’

Presentation on behalf of the Socialist Unity Party and Women In Struggle at VII International Seminar for Peace and the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases in Guantanamo, Cuba, May 4.

By Gloria Verdieu

Since the last international seminar in 2019, Cuba has achieved much – the implementation of a vaccination program that benefited not only the Cuban population, but those most in need of vaccines and health care around the world, by sending doctors and medicine abroad.

In spite of a coup supported by the U.S. in 2009, and the subsequent support of dictators loyal to the U.S. government, the Honduran people were able to overcome the violence and terrorism and courageously build a movement capable of electing a socialist and anti-imperialist woman, Xiomara Castro. After becoming president, Castro immediately canceled the electric bills for 1 million people suffering from poverty created by the corruption of the former president.

Other targets of U.S. imperialism like Bolivia and Venezuela have successfully maintained their sovereignty in spite of the illegal and devastating sanctions by the U.S. and its complicit imperialist allies in Europe, Canada, Australia and Israel.

Now, what have the U.S. rulers done in that time? Well, they continue to flounder in their attempts at containing the coronavirus due to their dependence on the market, rather than a more democratic and centralized approach in line with the international community. They contributed too little too late to combating the unequal access to vaccines suffered by developing countries, especially on the continent of Africa.

The U.S. government is now aggravating the crisis by taking vital resources needed to combat a further spread of the virus for the purpose of sending \$33 billion more to fund a proxy war in Ukraine, including arming Nazi military regiments there, and extending NATO’s hunger for oil profits and regime change – targeting Russia and China.

Regime change in Ukraine

Starting in 2004, the U.S. spent over \$22.4 billion for regime change in Ukraine. Washington orchestrated and funded a coup in 2014 with billions of dollars in weapons, training and public relations from the National Endowment for Democracy. Much of that funding and training went to self-proclaimed fascist and white supremacist organizations, some of whom carry the symbols of Nazis they admire. They even celebrate the collaboration of those in Ukraine who supported Nazi genocide against Jewish people in World War II.

As Obama sold out the people of Africa with the further implementation of AFRICOM, so has Ukrainian President Zelensky with his collaboration and promotion of Nazism – as when he recently introduced a member of the Azov Battalion to the Greek Parliament, and appointed self-proclaimed Nazis to political office, like the current governor of Odessa.



SLL PHOTO

Fernando Gonzalez Lloret, one of the Cuban 5 heroes, pictured with May Day Brigadista Gloria Verdieu. Gonzalez is president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP).

These are the same forces that have murdered and terrorised the people of Lugansk and Donetsk in the Donbass region for eight years, causing the deaths of 14,000 people. It was the Azov Battalion and similar forces, now an official part of the Ukrainian military, that were primarily responsible for those deaths and the increased genocide. It was only curbed when the Donbass people’s request for assistance to stop the humanitarian crisis was met by Russian military intervention.

We believe that the people of Lugansk and Donetsk, who are rarely mentioned, even by so-called anti-imperialists in the anti-war movement, had every right to ask for assistance to save the lives of their children. And we believe that the greatest threat to humanity today is the continued expansion of NATO, willing to use nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as the U.S. did when it bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing 80,000 civilians in seconds, then tens of thousands more slowly and painfully.

We believe that Russia has every right to defend itself in not allowing another NATO member state on its borders, especially one with a military led by Nazi regiments that could be put in possession of nuclear arms.

We hear much in the Pentagon’s propaganda machine – the Western corporate media – about the targeting of civilians by Russia. Much of this has been proven false, and even contradicted by Pentagon advisers. The media’s faith in the U.S. State Department information comes in spite of the knowledge that contradictory news is being suppressed in Ukraine. Three television stations were closed for not reporting coverage favorable to the Ukrainian government.

Western media help fascists

Much information came out in Ukraine exposing the Azov Battalion when it took over hospitals, schools and apartment buildings in Mariupol. The U.S. media continued the narrative of attacks on civilian

buildings and not Azov outposts. Doctored and mislabeled videos and photos were prevalent during the beginning of the Russian intervention, even showing Israeli bombings and Palestinian resistance as “evidence” of Russian brutality and Ukrainian resistance.

This follows a long history of U.S. corporate media misinformation to push war – from the sinking of the Lusitania to the Gulf of Tonkin incident to “weapons of mass destruction.” The corporate media were also willing accomplices in the destruction of Libya and Syria, using blatant lies and unchecked information from the U.S. State Department.

The bombing by Nazi-led forces of the center of the city of Donetsk, killing over 20 civilians waiting at an ATM machine, was verified by various organizations in Donetsk, media outlets and independent journalists in the Donbass region. But you never saw that report because the TV reporters and news publications in Ukraine that report those types of stories have been closed down. Those who would have protested and reported this missile attack on civilians in Donetsk, like Alexander Matyushenko from the Levitsa association in Dnipropetrovsk (Dnipro), or the 37 journalists detained in early March, have been jailed.

In Kiev, arrests began even earlier. On Feb. 27, brothers Mikhail Kononovich and Aleksandr Kononovich, leaders of the Ukrainian Communist Youth, members of the World Federation of Democratic Youth and ethnic Belarusians, were seized and imprisoned along with members of other organizations.

As I speak, one of our Socialist Unity Party members is traveling in Russia and Donbass, gathering more information on the real situation.

NATO expansion, NATO wars

Since 1990, when the Soviet Union unilaterally disbanded the Warsaw Pact military alliance, NATO has expanded from 17 to 30 member states. In 1999, U.S.-led NATO began raining bombs on the people of Yugoslavia,

bombing 10,000 homes and killing thousands of people, including three journalists at the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade.

Despite the end of the alleged threat from the Warsaw Pact, the belligerence continued with the unfathomable killing of 500,000 children in Iraq by the U.S. But this is just the tip of the iceberg of victims of U.S. and NATO wars, including the millions killed in Vietnam, Korea, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and Yemen. Now slavery exists in Libya, because of the war waged by the Obama administration and NATO – a reality that undoubtedly is destroying the lives of children.

In Yemen, U.S. assistance to the war led by Saudi Arabia is causing the starvation of millions of children, according to United Nations estimates. Like Trump and Obama, the Biden administration continues the endless wars abroad and the racist wars by police and ICE against people in the U.S., including immigrants, already victimized by U.S. economic wars against their countries, targeted by drones and Border Patrol on the U.S. borders.

The latest U.S.-NATO proxy war, with the corporate media acting as its propaganda arm, carries the danger of igniting World War III, and will do nothing but exacerbate the domestic and international crises of global warming, critical lack of health care, food insecurity and starvation – crises most affecting children.

Capitalism an open wound

Capitalism in the U.S. is exposed like an open wound. Its proclivity towards war is unacceptable, and today we face an unprecedented challenge to stop a possible world war.

We understand that the crisis of capitalism forces imperialist countries to desperately further siphon the surplus value created by working people and either steal or destroy the productive capacity of lesser capitalist powers like Russia. Russia’s GDP is smaller than that of South Korea, with an almost neocolonial economy dependent on the exchange of raw materials – not the export of capital – to survive.

That’s an important distinction. It explains why Nicaragua, Venezuela, Cuba, Iran, Syria, Zimbabwe and other targets of U.S. imperialism would suffer most if the U.S.-led NATO forces are successful in this war – not to mention the threat of another NATO member state on the border of Russia, this time potentially with nuclear weapons controlled by a Nazi-led military.

Our historic mission right now is to expose how U.S. imperialism’s escalation of its proxy war in Ukraine exacerbates the crisis of workers and oppressed communities at home and worldwide.

We must highlight the fact that the U.S.-NATO proxy war in Ukraine is an extension of the war against us, so that our working class can understand the source and solution to their problem, and begin dismantling the most dangerous threat to humanity today – U.S. imperialism.

