

STRUGGLE LA LUCHA

for Socialism / por el Socialismo



Struggle-La-Lucha.org
 Vol. 5, No. 23 • Dec. 19, 2022
 Suggested donation: \$1
Socialist Unity Party
Partido de Socialismo Unido
 Twitter: @StruggleLaLucha
 Facebook.com/strugglelaluca
 email: info@struggle-la-lucha.org

'Challenge the U.S. justifications for this war'

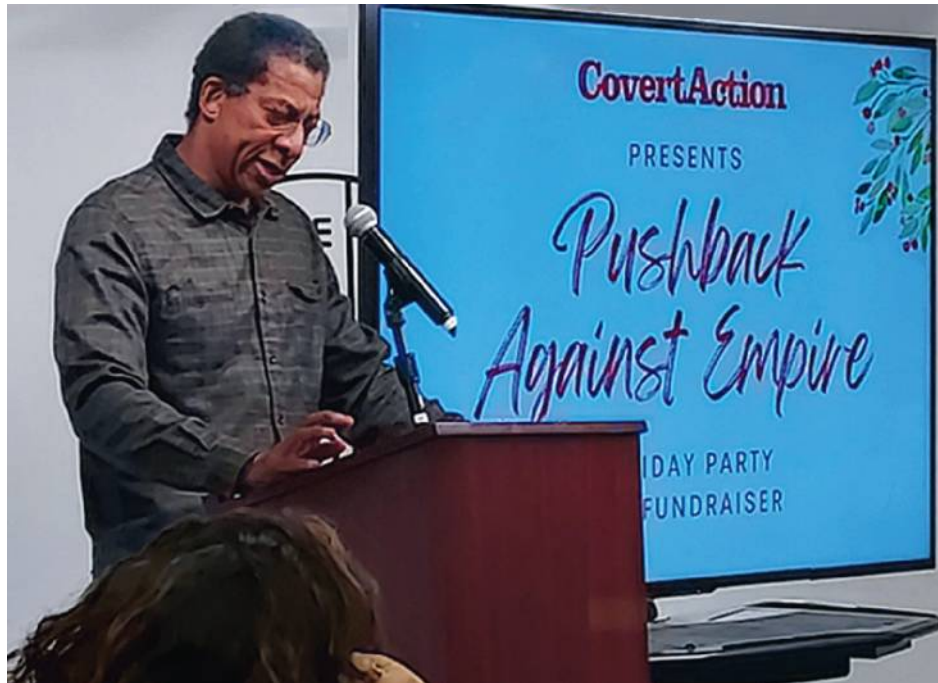
By John Parker

Talk given at "Pushback Against Empire," a holiday party and fundraiser for CovertAction Magazine in New York City on Dec. 1. CovertAction, founded by CIA whistleblower Phillip Agee in 1978, is one of the few publications that has published information exposing the U.S. proxy war in Ukraine, including John Parker's eyewitness reports from Donbass for Struggle-La Lucha.

If you like horror stories, here's one for you. It's the 2022 National Defense Strategy document from the U.S. secretary of defense. This document was blessed by President Biden, who is quoted in the introduction.

Right out of the gate, it calls China, Russia, Iran, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea threats to U.S. national security. And this threat must be met by making NATO even more powerful and nuclear-capable, especially surrounding Russia.

But in terms of priorities, China is the number one target. This will be done, the document declares, by provoking altercations in the Indo-Pacific region using Japan, South Korea, Australia, and any Southeast Asian countries Washington can recruit to launch a war from the South China Sea to the East China Sea. This week there was a very serious alter-



John Parker speaks at CovertAction event in New York City, Dec. 1.

cation in the South China Sea between the U.S. and China due to U.S. war games there.

As if that's not enough, the document says the U.S. should begin training and arming Taiwan in asymmetrical warfare (or guerrilla war) against China. So get your tax dollars ready to fund another war costing, this time, hundreds of billions of dollars. And unfortunately,

we may have to counter an anti-war movement in the U.S. that will probably blame China when that country is forced to respond to the provocations and threats to its security and sovereignty. That's what happened with Russia.

What should we learn from this document and the Rand Corporation strategy published three years ago

Continued on page 9



RAILROAD BARONS

- Baltimore: RR workers' right to sick leave 3
- NYC: Solidarity 3

Baltimore food deserts 2

Baltimore v Black youth & squeegee worker 2

PRESS CONFERENCE
 TUES, DEC. 13, 2022: 11AM EST

UNITED NATIONS STEPS IN WITH AMICUS BRIEF IN MUMIA ABU-JAMAL CASE

SPEAKERS:
 11TH CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE LINN WASHINGTON, JR
 VIJAY PRASHAD AND OTHERS

RACISM TAINTS JUDICIAL PROCESS UP TO NOW



California student workers strike 4



PEOPLE SPEAK OUT to STOP RACISM, POVERTY & WORLD WAR III

We Need Jobs, Housing, Food & Healthcare

In honor of Dr. King's legacy

FRIDAY, JAN 13, 6 pm to 9 pm

**St Mary's Episcopal Church, Harlem
 521 West 126th St. , New York, NY 10027**

COVID protocols. Must wear masks.

