

# STRUGGLE ★ LA LUCHA

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# Protest high cost of housing, food, fuel Inflation = wage theft!

By Sharon Black

Today the federal minimum wage is \$7.25! Let that sad fact sink in. Right now you can barely buy a gallon of gas in some parts of the country with that little cash.

July 24 will mark the anniversary of the last increase that took place in 2009. In 13 years the capitalist government in the United States has not raised the minimum wage even a nickel. And this is in the wealthiest

country in the world. Well, wealthiest for the wealthy!

Labor Department data for 2021 shows that approximately 250,000 people still earned \$7.25 and, to add insult to injury, domestic, farm, student, disabled, and restaurant workers can be paid less than \$7.25 an hour. It's called a "subminimum wage" — it's legal and it implies that these workers are considered subhuman by their bosses.

The majority of low wage workers

are Black, Brown, immigrant, women and young.

It is such a disgrace that some states and local municipalities have been forced to pass minimum wage increases on their own — but only as a result of concerted struggle by groups like "Fight for \$15," labor unions and community groups.

But still close to 52 million workers — 32% of the workforce — earn less than \$15. And when you factor in the large number of workers who can

only find part-time work, or do gig work, the situation is even more dire.

Of course, any worker can tell you that \$15 is a barely, barely, barely enough to get by wage.

A September 2021 broadcast on CBS Money Watch reports that the "minimum wage would be \$26 an hour if it had grown in line with productivity."

What the broadcast says in plain language is that workers are work-

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# Behind the escalating attacks on trans people

By Melinda Butterfield

Thirty-one members of the white supremacist Patriot Front from across the U.S. were detained after preparing an assault on a Pride festival in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, June 12.

On the July 4 weekend in Camden, Ohio, Noah Ruiz, a trans man, was beaten by four men after being forced to use a women's restroom at a campsite. The victim was arrested by the police and spent the night in jail. It took legal action by Ruiz to force the cops to arrest one of his attackers on July 18; the other three have not been charged.

In Pensacola, Florida, July 18, Alisabeth Lancaster, a candidate for the Santa Rosa County School Board declared that doctors who provide gender-affirming care to trans youth "should be hanging from the nearest tree," to applause from the audience. The video of Lancaster's lynching threat went viral on social media.

Lancaster was echoing Florida's state government, headed by notorious homophobe Ron DeSantis, which is preparing to ban gender-affirming care for minors and detransition adult Medicaid recipients while laying the groundwork for a complete ban on trans health care. Activists around the state are organizing to intervene at a hearing on the proposed ban Aug. 5.

During Pride month in Baltimore, four houses burned and three people were hospitalized after bigots set fire to a rainbow flag on a resident's porch. In Boston, the construction site of an LGBTQ2S-friendly affordable housing project was vandalized with hate speech and threats on the weekend of July 9.



LGBTQ2S activists and anti-fascists defend a drag brunch from neo-nazis, July 10.

In Texas, where the governor has ordered child protective services to investigate parents and health-care providers for "abuse" if they support trans children, families are uprooting their lives and fleeing to other states. That includes Kai Shappley, an 11-year-old trans girl who in 2021 testified about the importance of gender-affirming care at the state capitol in Austin.

From the San Francisco Bay area to Chicago, drag queen story hours and drag shows have been threatened and attacked by Proud Boys and other neo-nazis, often aided and abetted by local cops. Increasingly, communities are organizing to resist these attacks, as they did in Houston July 10, where defenders shouted down the bigots.

(Drag performers and trans peo-

ple are not the same, though the ultra-right conflates the two groups and smears both with false claims of being "groomers" and "pedophiles.")

These are just a few examples of what are now daily attacks on queer communities from coast to coast, especially targeting and scapegoating trans people.

## SCOTUS, gov't, cops & nazis

These vicious assaults — some spontaneous, but often planned and organized — cannot be separated from the nationwide political attack on trans rights and abortion rights.

From the dozens of state legislatures that have enacted or plan to enact restrictions on trans lives and women's lives, to the highest court in the land, the right to control one's

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Tent City, Maricopa County, Arizona in 1997 stood 10 minutes south of downtown Phoenix.



# Protest high cost of housing, food, fuel Inflation = wage theft!

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ing themselves to death, producing more and more — utilizing productivity-boosting technology — and killing themselves on the job.

Workers have “been more industrious,” in the words of CBS, making bosses’ profits soar.

On top of this, today’s inflation that continues to spiral upward has wiped away wages for all workers across the board. Wages were down 2.7% in April and are down much more than that in July.

So it is no wonder that workers and their organizations have begun to demand a minimum wage of \$25. In the case of Amazon workers, the Amazon Labor Union is demanding a \$30 minimum from the \$191 billion Bezos.

## What did Karl Marx have to say about wages?

Karl Marx spent his entire life writing and explaining the inner

workings of the capitalist system and the development of human history. Along with colleagues, Marx participated in the workers movement of the time and was forced to live in exile.

You could say Marx, who was impoverished and reviled by the ruling classes of that time, also worked himself to death. He drove himself tirelessly not under the direct whip of a capitalist boss, but in the service of emancipating the working class.

So what did he explain in a meticulous and scientific way that earned him the hatred of the industrialists, landlords, bankers and capitalist class?

He revealed how wages and prices were determined, what surplus value is and how profit is derived.

There is a pamphlet, “Value, Price & Profit,” that was presented first as an address at a gathering of the leading workers’ organization at that time that sums up some of the

more detailed analysis in “Capital.”

Marx explains that profit for the capitalist bosses comes from the unpaid labor of workers, who produce surplus value, which is the source of profit and the source of wealth for the capitalist class.

It’s amazing that at that time Marx was responding to some of the same arguments heard today against raising wages. But it’s true. “Value Price & Profit” starts with a presentation of Marx’s response to trade unionist John Weston who claimed that raising wages would be harmful to workers, causing inflation. Weston’s views at the time were supported by John Stuart Mill.

It wasn’t the individual Weston but rather his ideas that Marx argued with.

Karl Marx explained that raising wages will not automatically lead to higher prices. The only outcome of a rise in wages is a decline in profits. There is no reason for prices to increase.

However, there is almost nothing that a capitalist boss won’t do to make profit. It is not an individual thing, but built into the system. And so herein lies the heart of why there is so much propaganda about raising wages — that it will cause inflation, unemployment, and an endless list of disasters. The mere thought of declining profits causes terror.

So you might say that what Karl Marx described was wage theft, but only on a broader scale — meaning the entire system is predicated on ripping off the working class and that the real relations between bosses and workers is one of wage slavery.

Conclusion: We need to fight for every penny we can get and more. Let’s raise the minimum wage to \$25 or even \$30 an hour. But, as Karl Marx proclaimed, the ultimate solution is to do away with wage slavery totally and build socialism. 📖

# Behind the escalating attacks on trans people

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body and identity is being systematically stripped away.

After its Dobbs decision overturning the right to abortion, the Supreme Court majority has signaled it will next come after constitutional protections for same-sex marriage, contraception and protection from so-called “sodomy” laws.

With its spate of reactionary decisions in June, the Supreme Court carried out a coup d’état, establishing itself as the de facto government in service to the growing fascist-oriented wing of the ruling class and the Republican political establishment.

The elected government headed by Democrat Joe Biden and Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress have signaled their unwillingness to oppose the coup in any meaningful way.

The anti-trans panic cannot be separated from the bourgeois liberal establishment, either, where numerous figures from Hillary Clinton on down have expressed their disdain and disinterest in defending trans people.

Media outlets from the New York Times and Washington Post to The Atlantic magazine have joined the pile-on with “fake news” articles and op-eds attacking gender-affirming care, trans people’s participation in sports and more, taking up the same

arguments spouted by the far-right.

Corporate social media giants like Twitter, Reddit and Facebook have facilitated the trans panic, often protecting those who use slurs like “groomer” and incite violent attacks on trans people while censoring or even deplatforming trans people who stand up to them.

A deeply insidious effort to divide the women’s movement and the broader LGBTQ2S community from trans people is underway. It attempts to cast blame on trans people for the overturning of Roe v. Wade, claiming their existence somehow undermined the definition of “woman,” rather than uniting to fight the real culprits — the politicians in Washington and the state houses and the capitalists behind them.

Against this sabotage, it’s urgent for all groups fighting for abortion rights to follow the example of the Louisiana Abortion Rights Action Committee and others calling for a national week of civil disobedience in September. Their calls and statement are inclusive of all people who need abortion rights and bodily autonomy, and include trans people among their organizers and spokespeople.

## What’s at stake for workers? Everything!

What’s really behind these escalating attacks on trans lives — and what’s at stake for the working class?

Publicly out, self-identified trans-

gender, non-binary and gender-nonconforming people make up only about 1% of the U.S. population. Yet the community has been transformed into a monstrous bogeyman by the ultra-right, and increasingly by “mainstream” centrists and liberals as well.

It’s true that today more people, especially younger people, identify as trans or nonbinary than they did 10 or 20 years ago. That’s because hard-fought struggles have increased trans visibility, and more people now recognize and embrace their true selves. Much the same happened throughout the 1970s, 1980s and beyond with gay, lesbian and bisexual people.