Watch tinyurl.com/y3r9w7qm

Fact-finding trip to Donbass: A front-line

By John Parker

I had just left the Lugansk People's Republic, making my way to an interview in Moscow, when I saw a May 11 CNN story claiming Russia had targeted civilians in the Ukrainian city of Odessa. This was after the bombing of a hotel and shopping center there. When such structures are bombed, one assumes that they were filled with civilians.

Odessa was also the location of a massacre that took place after the 2014 coup, funded for years prior by the United States. The fascist element that was part of that coup burned the Odessa House of Trade Unions on May 2, 2014, killing progressives, socialists, trade unionists and anti-fascists.

My friend and guide during the Lugansk portion of my trip was Alexey Albu, who was inside that burning building and one of the few who escaped. At the time, Alexey was an elected member of the Odessa Regional Council. He was a former member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine and at that time the local coordinator of Union Borotba (Struggle). He and others were working on solving the contradictions created in society by the coup in a peaceful way through the still-existing legislative processes.

However, by May 2, time had run out. The fascists who praised Nazi collaborators and pushed ultra-nationalism against the Russian population turned even more violent against any opposition. Political repression and jailings were on the rise by the coup government, and six days after the massacre, Alexey found out he was to be arrested. He and his family then fled to Crimea where they felt safe. He later went to Lugansk to continue his political work, but had to separate from his family for four years to do so.

As he is from Odessa and still has many connections there, I wanted to ask Alexey about the bombing on May 11. Alexey responded: "Yes, Russia attacked the luxury hotel Grande Pettine, because there were foreign mercenaries operating there. And the big shopping and entertainment center Riviera was attacked because they made it into a warehouse for NATO weapons.

"It's also important to know that Russia used high-precision missiles, so as not to cause harm to civilians. And it is very interesting that CNN did not pay attention when more than 40 civilians were drowned in blood and burned in fire in the Trade

Union building on the second of May 2014," said Alexey.

Challenging U.S. narrative

The Russian intervention in Ukraine began Feb. 24, at the request of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (DPR and LPR). About a month later, unlikely sources – analysts and advisers working for the Pentagon – became whistleblowers in an exposé published by Newsweek, "Putin's Holding Back."

The authors, many of whom were military officers, had to remain anonymous in order to be as truthful as possible, since they were still working as advisers. The article challenged the official narrative that Russian President Putin was targeting civilians.

Regarding a similar earlier accusation by the corporate media about a Russian bombing, said to have targeted "peacekeeping facilities" (as if belonging to the U.N.), one of the analysts responded: "And the so-called peacekeeper training ground [in Yavoriv] was hit because it was the place where the 'international legion' [Ukrainian military unit, training international mercenaries] was to have trained."

This quote from one of the advisers sums up their motivation for becoming whistleblowers: "I'm frustrated by the current narrative – that Russia is intentionally targeting civilians, that it is demolishing cities, and that Putin doesn't care. Such a distorted view stands in the way of finding an end before true disaster hits or the war spreads to the rest of Europe," said this Pentagon adviser and U.S. Air Force officer.

It's interesting that CNN reported that only one person died and five were hospitalized in the May 11 bombing. In a shopping center and hotel filled with people, as they implied, many more likely would have died.

One of the ways to determine whether someone is telling the truth when you have no access to events far away, under media whiteouts and the jailing of journalists, is to either catch the liar at other lies to bring their credibility into question, or find a way to get access to the location of the events.

We did both.

Fact-finding mission

On April 27, I began a trip to the LPR in the Donbass region as part of a fact-finding mission organized by Struggle-La Lucha newspaper in the U.S. to gather eyewitness observations and testimony of Lugansk residents, some of whom I found

were living in shelters near the front lines of the war. The loud blasts are a constant reminder for them of the artillery of the Ukrainian military, targeting apartment buildings nearby and hopefully continuing to miss them.

This trip would not have been possible if not for our friends from Borotba, who we've been collaborating with for eight years. Borotba was founded in 2011 and in the process of becoming a political party, but the Maidan coup interrupted that process.

While passing through Russia on the way to Lugansk, I spoke to progressive, socialist and communist organizations at the Moscow May Day celebrations and a commemoration of the Odessa Massacre on May 2.

I also interviewed visiting journalists from Belarus who were covering the May 9 Victory Day parade, commemorating the defeat of Nazi Germany and honoring the 27 million Soviet people who died fighting fascism – a fact which everyone should consider as context in today's vilification of Russia. Soviet Russia, along with the rest of the USSR, was essential in order to defeat Nazi Germany in World War II.

Although Russia is no longer socialist, that doesn't change the fact that the parents and grandparents of most of the people in the country sacrificed for that victory. That deep understanding of the dangers of fascism did not go away with the counterrevolution. Nor did the targeting of this region by U.S. imperialism end.

The U.S. government says that the current Russian intervention was an uninvited "invasion," that the justification of self-defense and concern over the growth of fascist forces in the Ukrainian government and military is just a smokescreen designed to facilitate the takeover of that country. They claim the Russian military is targeting civilians and the Ukrainian military is not.

The Biden administration also says that it would be better for all of the people in the region if the Russian military withdrew its troops, with no acknowledgment of the eight-year Ukrainian war against the people of the Donbass region.

Surprisingly, a significant portion of organizations here in the U.S. that consider themselves anti-imperialist and socialist agree with the assessment pushed by the U.S. State Department.

The celebration of victory against the Nazis, by the way, is illegal in Ukraine. President Zelensky will not allow it. I know, the irony is unbelievable, but the fact remains – celebrating Victory Day in Kiev and anywhere controlled by the Ukrainian regime is illegal.

In spite of Zelensky's recent announcement giving lip service to the day for cover, the fact is that there was a curfew in place that day to discourage it. While in Lugansk, I asked someone what would happen if I were to have a sign celebrating Victory Day in Kiev. The answer was that in five minutes I would no longer be carrying that sign, and probably would be taken to prison.

But perhaps that's just a quirky policy meant for public safety? Let's dig deeper.

Rubizhne: Life on the front line

"Don't step there!" a soldier from the LPR warned me as my foot was about to step into the grass, away from the established path of the soldier walking in front of me.

This trek began in the morning, hitching a ride with the Lugansk People's Militia to an area in the north of Lugansk, close to the front line of war against the Ukrainian military, where the LPR with the help of Russian soldiers recently liberated a residential area in Rubizhne. This city in Lugansk was previously occupied by Kiev forces.

Here there was a shelter in an abandoned apartment complex. Unexploded armaments and even mines from the Ukrainian military littered the area, the soldier said.

Of course, I obliged and changed my path. I also immediately understood why no children were running around the grounds or using the playground. Instead, they mostly seemed to stay in the shelter or sometimes came out to play soccer in a small patch of land directly in front of it, under the watchful eye of a young LPR soldier.

At that moment my parental feelings kicked in and all I wanted to do was play with them, comfort them. But I had work to do.

This was once a lively apartment complex with a school and a beautiful playground. But now it looked like the backdrop to a "Walking Dead" episode.

Borotba's Alexey Albu accompanied me and provided translation. The video linked here includes some of these conversations and footage from this portion of the trip: tinyurl.com/y2v3r8b2

We spoke with the woman in charge of the shelter, Larisa. She reluctantly took the position of caretaker for the shelter, voted in by the residents who trusted her. It definitely seemed like the right choice, because she keeps it in the best order that can be expected in these times. With all the work and responsibilities, she still manages to share compassion with those in need of comfort – war makes apparent the devils, but also the angels.

Basic foodstuffs and supplies – grains, water, and diapers – were neatly stored away. Getting food is especially a challenge for people who have nowhere else to go. Some residents who had alternative dwellings and were not disabled left Rubizhne, but the area is still not safe for travel. Many stayed to remain under the protection of the soldiers of both the LPR and Russia.