And like that earlier breakthrough in queer visibility, those who seek to divide and conquer the working class have seized on this positive development to spread reactionary hate based on fear.

The attacks on gender-affirming care for trans youth are especially horrifying to anyone who understands the dangers for those denied the right to transition and live as themselves. Earlier this year, a study published by the Journal of the American Medical Association found that gender-affirming care reduced suicide attempts by up to 73%.

But the anti-trans bigots attempting to stir up a panic about “corruption” of children don’t care about their lives, any more than anti-abortion bigots care about the well-being of children that result from forced births.

Just as gay men were scapegoated and denied care during the HIV/AIDS crisis of the 1980s, today trans people are being spoken of as an “infection” that must be repressed, denied health care and kept away from children and youth who might see themselves reflected in trans lives.

In the 1980s, the Reagan administration used witch-hunts against “welfare mothers” and people with HIV/AIDS to distract from its union busting, Cold War nuclear buildup and vicious austerity measures. To-

day the U.S. ruling class has settled on trans people as a scapegoat for the crisis of its system: the stripping away of people’s basic rights, skyrocketing inflation, abandonment of public health, proxy wars that threaten to ignite World War III and global environmental catastrophe.

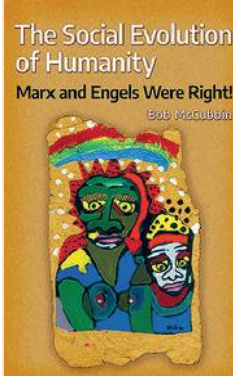
Trans people have also been targeted for the militant role many have played in other struggles against the system. Trans people were front and center during the mass uprising for Black Lives in 2020. Trans people are also key to many of the ongoing union organizing efforts peeling away the thin “progressive” veneer of megacorporations like Starbucks and Amazon.

Today, there is enormous fear within the trans community. People are preparing for the possibility that all gender-affirming care will be banned in the near future nationwide and that trans people will risk arrest for living publicly. Some are trying to find the means to flee the country, while others have declared they will stay and fight. Most are simply trying to survive day by day and live their lives under the darkening skies.

If you know a trans person, reach out to them and offer your solidarity. If you hear coworkers or family members spouting anti-trans rhetoric, stand up to them. Make sure that your union, your community organization, your movement is welcoming to trans people and takes a strong position in their defense.

History shows that the scapegoating of oppressed groups always snowballs from one to the next. The rights of the broad LGBTQ2S community are next on the chopping block. Reproductive rights and Black people’s voting rights have already been deeply wounded, and more attacks are in the offing.

Trans people may be the current targets on the front line of capitalism’s war on workers. But if we don’t unite and fight back now, you can be certain that others — including you, dear reader — will not be far behind. 📖



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

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.

# Police terror rips through downtown Denver

By Kevin Niemann

Police brutality and violence against innocent people aren't exactly a rarity in the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. From the senseless beating of a 73-year-old woman with dementia when she became confused outside of a local Walmart to the horrific torture and murder of an unarmed 23-year-old Black man, Elijah McClain, Colorado police departments are no stranger to enacting racist terror and severe brutality on the community.

During the early hours of Sunday, July 17, the Denver Police department added a chapter to that already long and bloody saga. As bars were letting out in downtown Denver, the police opened fire wildly at crowds of people. The officers claimed they were returning fire at a suspect who had brandished a firearm and opened fire himself. There is no evidence that this suspect discharged a firearm.

Five other people were severely wounded and ricocheting bullets and shrapnel grazed dozens of others. Groups of friends went from enjoying a Saturday night out to being victims of a terrorist police attack. The police and their political allies tell us that they "protect and serve" the community. Does this feel like

protecting or serving? Do we really think that the individuals wounded and their loved ones feel protected and served by the Denver Police Department?

This prey and spray mentality is all too common in U.S. police departments. The recent carnage in Denver draws disturbing parallels to the recent murder of Jayland Walker earlier this year in Akron, Ohio, and the 2020 murder of Louisville EMS worker, Breonna Taylor. Louisville police officers fired 32 rounds into Taylor's apartment, many penetrating into her bedroom, where she was asleep. Jayland Walker was shot up to 60 times after 8 Akron police officers fired 90 rounds at him while he was running away from them unarmed. And when actual violence occurs, like in the recent mass shooting in Uvalde, Texas, a "small army of 376 federal, state, and local law-enforcement officers" sat idle while innocent children were killed.

And now, Denver police fired dozens of rounds wildly into late night crowds exiting bars, nearly killing six people. That doesn't seem like protecting and serving. All Denver police officers involved in this recent shooting need to be terminated from their positions and charged with attempted murder. Further, the City of



Bystanders Bailey Alexander and Yekalo Weldehiwet were wounded during a Denver Police shooting rampage July 17.

Denver must pay reparations to all the individuals who Denver Police injured, directly or indirectly.

Defund the police 100%! Commu-

nity control now! End racist police terror now!

Breonna Taylor! Jayland Walker! Elijah McClain! Say their names! 📌

## Guilty until proven innocent

By Stephen Millies

The so-called U.S. criminal justice system is just plain criminal. Two of its biggest atrocities are cash bail and solitary confinement.

Black Lives Matter activist Sandra Bland was held in a Waller County, Texas, jail because she couldn't afford \$5,000 bail.

Three days after Bland was arrested for a minor traffic violation, the 28-year old Black woman was found hanged in her jail cell on July 13, 2015. Many people don't believe she committed suicide.

Albert Woodfox spent nearly 45 years in solitary confinement in Louisiana's notorious Angola prison. Woodfox, who with two other members of the Black Panther Party were known as the "Angola 3," was released in 2016.

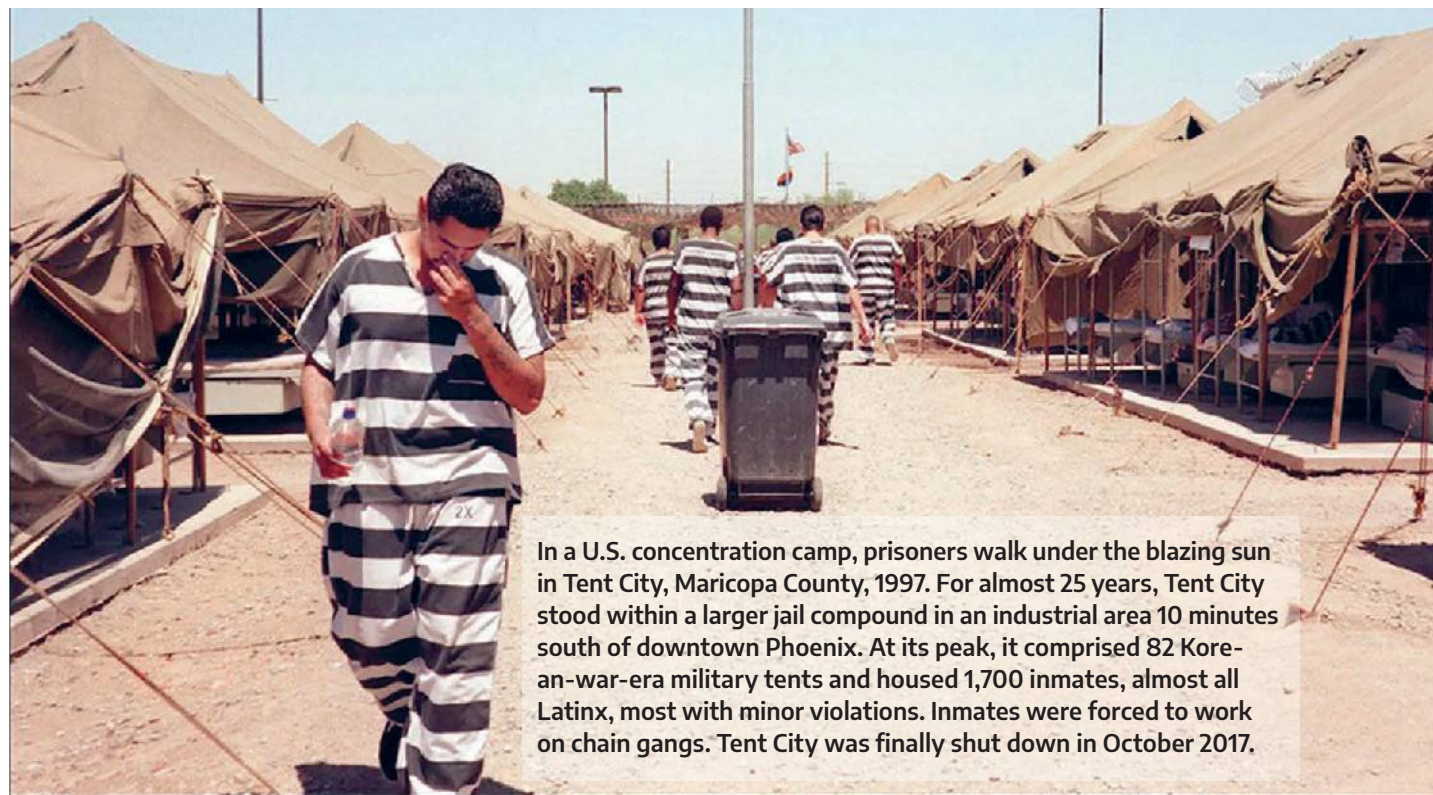
The Eighth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution — part of the Bill of Rights — clearly states that "excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted."

Bail is excessive for anyone who can't pay it. Solitary confinement is torture.

Unable to afford bail, Kalief Browder spent three years in New York City's jail complex on Rikers Island before his charges were dropped. For two of those years, the Black youth was in solitary confinement without trial or conviction.

Kalief Browder was jailed when he was just 16 years old. Two years after his release he hanged himself on June 6, 2015.

Sparked by this tragedy, a grassroots movement forced the New York State Legislature to pass laws that largely did away with cash bail. Police and their supporters launched



In a U.S. concentration camp, prisoners walk under the blazing sun in Tent City, Maricopa County, 1997. For almost 25 years, Tent City stood within a larger jail compound in an industrial area 10 minutes south of downtown Phoenix. At its peak, it comprised 82 Korean-war-era military tents and housed 1,700 inmates, almost all Latinx, most with minor violations. Inmates were forced to work on chain gangs. Tent City was finally shut down in October 2017.

a vicious campaign to repeal this needed legislation.

Cheering them on are Fox News and the New York Post, both owned by the billionaire hate-monger Rupert Murdoch. New York City Mayor Eric Adams also wants more people facing trial held on bail and more prisoners held in solitary confinement.

### No justice for the poor

It's a big lie that everyone in the United States is considered innocent until proven guilty. Not being able to afford bail means you can't contact witnesses that could prove your innocence. Any effective legal defense is largely denied.

Being kept in hellholes makes many innocent people confess to lesser charges just to get out of jail.

These forced confessions also prevent poor people from voting.

In 2020, 5.2 million people were kept off the voting rolls because of a previous conviction. Just cashing a check with insufficient funds can be enough to block someone from voting. Their real crime was being poor.

On an average day, 533,000 people are being held in local, state and federal dungeons without being convicted. Ten million people are driven through these lock-ups every year. Most people in jail are legally innocent.

More than 80,000 people are in solitary confinement. The United Nations Committee Against Torture has repeatedly condemned the use of solitary confinement in the U.S.

Any jail or prison is dangerous. Nearly 3,000 imprisoned people have

died of COVID-19. That's criminal.

Who needs to be locked-up are billionaire CEOs who are jacking-up prices. In just the first three months of 2022, the five biggest oil companies pumped out \$35 billion in profits.

The more than two million people in prisons are members of the working class. The labor movement needs to demand "Jobs Not Jails!"

On July, 14, 1789, poor people in Paris tore down a hated prison called the Bastille and started the French Revolution. There are thousands of bastilles across the United States. We need a socialist revolution to tear them down.

Kidnappers demand ransom. Bail is ransom for the poor while prisons are concentration camps for the poor. 📌

# Don't trust the Secret Service

By Stephen Millies

Despite the bloodshed in the U.S. capitol, Trump's attempted coup on Jan. 6, 2021, is often portrayed as a clown show. The capitalist media showed countless pictures of the bare-chested Jacob Chansley wearing a fur hat with horns.

Many people still question why it took over three hours for the Pentagon to send troops to stop the insurrection.

Gen. Charles Flynn, then deputy chief of operations, was one of those responsible for the 187 minute delay. He's the brother of retired Gen. Michael Flynn, Trump's first national security adviser who wanted the U.S. military to overturn the 2020 election results.

Col. Earl Matthews claims that Charles Flynn lied about the delay. The former D.C. National Guard officer sent a 36-page memo to the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 riot.

Because Washington, D.C., has been denied statehood, Mayor Muriel Bowser — unlike a state governor — couldn't call out the D.C. National Guard herself. Bowser had to ask the Pentagon to do it.

The spotlight is now on the U.S. Secret Service. Almost all of the agency's text messages from Jan. 5 and 6, 2021, were lost.

The alleged reasons for these deletions are as phony as the excuses given for the 18.5 minute gap in one of Richard Nixon's Watergate tapes. Rep. Jamie Raskin exclaimed, "I smell a rat."

Secret Service spokesperson Anthony Guglielmi is claiming that the destruction of this evidence was simply a technical screw-up. Guglielmi said the same when he was a public relations flack for the Chicago police department.

He tried to explain the lack of sound — in five police tapes that showed the murder of Laquan McDonald — as operator error. Convicted police officer Jason Van Dyke had shot the Black teenager 16 times.

It was very convenient that the conversations Van Dyke had with the other cops on the scene were lost.

Inspector General Joseph Cuffari of the Department of Homeland Security knew of the Secret Service erasures of the Jan. 5-6 text messages back in February of this year but he failed to inform Congress. His office was ready to issue a warning in October 2021 that the Secret Service was refusing to disclose texts and other records but failed to do so.

## The Secret Service and the coup

A year before the news broke about the lost texts, a book revealed an important part of Trump's coup attempt. "I Alone Can Fix It: Donald J. Trump's Catastrophic Final Year,"



Trump 2020. Vice President Mike Pence refused to be driven away from the Capitol by Secret Service agents. Trump thought Pence 'deserves' chants of 'hang Mike Pence' on Jan. 6.

by Washington Post reporters Carol Leonnig and Philip Rucker, was published in July 2021.

The authors disclosed that Vice President Mike Pence refused to be driven away from the Capitol by Secret Service agents, saying "I'm not getting in the car."

Pence is a bigot, not a hero. But he knew the Trump conspirators were trying to prevent him from counting the electoral college votes. Secret Service official Anthony Ornato, who was then serving on Trump's staff, wanted to take Pence to the Andrews military base.

While jokers like Rudy Giuliani and pillow salesman Mike Lindell were getting publicity, the Secret Service was going to kidnap the Vice President. At the same time Gen. Charles Flynn and other Pentagon officials were preventing the National Guard from clearing Trump's lynch mob from the U.S. Capitol.

With the support of a section of the "deep state" and Vice President Pence removed, Trump was to declare the election invalid and try to remain in the White House. Secret Service agents deleted their text messages as part of the cover-up.

The Jan. 6, 2021, coup failed for the same reason that Trump's earlier June 1, 2020, coup attempt flopped. (That was a week after George Floyd was murdered, when Trump wanted to declare martial law against the Black Lives Matter movement. His consolation prize was having demonstrators attacked with pepper spray and tear gas in Lafayette Park across from the White House.)

Most of the "deep state" — which is the real state's repressive apparatus of the Pentagon,

cops, courts and prisons — failed to back the coup.

It's one thing for Kenosha, Wisconsin, police to welcome fascist vigilantes like Kyle Rittenhouse. It's a different matter when the Pentagon's Joint Chiefs of Staff considered whether to help overturn the 2020 election or not.

The generals and admirals fear hundreds of thousands of GIs would refuse to carry out such orders. While 26 million people marched in 2020, demanding Black Lives Matter, many more millions would take to the streets if Trump tried to stay in office.

## Regime change in Dallas

"It can't happen here" has been a typical media response to claims of political conspiracies in the United States. This attitude has been evaporating because of Trump's attempted coup and the disclosures of the House of Representatives Jan. 6 committee.

The history of capitalism is punctuated by conspiracies. The African Holocaust and the Holocaust of Indigenous peoples in the Americas jump-started the world capitalist market.

Capitalism's bloody record includes trampling on its own laws.

Karl Marx quotes the British trade unionist T. J. Dunning:

"With adequate profit, capital is very bold. A certain 10 per cent. will ensure its employment anywhere;

20 percent certain will produce eagerness; 50 per cent, positive audacity; 100 percent, will make it ready to trample on all human laws; 300 percent, and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged."

Capitalist climate change's high temperatures are killing thousands of people. That didn't prevent the world's 60 biggest banks from lending \$742 billion last year to fossil fuel outfits, according to the Rainforest Action Network.

Big profits are why the bankers are helping to cook the earth. The \$6 trillion the U.S. spent on atomic weapons were also very profitable, even if capitalists would be incinerated in a nuclear war.

Lyndon Johnson became president because of a successful coup d'état. The Secret Service stood down, allowing John F. Kennedy to be assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas.

Secret Service agents were told to get off the rear of JFK's limousine just before it made the fatal turn in front of the Texas School Book Depository. On Kennedy and the Secret Service, Abraham Bolden, the first Black member of the president's Secret Service detail, was framed so he couldn't testify before the Warren Commission. Bolden was pardoned by President Biden on April 26.

JFK shouldn't have trusted the Secret Service. Neither should we. ☐

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# Philippines: Never again to martial law!

By Stephen Millies

New York — A terrible heat wave didn't stop a hundred people from demonstrating in front of the Philippines mission to the U.N. on July 24. Filipinos, Filipino-Americans and their supporters were protesting the newly installed regime of President Ferdinand "Bong Bong" Marcos, Jr. and Vice President Sara Duterte.

Marcos is a son of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who instituted martial law in 1972. Thousands of people were killed and at least 70,000 jailed during the 14-year long martial-law era that was blessed by four U.S. presidents.