Russia provides humanitarian aid

Humanitarian aid arrives frequently in Rubizhne, delivered by Russian soldiers. (In the short time I was at the border entering Lugansk from Russia, I saw 10 large trucks full of humanitarian aid entering the LPR.)

While we were at the shelter, two shipments of aid were delivered in a van, which we helped bring into the shelter. The box I was carrying almost broke open, with utensils and napkins barely making it to the bench where other items, especially diapers, were being placed.

Larisa explained that fuel, which is now hard to come by, had been used as their primary source for electric-



Photo: Izvestia

John Parker in the Lugansk People's Republic.

shelter in Rubizhne



SLL PHOTO

In the LPR, John Parker points to an explosion visible in the distance.

ity, refrigeration and water (running the generator and water pump). So the aid is essential in order that people do not starve or die of thirst.

“Because of the war, they had problems getting assistance to the shelter,” Alexey explained. The trade unions in charge of delivering food in Lugansk were not able to, due to the area becoming a war zone, meaning they had to hand over that task to the military.

Despite the danger and the fact that the Ukrainian military still controlled the area, the Russian and Lugansk soldiers, at great risk to their own lives, were able to get some aid to the residents of the shelter even before the area was liberated.

Recalling this moment, and the effect it had on her own child, brought Larisa to tears. She needed a minute to recover.

“Ukrainian soldiers did not help at all,” she said when she returned. “That is unacceptable. No one from the Ukrainian side asked us, visited us. I had supported Ukraine, but after I saw how they left these people I no longer supported them.”

Accompanying us was a journalist from an Italian media organization. He asked why people stayed here at the shelter, and if they were allowed to leave. Although Larisa made the facility as comfortable as possible, the conditions were hard and the constant thunder of bombings was heard during our entire time there.

Alexey explained that the roads here, although dangerous now, were even more dangerous during Ukrainian control, so leaving was not a safe option then. It became more possible after the area came under Russian control. “We tell people it is not safe, but if they want to leave, of course they can. No one will stop them,” explained Larisa.

Another issue Larisa wanted to address was the propaganda that has spread throughout Ukrainian society saying that the Russian soldiers rape and kill the people living in areas they’ve taken control of. She wanted to make it clear that this was not true.

“No, everything was very good, relations were very good and polite with the Russian soldiers. Even when we ask for some special foods like coffee or tea, they give it to us.”

Soldiers and civilians

To get a feel for the character of the relationship between the residents and the Russian and LPR soldiers, here’s one encounter that stuck with me. When we visited the school in the complex, which is now a shelter, I saw a woman reprimanding one of the soldiers for having the humanitarian aid truck remain too long at the entrance.

Alexey said she was complaining that if they had to evacuate the school quickly, the truck would be in the way. The soldier politely nodded and agreed to move it soon, as if she was in charge. From her tone it seemed like that to me, and it definitely didn’t reflect a repressive relationship – not for the residents anyway.

Both in the village of Krymskoye and here in Rubizhne, folks talked about living underground, in their basements, to avoid being hit by bombs. In this shelter we walked down the stairs into a dark hall where we had to use the light from our

phones to navigate, leading to the basement. Everyone slept with cots on the concrete floors, with just a few feet of space between each other, to have some semblance of privacy and illusion of personal space. Paint chips were peeling from the green concrete walls. Most of those spaces contained many members of a family.

We interviewed a woman who looked like she was in her 80s. She was alone in her space. Unlike the majority in Lugansk, she spoke Ukrainian. She was bundled in layers of clothing, although the weather was nice around noon, in the 60s°F (18°C). At night temperatures drop into the 40s°F (7°C) this time of year. Given the situation with no heat and her age, the layers made sense.

With a handkerchief hiding her tears, she spoke to us. “I have no relatives, I have no family,” she cried. Right away the caregiver of the shelter answered her: “Don’t worry, don’t worry – we are your family now.” Alexey, knowing Ukrainian, was able to translate her words for us.

“Soldiers shot into my home and burned all my things. Everything that I own is right here,” she said, pointing to the bed she sleeps on. I could see nothing but blankets and pillows. Her age and situation makes leaving an even worse prospect.

After we were done, I tried to give her a hug, forgetting that we were required to wear bulletproof flak jackets and helmets the entire day. I accidentally head-bumped this 80-year-old woman. I panicked, thinking I’d hurt her, but it didn’t affect her a bit. Our compassion and willingness to listen to her story, however, did affect her.

If only the compassion for the images, sometimes real, sometimes manufactured, used to promote support for U.S. war escalation against people in Lugansk and Donetsk, would extend to actual people like this woman, with the added compassion to at least listen to their stories!

Can’t eat Biden’s weapons

We then heard from a family of three – a mother, son and grandson. The son and grandson were both adults. The mother and son were disabled and therefore unable to find any employment in this environment, let alone travel.

They, like many others, were dependent on the humanitarian aid given by Russia. They can’t eat Biden’s high-tech weaponry sent to the Kiev regime. So they remain here.

They shared a similar story of having to leave a building that was being shot at. Although they said they couldn’t say for sure who was shooting at them, they were sure the shells were coming from where the Ukrainian military brigades were stationed.

I then asked them if they felt safe here in the shelter. They all said they did and that they didn’t know what they would do without this place.

I also wanted to know how they felt about the Russian soldiers being at the shelter. Both Russian and Lugansk People’s Republic troops

are present in this location, with the greatest number being LPR soldiers. But I wanted to specifically know how they felt about the Russian troops. So I asked them: “If the Russian soldiers left this shelter, how would that affect you?” The son and grandson answered immediately that they would not feel safe, and the mother nodded agreement.

The last interview we did in that basement was more detailed, regarding the circumstances of a family of four (five if you count the big gray cat held protectively by the teenage daughter).

The grandmother spoke to us about how they came to be there. She said that although this family was Russian, their neighbors were Ukrainian. When the Ukrainian soldiers came to their area, they told those soldiers that they didn’t have to worry because there were no Russian troops there. About a half hour later, the Ukrainian tanks came and began shooting into the houses.

“The dogs were very frightened and my neighbors were running out of burning houses,” said the grandmother. “They were shouting, ‘What are you doing, why are you shooting at us? We are Ukrainians.’ When they asked that, the soldiers just laughed and turned their faces away from the burning houses.”

She said: “I had to see who exactly was doing this, so I went outside and found some soldiers standing around and asked them, ‘Why are you shooting at my neighbors’ houses?’ No one answered me. But about 20 minutes later another Ukrainian tank came and shot directly into my house.”

When asked by another journalist how she felt about this situation, she recalled the hardship for her children and grandchildren after the 2014 coup. “They [the Ukrainian government] did not like that we used our native language [Russian]. So all schools, all kindergartens, changed their program to Ukrainian. But they are children who learned their language in homes that speak Russian. So we continued to teach our children in Russian.

“My granddaughter and great-granddaughter both pleaded with me: ‘Please, I want to change schools because I don’t understand.’ But we couldn’t do anything about it. And with exact sciences like mathematics they had bigger difficulties because they couldn’t understand what was written.

“This shows how the Nazis feel about us and why they killed us and harmed our homes and organized shellings against us – they don’t consider us as their people.”

The Italian journalist asked: “So they were not locals, these were western Ukrainians?”

“Yes,” she replied, “I think they were western Ukrainians.”

This is just a small reflection of the Ukrainian nationalist tendencies that grew out of the 2014 regime change and inspired the Donbass regions of Lugansk and Donetsk to become independent republics. Ukraine, instead of honoring Victory Day on May 9, now honors Nazi collaborators – like the notorious Stephan Bandera – with statues and street names.

Under Ukrainian bombs

It happened while we were there! Another apartment nearby got bombed by Ukrainian artillery while we were interviewing the families down in the shelter basement.