Sara Duterte is the daughter of outgoing president Rodrigo Duterte, whose mis-named "war on drugs" involved thousands killed by police and army units.

The Sunday protest on Fifth Avenue was called by the Northeast Coalition to Advance Genuine Democracy in the Philippines. In a leaflet that was handed out, the coalition raised the following issues:

- The questionable results of the May 2022 elections that included faulty voting machines along with cases of vote-buying, violence and disenfranchisement of voters. The elections were held after decades of lies that covered up the crimes of the bloody Marcos dictatorship.

These crimes include the looting of billions of dollars, some of which the Marcos family still controls. Much of the loot must have been siphoned off by U.S. banks and the greasy fingers of U.S. power brokers.

- The continuing economic crisis that includes a tenth of Filipino citizens having to work in other countries. Their remittances keep millions of Filipinos alive. New York City hospitals would collapse without Filipino and Haitian workers. Poorly paid Filipino sailors keep thousands of ships on the oceans operating.
- The humanitarian crisis that has led to murders committed by Philippine police and military. One of the signs at Sunday's protest was "activism is not terrorism." Among those assassinated have been peasants, workers, union organizers, teachers, journalists and LGBTQ2S activists. Police and army officials slander the victims by claiming they were terrorists. "Red-tagging" — that is, labeling people as communists — is used as an excuse to murder.

A representative of the women's organization Gabriela spoke of the arrest and disappearance of four women activists in the last two months: labor organizers Elizabeth "Loi" Magbana and Alipio "Ador" Juat and land



New York, July 24.

rights activists Elena Cortez Pampos and Elgene Mungcal.

## People's agenda for change

Many Filipino organizations have come together to support the new coalition including the Malaya Movement; Gabriela, National Alliance of Women and BAYAN-USA. Also supporting the rally was the International League for Peoples' Struggle, an anti-imperialist alliance.

A banner said "prosecute Duterte, justice and accountability for the Filipino people." One of the signs read "Oust Marcos."

On the same day in Quezon City, the Philippine capital, thousands of people demonstrated against the Marcos-Duterte regime.

The new coalition along with other Filipinos has put forward a 9 point People's Agenda for Change in the Philippines. The items include regulating prices; reviving agriculture; enacting land reform and developing national industrialization; fighting disinformation while promoting freedom of expression; free health care and social services; and ensuring environmental protection.

For more information on the North East Coalition contact: [linktr.ee/NE-4DemocracyPH](https://linktr.ee/NE-4DemocracyPH)

The rally was closed by Nina Macapinlac representing Bayan USA. After she spoke, protesters stomped to pieces painted cardboard boxes representing social injustices in the Philippines. 🇵🇭

# No martial law in the Philippines: Reject the Marcos-Duterte regime!

By Nina Macapinlac

The July 24 rally in front of the Philippines mission to the U.N. in New York was closed by Nina Macapinlac representing Bayan USA. Following is a full transcript:

Warm & militant greetings!  
My name is Nina Macapinlac, speaking on behalf of BAYAN USA. We, alongside millions of Filipinos in the Philippines and around the world, are here today to reject the Marcos-Duterte regime! We call for the strengthening of the peoples movement to end the economic crisis and fight for genuine change in the Philippines!

In a few hours, BBM [a nickname for "Bong Bong" Marcos -ed.] will give his first State of the Nation Address. The Philippine National Police tried to mandate a no-rally policy and illegally deny BAYAN a permit for their Peoples State of the Nation rally. Through much pressure, this was overturned by the city mayor and BAYAN will be able to hold its Peoples State of the Nation Address rally. This is a small but major victory. While 22k cops are getting ready to protect Bong Bong Marcos so that he can spout lies, the mass movement asserted and will continue to assert our rights in order to tell the truth on what is really happening in the Philippines!

So while kasamas take Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City, we are also out here in the streets of New York City! In Chicago, in California,



Nina Macapinlac

ALL PHOTOS: BILL DORES

in Hawaii, in Texas! In Hong Kong, UK, Australia and more. We are part of an international movement! Filipinos everywhere and the international community are marching in step to demand genuine democracy in the Philippines and push forward the Peoples Agenda!

This year is the 50th anniversary of martial law under Marcos Sr. and the Marcos family is back in Malacañang Palace. Let that sink in. It has been half a century since martial law enabled a dictatorship and that dictator's son is back in power. Upsetting, painful, ironic. There are so many words that can be used to describe how this political moment feels.

But let us remember that we are not helpless in a time loop. There are material reasons as to how we got to this moment. The Marcos family's decades-long disinformation

campaign was made possible by the alliances they forged with other political dynasties and reactionaries, enabled by a rotten political system that treats government as a business.

To top it off, Marcos Junior is coming to New York City in September for the U.N. General Assembly — the same time as the martial law anniversary. He is coming despite a \$353 million contempt order because the State Department & Biden think it's okay to let him enter the country because they need the Philippines to uphold U.S. geopolitical interests in Asia to isolate China. Sara Duterte is also tagging along to talk about education, to come here to talk to the international community on what it means to have a good education system for their people.

Will we let Marcos & Duterte have a good time here in New York City? No!

Will we allow Biden to legitimize these fascists to the international community?

Will we give Marcos & Duterte all hell when they get here? Yes!

As someone said, well actually it was Ate Carolina, we are wearing white today because we cannot mourn forever. We must move on and fight for genuine democracy for Inang Bayan.

So let us do that by ramping up our campaign against Marcos-Duterte! Let us build up to September, to the week of September 13 when the U.N. General Assembly is meeting, culminating on September 21st, the 50th anniversary of martial law! Let us make sure that Marcos knows he is not welcome in the Northeast! Repeat after me -

**Marcos Out Of NYC!**

**Duterte Out Of NYC!**

**Fascists Are Not Welcome Here!**

**Fascists Are Not Welcome Here!**

So comrades, let us draw strength and inspiration from each other, from the masses, from our siblings who are fighting fascism and imperialist crisis around the world. From El Salvador to Puerto Rico to Sri Lanka to Palestine, we are not alone in this struggle as Filipino people!

Let us lean on each other for community and solidarity! Let us organize tirelessly and build fighting mass organizations! And let us build our mass movements until the Philippines is free and all our people are free! 🇵🇭

# Cuba facing hybrid warfare

By Angel Guerra Cabrera

July 21 — Cuba must learn to live, advance and develop under the rigors of the fourth generation — or hybrid-warfare with which the United States systematically harasses it. That is the approach that emerges from observing the tireless activity of the government, the Communist Party and the Cuban institutional system in all spheres of economic, political, social and cultural activity. In addition to struggling to recover and transform its economy, the island, to give a couple of examples of great importance, is engaged in two tremendous political and legislative challenges: the debate on the family code — already in the process of approval in the National Assembly of People's Power, after receiving substantial modifications in popular assemblies— and the new communication law, two instruments that tend to deepen the vibrance of Cuban democracy.

Precisely, on Wednesday, the day in which the parliamentary commission discussed the opinion of the aforementioned code, President Miguel Díaz-Canel called, in the economic commission, to deepen Cuban democracy in the face of economic asphyxia and the subversive plans of the U.S.. There is talk of the defeated imperialist and counterrevolutionary attempt of 7/11, but every day the Cuban people must face nu-



President Miguel Díaz-Canel: deepening democracy in spite of hybrid war against Cuba.

merous manifestations of hostility, both in the economic, political and diplomatic order as well as in the cultural-communication battle. It is worth reiterating, so far President Joseph Biden has changed very little of the 243 measures added by Donald Trump to reinforce the blockade.

Biden's administration announced the reestablishment of family remittances and a greater delivery of visas, but so far he has not implemented them. However, the gray Secretary of State Anthony Blinken announced the day before yesterday the inclusion of Cuba in the black list of coun-

tries that do not perform well in human trafficking. It is a big lie, which identifies Cuba's prestigious medical cooperation as "trafficking".

In order to understand what fourth-generation warfare, or hybrid warfare, as applied to Cuba consists of, I briefly return to my previous week's post. There I summarized different forms of aggression applied by the United States (U.S.) against Cuba since 1959, the year of the revolutionary triumph. I tried to historically frame the social disorders provoked in the island on July 11, 2021 and to explain the combination of irritating

factors that came together to propitiate them. Some, like the pandemic and the confinement, an objective reality. Others, the most deliberate, such as the cruelty with which the government of Donald Trump sought to intensify during the pandemic the hardships and shortages caused by the blockade in order to inflict the maximum degree of pain and despair on the Cuban people. All this combined with a ferocious onslaught on social networks and in the conventional media.

Based on its long experience of wars of aggression, hostile campaigns and coups d'état against peoples and governments, including those of the first Cold War against the U.S.S.R., the U.S. has been modifying its military doctrine, adapting it to its scientific and technological development and to the advances and lessons learned from those it considers its enemies. That is to say, the revolutionary and progressive movements and governments, or also, those that do not subordinate themselves to the dictates of the empire. The fourth generation war is the combination of economic, financial and commercial asphyxiation, with which it bets on the division of the Cuban people. It is the use of digital networks, the digital media created for that purpose and the conventional ones, to sow ha-

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# The legacy of Pastors for Peace support for Cuba continues

By Alejandra Garcia and Bill Hackwell

For the 32nd time in 30 years a Pastors for Peace caravan is in Cuba bringing close to 100 people including many young people who are experiencing the reality of Cuba for the first time; seeing for themselves instead of through the filter of lies and hate so prevalent in the mainstream media of the U.S..