Another irony hit me (like the bomb attempted to do): my tax dollars were a portion of the billions spent on weapons like the one that just targeted the area where I and the people I was interviewing stood. Thanks for that, President Biden and all the Republicans and Democrats on board with escalating this proxy war against Russia.

Fortunately, that apartment building close to us was already abandoned, unlike the demolished homes of the 350 people who were using and had used this shelter.

The bombing is so constant that it almost fades away in the background. But reminders like the shelling of the nearby apartment bring them, and the fear, back up to the conscious mind.

The constant threat of bombings also makes cooking a challenge. Right outside the shelter are two areas for cooking. Since there are no gas stoves due to lack of fuel, the cooking has to be done outside in self-made fire pits – and as illustrated by the recent bombing, it has to be done fast so as not to be outside too long.

“We cook bread and a very tasty dessert specific to Lugansk here,” said Larisa. I asked her if she and the others who cook outside get worried about their safety. “Yes, of course we are afraid, but we need to cook because everyone needs to eat something.”

Today we find ourselves once again being sold a war by the U.S. government, this time against Russia. And – as in all U.S. imperialist wars – the corporate media follow along, dutifully reporting and publishing every video and “news story” they become aware of, with sources unknown at best and dubious at worst.

These hidden parts are the other side of that story, the more truthful side.

John Parker is the Socialist Unity Party candidate for U.S. Senate in California on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket and a member of the Black Alliance for Peace.

Ukraine 'aid': Congress pays off military-industrial capitalists

By Gary Wilson

Has there ever been a more corrupt Congress? Democrats and Republicans alike.

On May 19, the U.S. Congress approved an additional \$40 billion in "aid" to Ukraine, added to the roughly \$14 billion of Ukraine war funds approved in March. That's \$54 billion total.

President Joe Biden promoted the escalation of military spending, grinning as he stood at the podium, with a banner behind him declaring "Standing With Ukraine."

The Democrats unanimously approved the billions. None suggested that the funds should go to housing, food, healthcare, transportation, COVID relief or some other failing part of the U.S. economy.

To put some perspective on this, \$54 billion is more than Russia's defense budget for the whole year 2021, which was \$43 billion.

Officially, the U.S. military budget is \$782 billion for 2022. The \$54-billion Ukraine "aid" equals 7% of this year's official military budget.

The New York Times says that it's more money than the U.S. has given in any kind of aid to any country in the last decade. "It is roughly two times the amount given in 2011 to Afghanistan, the largest U.S. foreign aid recipient until now," the May 20 Times reported.

The Times adds that it is 1% of this year's projected federal budget. The "Ukraine aid" is more than many of the individual packages in Biden's "Build Back Better" plan that the Democrats couldn't approve, including Medicare hearing aid benefits, and roughly equal to the "Build Back Better" public housing funds.

'Financing total war'

"The sums of money being contemplated in Washington are enormous," Adam Tooze wrote in the Guardian shortly before final approval. "It will mean that we are financing nothing less than a total war."

On April 25, at a meeting with more than 40 NATO and non-NATO defense officials in Germany, U.S. Secretary of War Lloyd Austin said

in so many words that the NATO military operation is not about "defending Ukraine" but is a proxy war against Russia, with Ukraine as the battlefield.

"A weakened Russia" is the goal, Austin said.

Leon Panetta — White House chief of staff under Bill Clinton, CIA director and secretary of defense under Barack Obama — explained that the conflict in Ukraine is a NATO "proxy war" against Russia. Biden himself declared the goal is regime change in Moscow, saying Putin "cannot remain in power."

The Ukraine aid package, by the way, should rightfully be called a payoff to the U.S. military-industrial complex. For example, \$9 billion of the \$40 billion package goes directly to U.S. capitalist corporations that produce weapons, designated as "replenishment of U.S. weapons



stock" in the bill.

About \$6 billion goes to a Department of Defense slush fund that the Pentagon will decide how to spend. And \$4 billion is for Ukraine to spend buying new military equipment from U.S. weapons producers.

Another \$3.9 billion is for sending an additional 10,500 U.S. troops to Europe. Hard to find anything that's actual aid to the people in Ukraine.

Written by Lockheed Martin

In fact, the whole Ukraine aid package was written by the U.S. military-industrial complex. Business Insider reported on May 23: "One of the largest defense contractors in the nation donated to nearly 150 members of Congress as they debated Ukraine military aid."

On May 3, President Joe Biden went to Lockheed Martin's Pike County Operations facility in Troy, Alabama, and did a photo op at the Javelin missile production facility.

Military contractors have been the primary beneficiaries of the Ukraine war aid approved by Congress.

Lockheed Martin is the top war (military-industrial) contractor in the U.S., followed by Raytheon, General Dynamics, Boeing and Northrop Grumman.

The top member of Congress in charge of the military budget, Democrat Adam Smith from Washington state, is also the top recipient of money from the weapons makers.

The fact is, any semblance of Congress being representative of people and not money has been mostly abandoned. The Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United decision "reversed century-old campaign finance restrictions and enabled corporations and other outside groups to spend unlimited funds on elections," according to the Brennan Center for Justice.

In the New Yorker, legal analyst Jeffrey Toobin concludes that the Citizens United decision "let rich people buy candidates."

In 2016, in a case involving the open corruption of former Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell, the Supreme Court in a unanimous ruling made it difficult to impossible to prosecute political corruption. Some have characterized it as approving the purchase of sitting politicians.

On May 16 of this year, the Supreme Court removed the only restrictions left on the rich donating to (purchasing) politicians after they had been elected.

The military-industrial complex apparently owns Congress and it is writing the agenda. 📌

Donate to support Struggle-La Lucha's John Parker on the frontline in Donbass

Dear readers and friends,
Your help is urgently needed at this time.

Struggle-La Lucha's John Parker was in the Lugansk People's Republic, reporting from the front line of the U.S./ NATO proxy war in Ukraine. John interviewed Donbass residents who've lived under eight years of Ukrainian bombing and occupation, bearing witness to war crimes committed by Ukraine in the name of NATO expansion. He's traveled alongside Ukrainian activists forced into exile after the U.S.-backed Maidan coup in 2014.

Despite considerable expense, logistical challenges and personal risk to himself, John undertook this journey because it is so important for workers and oppressed communities here to get factual information about the conflict that is being censored by Washington, the corporate monopoly media and Big Tech social media companies. He knows that the people's movement must challenge the U.S. government's diversion of billions of dollars needed for housing, education, health care and pandemic control at home to a bloody war for Big Energy profits. Washington's alliance with neo-Nazis and white supremacists in Ukraine must be exposed as we continue to fight racist police terror here.

John Parker brings considerable know-how to the job. He is currently the Socialist Unity Party candidate for U.S. Senate in California on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket. In the past, he traveled to other hot spots in countries targeted by U.S. imperialism, including Iraq and Sudan alongside former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark. Most recently, he attended the inauguration of President Xiomara Castro in Honduras at the invitation of the Libre Party.

Struggle-La Lucha's coverage of the war crisis in Ukraine and Donbass has been absolutely unique in the U.S. Our writers have followed the anti-fascist struggle of the Donbass republics and Ukrainian underground for many years. We raised the alarm last year that Washington was deliberately creating a situation that would force Russia to respond militarily to prevent a genocidal Ukrainian invasion of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. While other alternative media quickly fell in line with the U.S. anti-Russia narrative, we continue to fearlessly speak out and print the truth: that Washington's proxy war against Russia threatens not only the people of Donbass and Ukraine, but Europe, Asia, Africa, in fact the whole world.

It's not just words. We organized the first webinar to bring the voices of Donbass to the U.S. anti-war movement; held protests and community educational events when larger anti-war groups were unwilling to take the streets; and now, John Parker's visit to Russia and Donbass to bring a message of solidarity to the people resisting the U.S. and NATO and to bring back truthful information to people here at home.