But the delegation is not just made up of first time supporters but veterans of many of the friendship caravans too who accompanied Pastor's visionary leader the Reverend Lucius Walker through all those years of collecting essential material aid for the island in cities and towns all around the U.S.. While tons of aid was delivered it was the explaining the truth about Cuba and its example of what a better world could look like along the way was what was most important. Walker's message was one of defiance against the cruelty of the blockade, wrapped in love. He said more than once, "our government has no authority to tell us who our friends are. The Cuban people are our brothers and sisters."

The history of the caravans is being carried in the stories of these veterans like Lisa Valenti who accompanied Lucius in 1996 on a 90 day hunger strike in front of Congress to demand the release of Cuba bound computers confiscated at the Mexican border by U.S. agents.

Longtime Pastor's Bus driver Bill Hill is another one who has partici-



2008, the caravan at the Mexican border.

Photos Bill Hackwell

pated in most of the caravans including many stopped at the border with furious resistance. From the first caravan in 1992 when border agents seized bibles and bicycles from the hands of priests and students to a caravan stopped at the Canadian border and the aid was then defiantly carried by caravanistas box by box to the other side. Other caravans have defied the U.S. ban on sending technology to Cuba containing any more than 10% of U.S. made components in it including satellite dishes and solar panels. In 1993, during the second caravan, a little yellow school bus was seized by Treasury officials and impounded for 23 days, with 13 caravanistas (including Lisa Valenti)

inside, at the border town of Hidalgo, in the blistering heat, until an international outcry forced its release. The State Department claimed the little yellow bus could be used for the military when in fact it was meant for a Cuban school for children with disabilities.

In the history of the caravans there always seemed to be another way to break the blockade.

To sum up the determination of these trips of solidarity and love Bill Hill remembered what Lucius once said, "These trucks and buses don't have a reverse, they only go forward to Cuba."

Pastors for Peace's commitment to ending the blockade didn't just focus

on their own projects but it has always extended to other Cuban solidarity groups in the U.S. when their support was needed. In 2011, for example, when the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5 was organizing a tour of the famed Cuban National Children's Theater Group, La Colmenita in the U.S., there was a need for a bus to transport the children between cities on the East coast and it was Pastors who provided one and Bill Hill drove it.

Cheryl LaBash, co-chair of the National Network on Cuba, is also on this caravan and explained to Resumen Latinoamericano why Pastor for Peace decided to launch the friendship caravans during the most difficult years of the Revolution.

"At that time it was the 1990s, and the island was going through its worst economic crisis up to that time, known as the Special Period.

"Our initiatives were carried out while the administration of then President George Bush (Sr.) was creating all kinds of measures to hinder Cuba's efforts to overcome the crisis. Bush had decided to maintain the fundamentals of the genocidal policy against Cuba, implemented shortly after the triumph of the Revolution of 1959.

"On April 6, 1960 Lester D. Malloy, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, in a secret State Department memo defined the U.S. strategy that continues to this day:

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tred and violence in Cuba, no matter the lies and slander used. It is also the reiterated call for the U.S. military intervention by the most vicious spokesmen of the counter-revolution. It is the millions of dollars of U.S. taxpayers' money used to sustain the aforementioned media campaigns and to pay the mercenary fifth column inside the island. In the height of delirium, they have gone so far as to use the slogan revolution, understanding as such the unleashing of chaos and social disorder in Cuba. Everything seems little enough to precipitate the longed-for day of the end of "communism". It was not July 11 of 2021, nor November 15 and nothing happened this July 11 either. Instead, Havana, very calm.

It does not matter. Four days later they were already mounting an operation on the Twitter network, denounced by the Union of Cuban Journalists, whose analysts found 8,190 users, the vast majority located outside Cuba, who have generated 27,301 interactions in the last few days, in which, with the greatest impunity, they call for street violence on the island. It is obvious that none of these accounts will be closed by Twitter, as they have done to many users who defend the revolution.

Source: *La Jornada*, translation *Resumen Latinoamericano – English*

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"The majority of Cubans support Castro...the only foreseeable way to detract from his domestic support is by disenchantment and dissatisfaction arising from economic malaise and material hardship...every possible means must be rapidly employed to weaken the economic life of Cuba...a course of action which, being as skillful and discreet as possible, will achieve the greatest advances in depriving Cuba of money and supplies, to reduce its financial resources, to bring about hunger, despair, and the overthrow of the Government."

"That prescribed as surreptitious-ly as possible to create difficulties without the major trading partners of the Eastern bloc and the Soviet Union. And the progressive movement urgently needed to do something from the United States."

"Why? Because Cuba and the Cuban Revolution were a symbol of resistance right here in our hemisphere, of constructing a new social order based on human needs, not on profit. So that's why in my opinion, the 1st Caravans were organized and undertaken."

LaBash concluded, "Cuba was never alone and never will be. Pastors for Peace and the new generation of caravanistas will continue the legacy of Lucius Walker and the hundreds of caravanistas who have preceded them for as long as it takes to put this criminal blockade of Cuba into the dustbin of history"

Source: *Resumen Latinoamericano – English*

# The assassination of Shinzo Abe and Japan's military expansion

By Gary Wilson

The assassination of Shinzo Abe, the former prime minister of Japan, on July 8 maybe stirred some memories of the period of government by assassination in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. It was a time when a pandemic and a severe capitalist depression led to a reign of terror from ruling class reactionary groups – the rise of fascism.

Shinzo Abe was described by Donald Trump adviser Steven Bannon as "Trump before Trump."

Abe had some similarities to Trump. He was a right-wing "Make Japan Great Again" nationalist who stirred up racism to rouse his supporters.

Abe was allied with anti-Korean and other racist groups. He drummed up anti-Korean sentiment against both the Korean residents of Japan and the people of South and North Korea, former colonies of Japan. He appointed Eriko Yamatani, a politician closely associated with the ultra-nationalist, extremist anti-Korean group Zaitokukai, to be the head of the National Public Safety Commission that oversees the National Police Agency.

Abe was a "special adviser" in the Nippon Kaigi, Japan's largest ultra-conservative, far-right non-governmental organization and lobby. Nippon Kaigi, the *Asia Times* reports, is "comparable to movements in the Southern U.S. which, to this day, glorify the Confederacy."

## A war criminal

Abe was for many years at the head of Japan's ruling party, the Liberal Democratic Party. The LDP was founded in 1955 by Abe's grandfather Nobusuke Kishi. It was funded by the CIA.

China has a museum in the city where the Japanese occupation of China began in 1931 that showcases the atrocities committed by the invading forces, including the "Rape of Nanking," a massacre of more than 300,000 people. The museum describes Nobusuke Kishi, Abe's grandfather, who was a top official of the Japanese occupation regime, as a "Class-A war criminal."

Even while out of power, Abe was "advising" the LDP's plan for a new Imperial Constitution for Japan. U.S. General Douglas MacArthur, the supreme commander of the occupying forces, shaped the writing of Japan's postwar constitution. This is generally known as a U.S.-dictated constitution, one that ultra-nationalists like Abe have long sought to tear up.

## Occupied by U.S. military

Japan has been occupied and dominated by the United States since



Shinzo Abe promoted the racist, ultra-nationalist organization Zaitokukai. Above, Zaitokukai members wave imperialist "rising sun" flags (a red ball with 16 red rays) during a rally in Tokyo. This is similar to waving Confederate battle flags in the U.S. The placard says 'Koreans should be massacred.'

1945. Japan has the highest number of U.S. military bases in the world at 120, followed by Germany with 119, and then South Korea with 73. The U.S. occupation forces in Japan exceed 55,000 troops.

Some 75% of all U.S. armed forces and military bases in Japan are on the island of Okinawa, Japan's only remaining colony. The Kadena Air Base in Okinawa is the largest U.S. Air Force base in the Asia-Pacific Region. A strong and popular anti-base movement in Okinawa regularly stages mass protests against the U.S. military occupation.

The assassination of Abe comes at a time when Japan's economy is in crisis. For example, the *Japan Times* reported June 30, "Japan's worst factory output slump in two years heaps pressure on the economy."

Japan's economy is contracting. Japan is the third-largest economy in the world, yet its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is almost the lowest of the Group of Seven (G7) imperialist countries – the U.S., Germany, Britain, France, Canada and Italy (with the lowest GDP per capita). Japan's poverty rate is the second-highest among the G7, behind Italy.

Income inequality in Japan accelerated during Abe's rule. Abenomics, as it was known, meant austerity and cutbacks for the working class while huge monetary "stimulus" support boosted stocks and corporate profits. Wages have not gone up since 2012, with household income falling an average of 3.5%, while the top 10% saw big increases.

Japan's current prime minister, banker Fumio Kishida, took office in October 2021 on a promise to revive Japan's economy with what he calls "new capitalism," which is popularly believed to be a rejection of Abenomics.