We need your help to keep doing this vital work. Because of U.S. sanctions and restrictions, travel to the region costs thousands of dollars. Please donate generously to help cover the cost of John's trip to the front line and enable us to continue this essential work.

Donate to **Struggle-La Lucha** online at struggle-la-lucha.org/donate or make a check payable to Struggle-La Lucha and send to: 703 East 37th St., Baltimore Maryland 21218.

**A huge thank you,
Struggle-La Lucha writers and staff**



SLL PHOTO

Poor People's Campaign and China's anti-poverty program

By Sharon Black

On May 12, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Poor People's Campaign officially began with a Mother's Day march led by Coretta Scott King and welfare mothers.

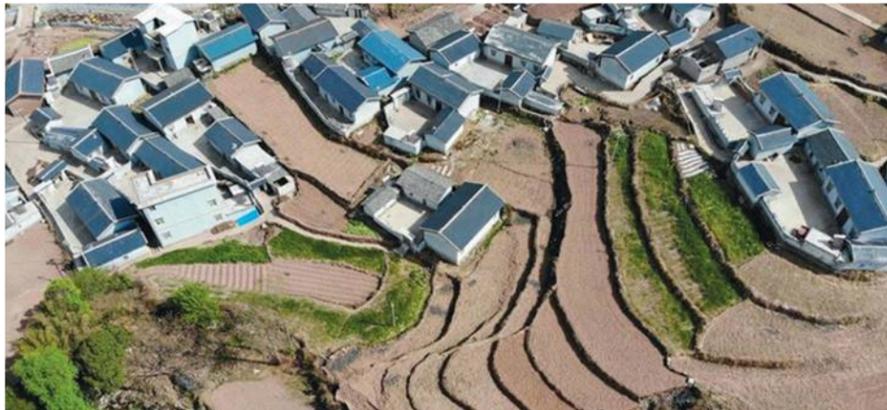
I was barely 18 years old. Pregnant with my son and filled with the kind of hope that only the young possess — who know little of the hardships ahead — I participated in the Poor People's Campaign.

My neighbors were from Appalachia; my mother from the coal mining area of eastern Pennsylvania. As much as I was motivated by empathy for the people I loved who were my family and neighbors, it was the civil rights movement that lit a fire inside of me.

So when I saw a flier posted by a group of Vista workers soliciting people to go with them to the D.C. Poor People's Campaign, I called immediately.

I lied to my parents and pretended to stay with a friend, then left for Washington with a small group of older, certainly more sophisticated, participants. Most of them were graduates from the University of Delaware.

I was the youngest, the only woman at the time. I was awkward; I couldn't accompany them to bars



A formerly poverty-stricken village in China's Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture was completely rebuilt in three years.

because of my age, had no money and had never eaten in a restaurant.

It wasn't surprising that my new companions found me a burden and deserted me once we arrived in Washington. I never saw them again until we made the trip back to Wilmington, Delaware.

Instead, it was older Black participants, mostly from the South, who took me under their wing. I was taught how to piece together boards, hammer nails and build Resurrection City.

Much of the mud, rain and even the speeches remain a blur. The only thing that stood out was the kindness and care of those Black residents of Resurrection City who took a rather young white kid under their guidance and shelter.



Poor People's Campaign march in 1968.

Families with Dependent Children, the country's main welfare program, was ended in 1997 by the Bill Clinton administration. Notwithstanding the program's history of racism, this was a terrible blow.

It's important to recount this history because mothers, particularly Black mothers from the Welfare Rights Organization, played a leading role in the Poor People's Campaign and in fighting for poor people's rights.

In January 2001, George W. Bush created the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives through a series of executive orders. These orders shifted federal funds to religious organizations to deliver formerly government-mandated social services.

This move also had a secondary impact of taking the teeth out of church- and religious-led protests, since religious institutions were now competing for government funds.

What was taking place, going back to the Reagan administration, was a trend popularly referred to as "neoliberalism." It included gutting gov-

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Resist capitalist 'trans panic' strategy

Continued from page 1

he issued an executive order to open criminal investigations against parents, healthcare providers, teachers and anyone else who supports trans youth. Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey signed a law to forcibly out and detransition trans children.

In Florida, the "Don't Say Gay" law championed by Gov. Rick DeSantis bans discussion of LGBTQ2S existence in state classrooms. Other states have banned trans youth from participating in sports or using school restrooms. Teachers may be forced to report trans students to their parents or are allowed to misgender and deadname them.

This has led to increased threats and violence against trans people across the U.S., from public transit to social media. In 2021, at least 57 transgender or gender non-conforming people were fatally shot or killed by other violent means, and 2022 is already on track to top that horrific number. The great majority of victims of deadly violence are trans women of color.

Measures attacking gender-affirming care directly contradict the recommendations of medical experts. A recent University of Washington study found that trans youth who got gender-affirming treatment experienced a 60% drop in depression risk and a 73% drop in suicidal thoughts, on average. Access to gender-affirming care saves trans youth's lives.

Amidst this crisis, the Supreme

Court lobbed another bombshell: the majority's plan to overturn the historic Roe V. Wade decision protecting the right to abortion, and to do it in a way that opens the door to similar attacks on contraception, same-sex marriage, protection from so-called sodomy laws and other rights won through decades of hard struggle.

Why now? The ultra-right politicians and behind them, many of the biggest banks and corporations, are using the attack on trans rights and reproductive rights to fuel the growth of a neo-fascist movement. It aims to protect private property and profits by crushing the rights of all workers. They are willing to sacrifice the lives of trans children, migrants and refugees, pregnant people, or anyone who makes a convenient target.

The only way fascist movements have ever been defeated is by people uniting and fighting back. It is not enough to rely on elections or hope that friendly politicians will save us. They won't. The Democratic Party is tied by a million threads to the same capitalist class that demands these anti-people measures. Joe Biden and Nancy Pelosi will continue to say in-offensive things beside the railroad tracks while doing nothing to stop the onrushing train.

Fight like Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson

How can we fight back? There are many recent examples of unity and

struggle — especially by students and youth.

Across North America, from Salt Lake City, Utah, to Des Moines, Iowa, to Newfoundland and Labrador, students have walked out in large numbers to protest laws and repressive measures targeting trans people.

We urgently need a mass national protest like the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, held amidst the AIDS crisis when the Reagan administration was targeting gay men, or the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation of more than one million people.

But simply coming out in large numbers is not enough. We must learn from the example of the 2011 Wisconsin State Capitol takeover by the labor movement and community allies. The occupation to resist anti-union legislation energized workers coast-to-coast, many of whom traveled to Madison or raised money to support the protesters.

While the occupation didn't win in the short term, it laid the groundwork for the wave of teacher strikes that swept the country in 2018-2019 and today's upsurge in organizing at Amazon, Starbucks and other anti-union behemoths.

Imagine the power of LGBTQ2S people and allies from the reproductive rights struggle, Black Lives Matter movement, immigrants and labor, occupying the capitol in Texas, Florida or another state targeting trans lives!

We must also recognize that reactionary U.S. wars and sanctions around the world fuel anti-LGBTQ2S attacks at home.

Every bomb Congress sends to Ukraine, Israel and Saudi Arabia for U.S. proxy wars explodes here, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said during the Vietnam War. The more desperately needed resources are siphoned off for the expansion of the U.S. empire abroad, the more the system scapegoats us to ensure workers remain divided and powerless.

Our community cannot effectively fight the anti-trans, anti-people offensive at home while supporting U.S. aggression abroad. When people struggling against U.S. domination around the world win, our movements for rights are strengthened. When we extend our solidarity to those resisting U.S. imperialism, we open up the opportunity for greater understanding and participation by LGBTQ2S people everywhere.