## Doubling military spending

Kishida's "new capitalism" will mean a doubling of military spending and increased military involvement in the Indo-Pacific region, according to the policy guidelines adopted on June 7. The guidelines call for doubling Tokyo's military spending "within five years." If that happens, Japan would be the third-largest military spender in the world, surpassed only by the U.S. and China.

Kishida announced the planned military expansion at the opening of the G7 summit on June 27 in Germany, just after drills with the U.S. and Australia leading up to the massive Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) war exercises in early July. Kishida denounced China and North Korea in order to justify future Japanese aggression in the Asia-Pacific region.

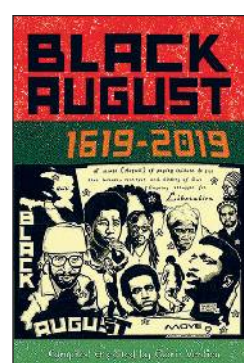
Next was the NATO summit in Madrid. Kishida, the first Japanese leader to attend a NATO summit, said that Japan would work with the NATO military alliance to "realize a free and open Indo-Pacific."

The U.S. announced at the NATO summit the formation of a new "coordination mechanism" in the Pacific in preparation for war. The so-called "Partners in the Blue Pacific" are the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Britain and Japan – an imperialist front.

Economics drives politics. And military spending and expansion are frequently touted as economic stimuli that will turn around a capitalist crisis, even though it never does.

Shinzo Abe's alleged assassin, Tetsuya Yamagami, reportedly told police that he targeted the former prime minister because of Abe's affiliation with the Unification Church, a religious cult rooted in anti-communism. Abe's war-criminal grandfather Nobusuke Kishi was one of the founders of the Unification Church. The church had bankrupted the family of the alleged assassin.

That could be the end of the story. While Abe was a militarist and proponent of Japan's military expansion, he had said that Japan would be a partner to NATO, not a member, which would put the Japanese military under direct U.S. military command. He considered NATO a diversion from a focus on North Korea and China, which were the primary targets throughout his career. □



## BLACK AUGUST 1619-2019 commemorates 400 years of Black freedom struggle.

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<https://tinyurl.com/vn3qvn5>

# Biden and the U.S.-Israel-GCC axis

## It's not the oil, it's the money

**GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council**  
includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar,  
Saudi Arabia & the United Arab Emirates

By Bill Dores

Joe Biden didn't go to Arabia in July to beg for oil. That's not the nature of the U.S.-Saudi relationship.

He didn't go to Palestine to promote peace. The U.S.-Israeli relationship is based on endless war. And war is what Biden's trip was about.

He went on a mission for his corporate masters. His job: To cement a military alliance of U.S.-armed states for proxy war against Iran.

Since 1991, when the Soviet bloc fell, the U.S. has been bombing, invading and sanctioning energy-producing countries. That 30-year war is a desperate effort to regain the stranglehold U.S. corporations once held on the world's energy reserves.

In the 1960s, most of the region's oil was owned directly by Western monopolies. Half of the overseas profits of U.S. corporations came from Arab and Iranian oil. Revolutions in Iraq, Libya, Syria and Iran took much of that wealth out of their hands. They want it back.

War and destruction in Iraq, Libya, Syria, Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan and now Ukraine saved U.S. oil monopolies and their bankers from financial disaster. In fact, it brought them their biggest profits ever. And it made the U.S. the world's top oil and gas producer.

### How to really tame inflation

If Biden seriously wanted to bring down fuel costs, he would order those monopolies to roll back prices. If he wanted to expand the global energy supply, he would lift sanctions on Iran, Syria and Venezuela, not to mention Russia.

If Biden wanted to promote peace in the "Middle East," he would stop sending \$3.8 billion worth of arms to the Israeli war machine every year. He would end massive U.S. arm sales to the Saudis and other royal tyrants of the Arabian peninsula. He would get U.S. troops out of Iraq and Syria, get the Sixth Fleet out of the Mediterranean and the Fifth Fleet out of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea.

Those actions would also crush inflation. But taking them would mean standing up to Big Oil, the military-industrial complex and Wall Street. Biden didn't go to the "Middle East" to oppose their interests. He went to serve them.

### "Normalization" means war

In Jerusalem, Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid issued a "strategic partnership joint declaration." Biden pledged the U.S. to maintain Israel's "qualitative military edge" and to continue the 2016 memorandum of understanding (MOU), signed by Barack Obama's administration, when Biden was vice president, that went into effect in 2018. That's a \$38 billion arms transfer to the Zionist state over 10 years. The U.S. provided an additional \$1 billion over MOU levels in supplemental missile defense funding in 2021.

Biden promised the Israeli occupation regime even more money if it launches a war. And that another 10-year MOU would follow.

In 2021 Israel borrowed \$2.5 billion from Citibank for arms purchases over and above the \$38 billion. It used the next U.S. MOU as collateral.

### "Abraham Accords" is a military pact

Biden and Lapid also said they would "broaden and strengthen" the Trump regime's vaunted Abraham Accords between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and the U.S. That so-called "normalization" deal is in reality a war pact aimed at the Palestinian and Lebanese Resistance and countries like Iran and Syria that don't pay tribute to "Corporate America."

### Palestine, petrodollars and pipelines

There is another aspect to the accords: Washington and Wall Street want to use the region's natural gas to battle Russia for Europe's energy market. Since the 1980s the U.S. has been trying to take that market over. "Normalization" would allow gas and oil from the Gulf states to flow across occupied Palestine to the Mediterranean and Europe.

That's on top of the natural gas U.S. oil giant Chevron already plunders from the stolen waters off Palestine. Chevron and other U.S. firms are exploring and drilling in Palestinian, Egyptian and Cypriot waters. Their Israeli agent now seeks to steal Lebanon's gas as well.

Meanwhile, U.S. troops occupy Syria's oil fields. And U.S.-Israeli military operations in Syria block a planned pipeline to bring natural gas from Iran to the Mediterranean.

In 2020, when the Abraham Accords were signed, Washington and Tel Aviv wanted Saudi Arabia and Qatar to openly join the alliance. The House of Saud has long collaborated covertly with the Zionist state, including in its war against Yemen.

### Biden leaves, Israel's murder spree continues

On July 15, Biden left Jerusalem for Jeddah. That night Israel's U.S.-made planes again rained U.S.-made missiles on the besieged Palestinian enclave of Gaza. Israeli troops resumed their murderous terror raids, cruel home demolitions and killings in towns and refugee camps on the West Bank.

Six West Bank Palestinians have been murdered by U.S.-paid Israeli troops in the 12 days since Biden's visit. On July 29, Amjad Abu Alia, 16, was shot to death by occupation soldiers in the village of Al Mughhir near Ramallah.

Within days of Biden's visit, Israeli forces also launched new airstrikes on Syria, killing at least three people.

### A summit of tribute states

In Saudi-ruled Arabia, Biden addressed a summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The presidents of Egypt and Iraq and the king of Jordan attended. Along with Israel, those nine countries account for half of U.S. arms sales in the past decade.

The GCC is a gang of oil-rich monarchies that pay tribute to the United States. That is, they fork over their oil and gas revenues to U.S. oil companies, arms contractors and Wall Street banks.

Sixty percent of the private wealth of the GCC countries is invested in the U.S. Lockheed Martin opened a

new production plant in 2021 to supply F16s to GCC states. Bahrain is the home base for the U.S. Fifth Fleet.

Before the 1979 Revolution, the Shah made Iran a cash cow for Wall Street. When the new Islamic Republic of Iran stopped paying tribute, it became a target of Washington's wrath.

In his speech to the GCC +3 (the Gulf Cooperation Council plus Egypt, Iraq, and Jordan), Biden warned of threats to the "rules-based international order" — the one under which the U.S., Israel and Saudi Arabia bomb and kill with impunity.

He lied that U.S. troops are no longer "engaged in combat" in the region. What are they doing in Iraq and Syria against those countries' wishes?

There are 65,000 U.S. troops in Southwest Asia, including air and naval forces. There are 5,500 in Iraq and 600 in Syria, where they deny Syrians access to their own oil. They have no business being there.

Biden praised the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which he helped engineer. He rambled about "energy security" and "regional cooperation" and "economic integration."

Then he got to the main point: War. He invoked the oldest pretext in the imperialist box of lies: "The free flow of commerce."

Biden claimed the U.S. had to defend "freedom of navigation" through the Bab el Mandeb and the Straits of Hormuz, which he implied is under threat by Iran. Not a word about the Saudi blockade of Yemen, Israeli attacks on Iranian tankers and U.S. sanctions on Iran, Syria, Eritrea and Yemen.

"We've established a new naval task force to work in partnership with many of your navies to help secure the Red Sea," the president said. "That includes the first naval task force to use [un-manned] surface vessels and artificial intelligence technology to enhance marine — maritime awareness. ... We're also integrating air defenses and early warning systems to ensure that we can defeat airborne threats."

He didn't explain what business the U.S. Navy has "securing" the Red Sea, 7,413 miles from U.S. shores. But control of that waterway would allow the U.S. and Israel to choke off access to the Suez Canal.