Let's embrace the legacy of ACT UP, Queer Nation and those who fought militantly against the "gay panic" of the 1980s. Let's imbue our movement with the spirit of unity that fueled the Stonewall Rebellion — an uprising led by the most oppressed Black and Brown, working-class, revolutionary trans and queer youth.

Resist capitalism's trans panic strategy! Fight for socialism — a system that puts people's needs first! 🏳️‍🌈

Shireen Abu Akleh was a truth teller: Palestine will not be silenced

By Stephen Millies

The Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was deliberately targeted by an Israeli sniper and assassinated on May 11. She was murdered in the morning daylight while wearing a vest that was clearly marked PRESS on the front and on her back.

To the apartheid regime occupying Palestine, her camera was more dangerous than a gun.

For 25 years Abu Akleh told the world about Palestine. “I chose journalism to be close to people,” said Shireen Abu Akleh. “It might not be easy to change the reality, but at least I could bring their voice to the world.”

The Al Jazeera broadcaster reported how racist Israeli settlers shout in Hebrew “Mavet le-Aravim.” (“Death to the Arabs.”) She showed the demolition of Palestinian homes and the shooting of Palestinian children.

For telling the truth, Shireen Abu Akleh was beloved throughout the Arab world and beyond. And for being a truth teller she was murdered.

More than 50 other Palestinian journalists have been killed. The Israeli military spokesperson Ran Kochav justified these killings by saying “They’re armed with cameras, if you’ll permit me to say so.”

The capitalist media covers up these murders. The first headlines about Abu Akleh’s death in The New York Times referred to her as simply being slain, not assassinated.

The actress Susan Sarandon tweeted the truth: “Shireen Abu Akleh was EXECUTED with a shot to the head.”

Shireen Abu Akleh held U.S. citizenship. Where was the congressional resolution condemning her assassination after the U.S. has delivered over \$140 billion to the Zionist state?

Stop lying about Zionist murder! Shireen Abu Akleh was assassinated

By Stephen Millies

Hundreds protested on short notice outside the headquarters of the New York Times on May 13. They came to protest the coverage by the capitalist media about the murder of Al Jazeera reporter Shireen Abu Akleh by an Israeli sniper.

The Times’ coverage was typical. Its headlines disguise the fact that the Palestinian journalist was assassinated.

The emergency memorial and protest was called by Al-Awda NY: The Palestine Right to Return Coalition. It called for “justice for honorable journalist Shireen Abu Akleh.”

During the rush-hour rally on Manhattan’s Eighth Avenue, news was received that Zionist cops attacked the pallbearers of Abu Akleh’s casket and tore Palestinian flags from it. Their viciousness underlined the desperation of the apartheid regime occupying Palestine.

Lamis Deek of Al-Awda described

In contrast, the governments of South Africa and Namibia denounced this foul murder. So did the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists.

Africans remember how Israel supported the original apartheid regime in South Africa and even supplied those neo-Nazis with nuclear weapons.

Attacking her funeral

The Zionist state couldn’t even let Palestinians bury Shireen Abu Akleh in peace. The whole world saw on May 13 how Israeli police in riot gear attacked the pallbearers with horses and batons in Al-Quds (Jerusalem), the capital of Palestine.

At one point the casket almost dropped to the ground. One of the carriers managed to hold it with one hand while warding off police clubs with the other.

Palestinians belong to different faiths. Shireen Abu Akleh was a Christian.

Some Israeli soldiers asked Palestinians in the funeral procession whether they were Muslim or Christian. If they answered “Muslim” they would be kicked out.

Tear gas and stun grenades were used against mourners. Cops beat and kicked the mourners while seizing Palestinian flags.

That’s how every colonial regime acts. In 1948, Law No. 53 was passed in Puerto Rico that made it illegal to display or even own a Puerto Rican flag. “La Ley de la Mordaza” was repealed in 1957.

Israeli police claim Palestinians carrying their own flag is “nationalist incitement.” Real “incitement” is the Israeli Brigadier-General (Reserve) Zvika Fogel confirming that army snipers are ordered to shoot at Palestinian children.

Fogel told Ron Nesiel on the Israe-



Israeli police attacked the funeral procession – nearly forcing pallbearers to drop Abu Akleh’s coffin.

li public radio network Kan in 2018 that “it is not the whim of one or the other sniper who identifies the small body of a child now and decides he’ll shoot. Someone marks the target for him very well and tells him exactly why one has to shoot and what the threat is from that individual.”

Someone in the Israeli military establishment also marked the target of Shireen Abu Akleh and ordered the sniper to shoot her in the head.

It’s not just in the U.S. client state of Israel that truth tellers are assassinated. Between 2000 and 2016, \$10 billion in U.S. aid was sent to Colombia.

The upshot was that tens of thousands of people were killed. Among them were 53 Colombian journalists slain between 1992 and 2022.

Within the United States itself — all of it stolen from Indigenous peoples — journalists have been attacked and killed.

Los Angeles Times columnist and KMEX-TV news director Ruben Salazar was killed on Aug. 29, 1970, during the National Chicano Moratorium anti-war march in East Los Angeles. Cops had attacked the peaceful protest of over 20,000 people.

Salazar was killed by a tear gas canister fired by a Los Angeles County Sheriff’s deputy.

Many people believe that Salazar was deliberately targeted for exposing the racism and brutality of the police and sheriff departments. In the days before his death, Ruben Salazar felt that he was being followed by police.

The wealthy and powerful wanted to silence the radio journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal forever. The former Black Panther Party member was framed for killing a Philadelphia police officer and was sentenced to death.

Although the death sentence was eventually overturned, Mumia Abu-Jamal has been in prison since 1981.

Ramsey Orta, a member of Copwatch in New York City, videoed the killing of Eric Garner by police officer Daniel Pantaleo on July 17, 2014. Garner was choked to death while repeatedly saying “I can’t breathe.”

For revealing the truth about Eric Garner’s cruel death to the world, Ramsey Orta was railroaded to jail and spent four years in prison.

The U.S. government is now trying to extradite Wikileaks founder Julian Assange for exposing Pentagon war crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq. Assange is in ill health and could be sentenced to many years in jail.

Hands off Julian Assange and all the truth tellers. 📌

How socialist countries fight disease

By Stephen Millies

Around 75 million people live in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic as compared to 8.8 million people residing in New York City. While 756 people in Laos have died from COVID-19, 40,365 New Yorkers died from it — 53 times as many.

How does Laos do it? More bombs fell on Laos than any other country in history.

Two million tons of cluster bombs were dropped on the Asian country by the United States military from 1964 to 1973. That’s more bombs than were dropped by all sides during World War II.

What did Laotians do to the U.S. to deserve such terror? At least 50,000 people died from the bombing. Another 20,000 have died or been injured from the initially unexploded munitions in the 49 years since the war.

The not-so-secret weapon that Laos uses against disease is social-

ism. Encouraging people to organize themselves is a requirement to build a socialist society.

Trade unions, women’s associations and youth groups work with the communist party to carry out COVID-19 testing and vaccinations.

Over 1,100 years ago the Iranian scientist Ibn Sina — also known as Abu Ali Sina or Avicenna — advocated isolating sick people to stop the spread of disease. Although this was centuries before the invention of microscopes, the Muslim scholar thought that small organisms were responsible for infections.

In the socialist People’s Republic of China, entire cities with populations of millions were shut down to stop COVID. But nobody starved. Unarmed police in Wuhan delivered meals to residents.

Socialist Cuba developed five different vaccines against the corona-

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New York City, May 13. SLL photo: Stephen Millies

how Shireen Abu Akleh helped give a voice to the Palestinian people. Deek denounced the corporate media for covering-up Zionist war crimes. Deek, a human rights attorney, hailed Palestinian resistance groups.

Protesters marched from the Times building to the Zionist regime’s U.N. mission on Second Avenue. Forty-Second street was filled with Palestinian flags as protesters took to the streets.

People on the sidewalk greeted the marchers while many cars honked in approval.

Long live the memory of Shireen Abu Akleh! Palestine will win! 📌

Oil barons, Pentagon knowingly wreck the planet

By Scott Scheffer

The U.S. government and all the corporations that profit from fossil fuels are cherry picking the actions that they are taking in response to the global climate emergency. Everything that they are pursuing is potentially profitable, and they are paying less attention to reforestation, wind power, solar power or other alternative energy sources.

As they have done and are continuing to do during the COVID pandemic, they treat the climate crisis as if the United States is the only country enduring the consequences.

The whole scenario raises the question of how, in spite of divergent interests among the rich and powerful, they could have reached this consensus of inaction and callous disregard. The world is on fire and they aren't even looking for a fire extinguisher.

The poorest populations are suffering the worst disasters when extreme weather created by CO₂, methane and other pollutants hit their homes.

In 1984, Congress demanded the presence of top tobacco executives to answer for the lies they had been telling for decades about the harm of tobacco use. The hearings were a big deal, covered by the national media before and after, and tobacco CEOs' lies to Congress made headlines and were talked about for years.

Not that it did that much good, but contrast that to what was supposed to be a similar hearing – this time with top energy company executives, to answer for misinformation about climate change that they've been funding through phony think tanks.

The October 2021 hearing was held electronically because of the pandemic. The CEOs didn't even bother to join it. They had lower-level flunkies answer questions, and the news media barely covered the events.

The way that they brushed off Congress with barely a second thought was a clear demonstration of the hierarchy. Capitalist government works for corporations – not the other way around. Any events that

hint at another relationship in which giant corporations have to answer to the government are theater.

Oil companies expanding

A May 11, 2022, article in the Guardian revealed something that even further elucidates their power. It turns out that despite claims by the major oil companies that they are going green, they are in fact expanding as never before. The article revealed:

- “The fossil fuel industry's short-term expansion plans involve the start of oil and gas projects that will produce greenhouse gases equivalent to a decade of CO₂ emissions from China...”
- “These plans include 195 carbon bombs, gigantic oil and gas projects that would each result in at least a billion tons of CO₂ emissions over their lifetimes, in total equivalent to about 18 years of current global CO₂ emissions. About 60% of these have already started pumping.”
- “The dozen biggest oil companies are on track to spend \$103m a day for the rest of the decade exploiting new fields of oil and gas that cannot be burned if global heating is to be limited to well under 2 degrees Celsius.”

Here are some of the events happening now that are caused by energy corporation criminals:

The Colorado River is in an unprecedented crisis. Warming and drying weather for decades has led to a drought that has broken records that go back 1,200 years. Water levels at Lake Mead, Lake Oroville, Lake Powell and dozens of other lakes are all at the lowest point ever recorded.

The river and its tributaries supply water to more than 40 million people and 3 million acres of crops. Hundreds of hydroelectric power generators electrify most of the southwest and are closer to their breaking point than ever before.

In northwestern India and in Pakistan a heatwave hit in the latter part of April and beginning of May, and is projected to return at the end of May. The heat was so bad that schools



Global Climate Strike in Nairobi, Kenya, on Sept. 20, 2019.

closed, crops were damaged, and there were power outages. A deadly cholera outbreak has infected thousands and killed people because of lack of access to clean drinking water.

On May 15, the temperature in the city of Jacobabad in Pakistan's Sindh province was 124 degrees Fahrenheit. India's capital city of Delhi hit 120 degrees Fahrenheit on the same day.

A study by the British national meteorological service concluded that without the impact of climate change, a heatwave such as this might occur once every 312 years. But the frequency is now likely to be every 3.1 years – roughly 100 times more frequent. By the end of the century their frequency will be about once per year.

This is similar to what has been forecast recently for Baghdad, Iraq. Many experts question whether such heat is fit for human survival.

KwaZulu-Natal slammed again

After torrential rains destroyed hundreds of homes and killed 435 people in the impoverished KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa last month, flooding is happening again. Hundreds had to flee their dwellings in late May.

KwaZulu-Natal Premier Sihle Zikalala told Al Jazeera reporters, “Some areas are inaccessible and have become islands at this stage.”

In Bangladesh and parts of northeastern India, flooding in hundreds of villages has stranded 2 million people, including many children.

The region is impoverished and because of lack of mobility, starvation is actually a concern.

The biggest obstacle to curtailing rising atmospheric temperatures is capitalism. But it isn't just the rise of industrial capitalism that Biden & Co. can blame on the system's earlier phases. The hyper-militarism of the U.S. imperialist era has exacerbated the global crisis.

That isn't only because of the emissions spewed during the manufacture of the machinery of war – although the Pentagon itself emits more than the economies of 46 entire countries. But the plunder of the global south made possible by murderous warfare has left much of the world more vulnerable to extreme weather.

No one is safe from hurricanes, floods, rising sea levels or extreme heat. But when poverty is added to the equation, climate change is much more deadly for the world's poorest populations.

Congressional hearings are nothing more than an attempt to rescue the reputation of the Biden administration that has come nowhere near being the champion of saving the planet that it promised during the 2020 election campaign and the early months of the administration.

The transition to a non-fossil-fuel world has to be run by the people. The oil barons that are knowingly destroying our planet belong in jail for the rest of their lives. ☐



PHOTO: XINHUA/ZHANG JIANHUA

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virus. Before its 1959 revolution Cuba wasn't able to manufacture aspirin.

Volunteers in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam carried out massive testing and tracing to hold back the virus. People are being mobilized in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fight the latest variant of COVID-19.

These five socialist countries have a total population of 1.55 billion people. That's almost a fifth of the human race. Yet they account for little more than one percent of the 6.3 million people who have been counted as dying of COVID-19.

Before their 1949 socialist revolution, Chinese people lived to be on average just 36 years old. By 2022, life expectancy had more than doubled to reach 77.3 years.

China was plagued by diseases before liberation. The parasitic disease schistosomiasis infected over 12 million people and threatened many more.

Millions of volunteers waded into rivers to root out fresh water snails that harbored the parasite. (See “Away With All Pests”, by Dr. Joshua Horn, published by Monthly Review Press.)

Capitalists dread such mass mobilizations. Trump wanted to send troops to shoot people who were demanding Black Lives Matter.

Slave masters prohibited funerals of enslaved Africans. The plantation owners feared that people would discuss how to rise up.

Centuries before capitalism, a Roman governor called Pliny the Younger wrote to Emperor Trajan. Pliny

asked if he could allow the formation of a volunteer fire fighting company.

Even though fires in wooden buildings were frequent, Trajan prohibited such activity because the volunteers would talk politics.

Racist cops often don't even allow Black and Brown youth to gather on street corners. In contrast, socialism requires peoples' power – which includes youth getting together, whether to discuss world politics or play basketball.

The wealthy and powerful thought it was awful to shut down parts of the capitalist economy to stop the spread of COVID-19. To them profits are more precious than life.

Typical of their class was California lawyer Scott McMillan. Referring to the elderly, he tweeted: “The fundamental problem is whether we are going to tank the entire economy to save 2.5 percent of the population which is (1) generally expensive to maintain, and (2) not productive.”

Seniors and disabled people are considered roadkill by banksters and billionaires. The rich don't care that one out of 35 people aged 85 years or older in the United States has died of COVID-19.

In socialist countries both older folk and youth are treasured. Cuba is proud that more than 2,000 of its people are over 100 years old.

Remarkable success in combating COVID-19 was also carried out by people's governments of Nicaragua, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. This is despite these countries suffering from vicious economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. and European Union. Wall Street continues to economically blockade Cuba and People's Korea.