### Shirin Abu Akleh and Breonna Taylor

Palestinian journalist Shirin Abu Akleh could not report on Joe Biden's visit to her occupied homeland. She was among 70 Palestinian civilians murdered by U.S.-armed Israeli occupation troops so far this year.

Akleh was a U.S. citizen and reporter for Al Jazeera. On May 11 she was covering an Israeli army attack on the Jenin refugee camp. An Israeli sniper shot her in the head with a rifle made in Connecticut.

The murder weapon was one of hundreds of thousands of rifles the U.S. has given Israeli army for free. The bullet that took her life was standard U.S. Army issue.

Shirin Abu Akleh was a household name in the Arab world. The Israeli army wouldn't assassinate a U.S. citizen working for an international news agency without approval from the top. The White House and State

Department said they would demand "accountability."

Biden forgot all about that when he landed in Israeli-occupied Palestine July 13. Just like he forgot about Black medical worker Breonna Taylor, murdered in her bed March 13, 2020, by Louisville cops.

On the campaign trail Biden promised justice for Taylor. Since taking office he has refused to order the Justice Department to act against her killers in blue.

When Biden arrived in Palestine, he smiled and shook hands with rightwing Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid, alternate PM Naftali Bennet, former PM Benjamin Netanyahu and war minister Benny Gantz. Gantz gave him a "video tour" of Israel's "cutting edge" missile technology, developed with U.S. funds.

Biden accepted the settler state's Medal of Honor from its president, Isaac Herzog. He refused to meet with the family of Shirin Abu Akleh.

### Genocide in Yemen and a murder in Istanbul

On July 15, Biden flew to Saudi Arabia. Exiled Arabian journalist Jamal Khashoggi was not alive to write about it.

On October 2, 2019, the U.S. resident was lured into the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. His fiancé waited for him on the sidewalk outside. He never came out.

A hit team sent by Saudi crown prince Muhammad Bin Salman awaited Khashoggi inside the consulate. They strangled him and dismembered his body with a bone saw.

Donald Trump, then President, protected the Saudi prince. "I wouldn't let Congress touch him," he bragged. Earlier that year Trump had also vetoed a bill restricting U.S. involvement in the genocidal Saudi war against Yemen.

Joe Biden said in his campaign speeches that he would make the Saudi kingdom a "pariah." He also condemned the kingdom's genocidal war against neighboring Yemen. "I would end the ... sale of materials to the Saudis where they're going in and murdering children," the future President said.

### The war on Yemen continues; so do U.S. arms sales

When Biden took office last year, he did declare a "freeze" on "offensive weapons sales" to the Saudi regime. But in November, the White House approved a \$650 million sale of "defensive" air-to-air missiles and launchers to the kingdom.

On July 11, four days before Biden's visit, U.S.-armed Saudi troops opened fire on a village in Yemen, killing 17 people. That same day Reuters reported that "the Biden administration is discussing the possible lifting of its ban on U.S. sales of offensive weapons to Saudi Arabia."

Although there is supposedly a truce in Yemen, the Saudi Navy's U.S.-made ships continue to blockade the impoverished country, where 17 million people face starvation.

Eighty-five thousand Yemeni children have starved to death since the Saudi blockade began. Over 10,000 children have been killed by the

*Continued on page 9*



# Crisis in Sri Lanka: Is U.S. imperialism involved?

By Sharon Black

The scenes of massive people's protests that have forced Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to flee to Singapore have filled the news media. On July 20, Ranil Wickremesinghe, the former prime minister, was appointed interim president.

This choice is unlikely to quell the masses of people protesting in the street who view Wickremesinghe as part of the previous government that is reviled for corruption and is held responsible for the recent economic crisis.

## Characterizing the revolt

It is difficult to have a full picture of the opposition from working class parties and the left or at least to make immediate conclusions. For the most part we are being fed a narrative from the capitalist press.

So far the mass protests and upheaval have not changed social or property relations in Sri Lanka. Sections of the mass movement have demanded the formation of a representative people's council that could act as a consultative body to parliament. It is unknown at this point whether or how far the Sri Lankan working class will be able to propel things forward under present conditions.

*Continued from page 8*

Saudi Kingdom's U.S.-made bombs.

The Trump regime imposed sanctions on Yemen in 2020. Biden has not lifted them.

There was talk that Biden would refuse to shake hands with Prince Bin Salman. When he arrived in Jeddah, he gave the butcher of Yemen a fist bump. The next day he warmly shook hands with his father, King Salman bin Abdulaziz.

All U.S. presidents, without exception, serve the U.S. corporate war machine. The point of this article is not to expose Biden's dishonesty and corruption. It's to point out the real nature of the U.S.-Israel-Saudi-GCC relationship, which the corporate media conceals.

It is a bloody protection racket. It has brought trillions of dollars in profits to U.S. corporations over the past 75 years at a cost of millions of lives. It depends on endless war.

Since its creation on stolen Palestinian land, the racist state of Israel has acted as enforcer in this protection racket. Pentagon officials routinely call the Zionist state "our unsinkable aircraft carrier."

The only solution: 'U.S. Out' and a 'Free Palestine'

Peace and cooperation in Southwest Asia, the region they call the "Middle East," demands that the U.S. get out, with all its troops, planes, warships, weapons and spies. That includes an end to the flow of arms and dollars to the Israeli occupation regime and arms sales to the GCC.

It demands that the settler state U.S. generals call "our unsinkable aircraft carrier" be replaced with a democratic state in all of Palestine. It demands that Palestinian refugees have the right to return and that every Palestinian has the right to live in peace and freedom in every corner of the land of Palestine. 📌

But we should keep in mind the experiences and expectations of the Sri Lankan people who have had free education since 1944 and universal health care since 1951. It was the attempt to privatize education that pushed students and teachers into the streets in earlier protests.

At the same time the danger of increased U.S. involvement and deeper privatization looms large. There is already evidence of attempts by U.S. imperialism to jockey and insert its interests into the equation.

## Danger of the IMF

In June 2022, International Monetary Fund representatives made visits to Sri Lanka to dangle the potential of more loans to address the debt crisis.

On July 22, the IMF is reported to hope to complete talks "as quickly as possible" according to Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva. "The IMF will not lend into a situation where they deem their money will not be repaid," according to John Hopkins Professor Deborah Brautigam.

At the same time on July 22, Wickremesinghe, the newly appointed president, ordered security forces to raid an encampment occupying government grounds in Colombo. Soldiers in riot gear and assault rifles tore down the encampment, beat and arrested protesters.

It should be noted that there have been 16 IMF "agreements" since 1965.

## Debt crisis lies - China & Russia

The U.S. capitalist press has been quick to trumpet the lie that the crisis in Sri Lanka was precipitated by loans from China for infrastructure development. But even in the fine print of these reports they have to admit that the majority of debt in Sri Lanka is due to private Western loans, not China.

The truth is that only 10% of Sri Lankan debt is linked to Chinese development and investment. It has been the larger commercial borrowing in capital markets that has pushed Sri Lanka into debt. According to Advocata Institute, a Colombo-based think tank, BlackRock, Allianz, UBS, HSBC, JPMorgan Chase and Prudential, are listed in the top 20 bond holders.

Sri Lanka's relationship with China is not new. At the end of the Korean War, Sri Lanka imported rice and exported rubber. Between 1956 and 1976, Sri Lanka was part of the Non-Aligned Movement and had close relations with China.

Similar to blaming China, the "Russia is to blame" also found in the U.S.-dominated media is turning the truth upside down. It has been the U.S./NATO proxy war and the U.S. sanctions that have disrupted the flow of food and fuel to Sri Lanka. While mouthpieces for the U.S. military-industrial complex blame Russia for blocking grain shipments, it was the Ukrainian military that mined the Port of Odessa and refused to remove the mines that had blocked shipments on the Black Sea.



## Is the U.S. involved more directly in Sri Lanka?

The National Endowment for Democracy, which specializes in regime-change operations, along with other Western NGOs are on the ground inside Sri Lanka and engaged in the recent protests. A Reuters report confirms this. It highlights the role of digital strategist Chameera Dedduwage who was a so-called volunteer at the NED. The report by Reuters details how much of this was organized on Facebook.

## Pentagon wants a 'military logistics hub'

The U.S. sees strategically-located Sri Lanka as a "military logistics hub" at the center of its "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Region Policy." This alliance between the United States, Japan, Australia and India is aimed at countering China's Maritime Belt and Silk Road Initiative.

It's estimated that two-thirds of the world's oil and half of all container shipments use the East-West shipping route. This major shipping route lies just 6 to 11 nautical miles from the southern tip of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's eastern Trincomalee Port has a natural harbor that is one of the best in the world.

It's in this context that the Pentagon conspired and bludgeoned its way to obtain a status of forces agreement (SOFA) and an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), formerly known as the NATO Mutual Support Act.

In the 2019 renewal, the Sri Lankan Parliament was never able to review the full document; not even Sri Lanka's military leaders had viewed it before it was signed. There was much opposition from Sri Lankans who saw this as a threat to their sovereignty. The Colombo Telegraph headline says it all: "Draft SOFA Reveals American Plan to Turn Sri Lanka into a Military Colony."

## 26-year civil war

It is beyond the scope of this article to detail the ravages of the war between Sri Lanka's government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The amount of suffering is deep and profound.

Here again the mainstream narrative has reduced the civil war to "ethnic differences," ignoring the role of British colonialism's divide

and conquer policies that were key to its conquest. It also ignores the complicated class divisions and what has driven right-wing nationalism. Sri Lanka did not get independence until 1948. British colonialism began in 1796 in the lowlands of Sri Lanka and was completed in 1815.

In the case of the war between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government, the U.S. had a duplicit role which included supplying arms to both sides. Later the U.S. dangled military assistance in the war to the Colombo government in return for support for ASCA.

When the war ended in 2009, Sri Lanka was viewed as a post-war economy ripe for plundering.

## Not just corruption

The narrative that corruption, no matter how disastrous or real it may be, is the cause of the crisis is superficial and is uninformative on solutions.

The severe capitalist debt crisis that broke out in a dramatic way in Sri Lanka is faced by developing countries across the globe including Ghana, Egypt, El Salvador, Tunisia, Pakistan, Nepal and many others. COVID-19 and U.S. sanctions exacerbated the crisis and sped it up.

The result has been desperate poverty, scarcity of food – even an absence of food and fuel – and instability in governance regardless of whether local governments are good, bad or in-between.

The crises are rooted in the dependence on imports by smaller countries in the dollar-dominated global market and the chokehold held by the imperialist banks.

In the case of Sri Lanka in particular, COVID-19 decimated the tourist industry that brought in hard currency along with remittances from Sri Lankan workers abroad who have lost jobs and income during the COVID crisis.

The problems facing the Sri Lankan people are a result of the greater global economic crises of capitalism, which have intensified. The contraction of U.S. capitalism has had its political and military expression manifested in its dangerous and virulent anti-China campaign and the U.S./NATO proxy war against Russia.

The well-being of the people of Sri Lanka is of no consequence to U.S. imperialism.

## Struggle is at a crossroad

The struggle is at a crossroad: the challenge is whether it can move in the direction of changing class relations and break the imperialist stranglehold in the country or whether Sri Lanka's elite turn toward more repression.

The biggest immediate danger is most notably U.S. imperialism and its neo-liberal policies which will deepen misery for the Sri Lankan people. This is why we must demand U.S. hands off Sri Lanka! The Sri Lankan people have a long history of defending their sovereignty regardless of the twists and turns, and we have confidence that they will resist U.S. imperialism no matter how difficult or long the journey. 📌

# Las causas estructurales del estallido social

Por Olmedo Beluche

Panamá ha exhibido en los últimos 20 años cifras macroeconómicas que son un encanto para los neoliberales, en particular un crecimiento sostenido del PIB basado en la acumulación privada producto de la reversión del canal a la soberanía panameña.

Pero los números que alegran a los neoliberales esconden la realidad de que este país, antes de la pandemia (2018), ya era considerado por el Banco Mundial como uno de los más desiguales de América Latina y el mundo. Según la CEPAL, a 2018, el 20% de la población se encontraba por debajo de la línea de pobreza, y el 10% por debajo de la línea de pobreza extrema. Todo ello acicateado por una precarización del empleo que lleva 40 años, en que la informalidad superaba el 40%.

Todo lo cual fue a peor en 2020, gracias a los efectos económicos de la pandemia. Los asalariados del sector privado, a 2019, eran 873,750 personas, de las cuales sólo conservaron sus empleos el 30%, en medio de la pandemia; el 37% fue despedido; y 33% (284 mil) pasaron a un limbo jurídico denominado “contratos suspendidos”. Un alto porcentaje de los cuales fue reactivado para ser despedidos inmediatamente en 2021.

Con lo cual podemos comprender el grado de descontento de la población panameña con la inflación de los precios de los combustibles, alimentos y medicinas. Pese a que en Panamá la inflación no alcanza cifras extraordinarias (como Venezuela o Argentina), y a junio de 2022 llegó al 5.2% respecto al año anterior, ese aumento de los precios conduce a las familias a la desesperación dada la precariedad laboral y salarial.

La Cámara de Comercio exige al gobierno contención del gasto público, despidos y austeridad. El gobi-



Marcha del pasado 12 de julio que aglutinó a diversos gremios, en protesta por el alto costo del combustible, alimentos y medicamentos.

erno de Laurentino Cortizo, sin admitir el alto grado de corrupción que lo corroe, ha aceptado parte del argumento empresarial y ha decidido contener el gasto con una reducción del 10% de la planilla estatal, lo que puede significar el despido de hasta 27 mil funcionarios que se sumarían a la ya grave crisis del empleo.

En sentido contrario, las organizaciones populares, como Polo Ciudadano, y los sindicatos más avanzados, han señalado que el problema central de la administración pública y los recursos necesarios para cubrir el gasto social está en la alta evasión fiscal a la que se suma la política de exoneraciones que se hacen a los principales rubros de la economía. El problema no son los subsidios a los pobres sino los subsidios a los ricos.

El economista Juan Jované ha estimado que la evasión fiscal en Pan-

amá, en la década de 2009 a 2019, totaliza unos 46 mil millones de dólares. Ese proceso de evasión impune ha ido creciendo de un promedio 3,000 millones de dólares por año a llegar a los 6 mil millones en 2019, donde se estima que se mantiene.

Súmese a esto la política de exoneraciones fiscales y se aprecia un paraíso para el gran capital y un infierno para las clases trabajadoras. Es más, la rebaja de los combustibles que se está exigiendo se transformará en un subsidio a los monopolios que controlan su importación y distribución, sin que haya un control a las desmedidas ganancias.

La tarea histórica: la construcción de un proyecto político alternativo popular y antineoliberal. Por eso el debate de fondo es entre dos proyectos de país:

• por un lado, lo que proponen

los gremios empresariales y los partidos tradicionales, que solo hablan de corrupción sin modificar la estructura social y económica del país, pero para imponer una austeridad que pagará la clase trabajadora;

• por otro lado, lo que propone el movimiento popular, medidas que resuelvan el problema de fondo, estructural, partiendo de una reforma fiscal progresiva en la que paguen más impuestos los que más ganan, que se acabe y penalice la evasión fiscal, para empezar. Cambiar el modelo económico requiere cambiar el régimen político oligárquico y corrupto, mediante una Asamblea Constituyente originaria.

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# The structural causes of the social explosion

By Olmedo Beluche

In the last 20 years, Panama has shown macroeconomic figures that the neoliberals love, in particular a sustained growth of the GDP based on private accumulation as a result of the reversion of the canal to Panamanian sovereignty.

But the numbers that make neoliberals happy hide the reality that this country, before the pandemic (2018), was already considered by the World Bank as one of the most unequal in Latin America and the world. According to the ECLAC, as of 2018, twenty percent of the population was below the poverty line, and 10% below the extreme poverty line. All this spurred on by a precariousness of employment that has been going on for 40 years, in which informality exceeded forty percent.

All of which got worse in 2020, due to the economic effects of the pandemic. Private sector wage earners, as of 2019, were 873,750 people, of whom only 30% kept their jobs in the midst of the pandemic; 37% were fired; and 33% (284 thousand) went into a legal limbo called “suspended contracts”. A high percentage of which were reactivated, to be immediately laid off in 2021.

Under these circumstances we can understand the degree of discontent of the Panamanian population with the inflation of the fuel, food and medicines' prices.

Despite the fact that in Panama inflation does not reach extraordinary figures (like in Venezuela or Argentina), and in June 2022 it reached 5.2% compared to the previous year, this increase in prices drives families to despair given the job and salary insecurity.

The Chamber of Commerce demands that the government contain public spending, along with layoffs and austerity. The government of Laurentino Cortizo, without admitting the high degree of corruption that corrodes it, has accepted part of the business sector argument and has decided to contain spending with a 10% reduction in the state payroll, which could mean the dismissal of up to 27,000 employees, which would add to the already serious employment crisis.

On the contrary, popular organizations, such as Polo Ciudadano, and the most advanced unions, have pointed out that the central problem of the public administration and the lack of resources necessary to cover

## PANAMA

social spending lies in the high tax evasion to which is added the policy of exonerations that are made to the main areas of the economy. The problem is not subsidies to the poor but subsidies to the rich.

The economist Juan Jované has estimated that tax evasion in Panama, in the decade from 2009 to 2019, totals about 46 billion dollars. This process of unpunished evasion has been growing from an average of 3 billion dollars per year to reach 6 billion in 2019, where it is estimated to remain.

Add to this the policy of tax exemptions and you see a paradise for big business and hell for the working classes. What's more, the reduction in fuels that is being demanded will become a subsidy for the monopolies that control their importation and distribution, without any control over excessive profits.

The historical task is: the construction of a popular and anti-neo-

liberal alternative political project. That is why the underlying debate is between two national projects:

• on the one hand, what is proposed by business associations and traditional parties, who only talk about corruption without modifying the social and economic structure of the country, but to impose an austerity that the working class will pay for;

• on the other hand, what the popular movement proposes are measures that solve the underlying structural problem, starting with a progressive tax reform in which those who earn the most pay more taxes and that tax evasion is ended and penalized, to begin with. Changing the economic model requires changing the oligarchic and corrupt political regime through a new Constituent Assembly.

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