Capitalism is unwilling and unable to fight pandemics. We need socialism to do that. Always remember what Laos was able to accomplish despite the mass murder conducted by the U.S. ☐

Los héroes del Saratoga

Por Rosa Miriam Elizalde

Primero, la explosión. El edificio, de seis pisos, vibró, se saltaron unos cables después, con la fuerza de un latigazo. Acto seguido, se desplomó más de la mitad de la fachada sin dar tiempo, sin anunciar nada, cada pedazo de piso tragándose al de arriba, aplastados techo contra piso y piso contra techo, en medio de un estrépito y una nube de polvo que ocultaba todo, menos los gritos desesperados. Parecía como si acabara de abrirse y cerrarse la tierra, cuando otros dos edificios se vinieron abajo.

De inmediato se conocieron las causas del siniestro del seis de mayo en el Hotel Saratoga, de La Habana Vieja, aunque está abierta la investigación: fue un escape de gas, mientras un camión cisterna habilitaba al edificio que se preparaba para reabrir esta semana. Sin huéspedes, las habitaciones permanecían cerradas a cal y canto, y puede que un simple clic del interruptor de la luz fuera suficiente para que la masa de gas acumulado provocara la onda expansiva que hizo añicos los cristales, la marquetería y la fachada ligera con adornos de estuco verde y blanco, original del siglo XIX.

No es la primera vez que Cuba se enluta. Podría parecer hasta menor un accidente como este en un país que ha padecido en medio siglo más de treinta huracanes de gran magnitud, decenas de muertos durante el sabotaje de la CIA al vapor La Coubre en el puerto de La Habana en 1960, la voladura de un avión civil con 73 pasajeros en 1976, una cadena de bombas en hoteles y restaurantes en la década de los 90, el bloqueo sem-



FOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Los equipos de rescate siguen peinando los escombros en busca de señales de vida.

piterno del Gobierno de Estados Unidos – “acción canallesca”, lo llama el Presidente Andrés Manuel López Obrador – que ha naturalizado la escasez de casi todo y que hizo más desesperante la pandemia, por citar algunos ejemplos dramáticos.

Pero no. La explosión en el Hotel Saratoga, con casi un centenar de lesionados – de ellos 43 muertes hasta el 11 de mayo –, es otra cosa. Lo que hizo de esta historia en particular la Gran Historia no fue la explosión que se sintió en La Habana, ni el humo denso que se podía ver desde las zonas altas, ni la sensación de vulnerabilidad que nos dejó a todos, sino la solidaridad de la ciudadanía que se apiñaba en los alrededores exigiendo un lugar para rescatar a las víctimas de los escombros, donar su sangre para los heridos o aliviar la angustia de los damnificados. Dos horas después del accidente, la fila

de voluntarios y voluntarias frente a los bancos de sangre, los policlínicos y los hospitales superaban los miles, y la mayoría eran jóvenes, esos mismos que la propaganda de Miami dice que se están yendo en masa de Cuba.

Mientras el Gobierno actúa y la prensa pública da lecciones de inmediatez y sensibilidad, personas de la calle, con todo tipo de profesiones, siguen ayudando a sus compatriotas. No sabemos los nombres de todos los rescatistas – muchos de ellos bomberos voluntarios –, de los maestros de la escuela “Concepción Arenal” que colinda con el hotel y protegieron a sus alumnos, de los niños que salvaron a otros niños, de los transeúntes que socorrieron a los trabajadores del Saratoga y a las familias de los dos edificios que implosionaron en la vecindad, ni de los perros rastreadores que todavía buscan las huellas de al menos dos

desaparecidos entre los escombros.

Al romperse, los edificios mostraron sus vísceras, sus arterias, sus nervios y su fragilidad, que es la nuestra. Pero también expusieron a esa especie de sentimentalidades decentes que no está en peligro de extinción y que son los mejores de todos nosotros, los héroes que se lanzaron a salvar a los demás, sin reparar en que otra explosión y otro derrumbe habrían podido convertirlos en víctimas. Y, a la par, hay un ejército anónimo de trabajadores de la salud que no ha descansado en más de cien horas desde el accidente.

En Los soldados de Salamina, el novelista español Javier Cercas nos recuerda que “en el comportamiento de un héroe hay casi siempre algo ciego, irracional, instintivo, algo que está en su naturaleza y a lo que no puede escapar”. Es el que mira de frente el absurdo y la crueldad de la vida para hacernos más humanos, el que nos advierte que de la desesperación nace la lucha.

La muerte no prevalece. Una vez más.

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Poor People's Campaign and China's anti-poverty program

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ernment spending on social programs, eliminating price controls, deregulating and privatizing services in favor of “free market” capitalism.

The nonprofit sector has grown ever larger, but it has served more to enrich its executive directors and top leaders than to serve the poor. It has attracted young workers who are looking for what they consider “meaningful work,” only to encounter poor compensation, resistance to union drives and high burnout rates.

This trend toward private charities and nonprofits was meant to replace the government's responsibility to serve people. The vast amount of wealth produced in this country continued to shift to the war machine, the forces of repression and to fill the pockets of bankers and billionaires.

All of this contrasts with the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese government, which made eradicating poverty one of its major goals.

China's anti-poverty program

In 1949, the newly-formed People's Republic of China was faced with momentous tasks. The majority of the population were desperately poor peasants plagued with famine and death. There was almost no industrialization or education.

Edgar Snow documents many of the incredible obstacles that faced

the CPC in his book, “Red Star Over China.” He gives a firsthand account, and puts human faces to the staggering statistics and suffering of both the peasants and the Red Army.

The commitment to wiping out poverty has its roots in the early period of the People's Republic of China and remains important.

Decades later, in 2012, China's President Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, vowed to eradicate the vestiges of extreme poverty by 2020.

Despite the incredible challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chinese government proudly proclaimed the achievement of this herculean effort on November 23, 2020.

The World Bank stated that China has lifted over 850 million people out of poverty. “With this, China has contributed close to three-quarters of the global reduction in the number of people living in extreme poverty.”

When humanity looks back, this will be one of the biggest stories of this century.

How did China do it?

It would take a much longer article to explain in full. Of course, one factor is China's economic growth. But that's just a part of the equation. Without a conscious effort by the Chinese government, economic growth in of itself would not have solved the problem.

This government effort was remarkably systematic from top to bottom, from the central government to rural villages to individual families. Every poor family is tracked and assessed individually. Villagers voted to determine who among them should be declared in poverty and when poverty was alleviated.

There were five components: industry, relocation, ecological compensation, education and social security. Social security includes both pensions and Dibao, China's minimum living standard guarantee.

Massive apartment buildings were constructed to relocate people in villages where soil erosion or other conditions made it impossible to sustain a higher standard of life. Contrast this with the continual destruction of public housing and Section 8 programs in the U.S. In addition to deep housing subsidies, China's poor families are guaranteed furniture and televisions.

Emphasis is put on providing stipends and funds for education.

Young urban students and workers, many of them professionals, moved from their relatively comfortable lives to rural villages to participate in this campaign. It reminded me of Cuba's lit-

eracy campaign that uplifted young women teachers and tasked them with going into the countryside and the mountains to teach peasants to read and write, making Cuba one of the first Caribbean nations to eradicate illiteracy.

Going in opposite directions

The capitalist West, particularly the U.S., remains cynical and dismisses all that China has accomplished. The media distorts and quibbles about statistics. But this is only possible if you have never experienced how poverty crushes human potential.

What cannot be argued is that socialist China is going in the opposite direction of the capitalist West. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the government is taking on the responsibility of uplifting the population.

In contrast, the U.S. government has shed itself of responsibility for the welfare of the people. Instead, its only duty is to the imperialist banks and billionaires and increasing the repressive apparatus from police to prisons to Pentagon.

Our challenge is to learn from what China has done. 

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