- **NO WAR & SANCTIONS** on the people of Russia, Donbass, China, Cuba, Haiti, Zimbabwe, Palestine, Yemen, Philippines, Venezuela, Iran, Syria, Puerto Rico
- **STOP FUNDING** white supremacy from Ukraine to the U.S.
- **SHUT DOWN NATO**, the Pentagon & the CIA
- **STOP racism, transphobia, union busting, and attacks on women's rights, LGBTQ people and immigrants**

Sponsors include: Struggle-La-Lucha; Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice; Women In Struggle; Voices of Resistance; United National Anti-War Committee; Youth Against War & Racism; Socialist Unity Party; Peoples Power Assembly, Freedom Road Socialist Org; December 12 Movement; Shut Down the Pentagon & CIA

<https://tinyurl.com/4bj9bhk4>

China Zero COVID ♦ No Haiti sanctions ♦ Palestine, 75 years ♦ Peru coup
 ♦ Free Venezuela's Alex Saab ♦ Ban U.S. cluster bombs to Ukraine

HONDURAS 5



Food deserts: Grocery giant shuts down in southwest Baltimore

By Lev Koufax

Over the past two years, grocery store closures have rolled across the U.S. like an epidemic. In particular, these closures have occurred in working-class communities, especially where most residents are Black or Brown.

Whether it is Kroger, Aldi, Stop and Shop, etc., huge grocery store magnates are closing stores that serve working-class neighborhoods. Corporate public relations departments and their allies in the media tell us that the reason for these closures is shoplifting or a shortage of workers.

In reality, these stores close because of corporate greed. There is no better demonstration of this reality than the recently announced closure of a Price Rite Marketplace in the heart of southwest Baltimore. Price Rite is part of the giant Wakefern Food conglomerate that includes ShopRite, Fresh Grocer, Dearborn Market, Fairway Market and more. Wakefern is one of the top 25 grocery retailers in the U.S., with 365 supermarkets, and is the largest private employer in New Jersey, with 40,200 employees.

This particular Price Rite store has been a staple in the Baltimore “Pigtown” neighborhood for over two decades. The Pigtown Price Rite is the only full grocery store easily accessible to those living in Pigtown and all the southwest Baltimore neighborhoods.

The recently announced Price Rite closure has sent a wave of shock and concern through the surrounding community. For years, this store has been the only source of fresh produce and meat in the area. Without it, the evolution of southwest Baltimore into a food desert is tragically complete.

Further compounding the injustice, the Giant grocery store chain announced the opening of a new location in the Locust Point neighborhood of Baltimore. Locust Point is a rapidly gentrifying majority-white middle-class neighborhood just east of Pigtown. While Locust Point is not geographically distant from Pigtown, because of economic segregation, it might as well be.



The Price Rite Marketplace in southwest Baltimore will permanently close its doors by the end of December.

Due to the lack of public transportation and racist wealth inequality, overpriced grocery stores in the heart of gentrifying neighborhoods are just not an option for the working-class Black and Brown communities in west Baltimore.

As if the closure itself wasn't bad enough, it seems unlikely that a different store will replace the Price Rite due to greedy developers. Several months ago, the Carlyle Development Group purchased the shopping center where the Pigtown Price Rite is currently located from the Baltimore City Government for an unbelievably low price. After the market announced its closure, the Carlyle Development Group made it clear that it would not seek to rent to another grocery store.

Their reason? Private medical practices and laboratories have a higher profit margin than grocery stores; working-class communities be damned.

The recent closure of the Pigtown Price Rite is one development in a broader trend in the capitalist market. Grocery store magnates have strategically decided to abandon working-class neighborhoods for wealthier, usually white, areas.

For example, when workers at the Kroger-owned Ralph's supermarket in South Central Los Angeles demanded hero pay for hours worked at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, what was the store's reaction? Well, Kroger decided to close that store, much like the Price Rite development in Baltimore, which deepened the food desert crisis in South Central Los Angeles.

The developers don't care about people. The grocery store chains don't care about people. The politicians in their pockets don't care, either. The capitalists only care about their bottom line.

We must fight back against these racist and anti-worker closures that cost the community healthy food access and jobs. The only people helped by these closures are millionaire and billionaire investors. [L]

Baltimore City escalates racist attack on squeegee workers and Black youth

By Lev Koufax

Earlier this month, Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott's “Baltimore Squeegee Collaborative” task force announced an action plan. This plan claims to address the socioeconomic and cultural issues associated with the phenomenon of street laborers, usually in their teens or early 20s, known as “squeegee workers.” These workers aim to supplement their family's income through cleaning the windshields of cars as they are stopped at intersections.

In reality, this plan simply escalates police crackdowns on the Black community and demonstrates that the Baltimore City government is firmly in the grip of local business owners and the investment banks behind them.

Scott's plan comes after months of racist and repressive outcry from the business community in Baltimore since a Black teenage squeegee worker killed a 48-year-old white man, Timothy Reynolds, in self defense.

The fatal shooting occurred when Reynolds exited his car, crossed nine lanes of traffic, and proceeded to swing a baseball bat wildly at a group of squeegee workers, all of whom were Black teenagers. Fearing for his life and that of his friends, one of the teens discharged a firearm and killed Reynolds.

Judge rejects plea deal

As Struggle-La Lucha has previously reported, the prosecution of this 15-year-old Black teenager has continued since the teen was charged with first-degree murder in August. The teen's indictment included seven other charges. He was charged as an adult on all counts,



Protesters in downtown Baltimore denounce the arrest of a 15-year-old African American squeegee worker for an act of self-defense, Aug. 2.

despite being 14 years old at the time of the alleged crimes.

The case took an unfortunate turn on Nov. 17, when a Baltimore City Juvenile Court judge rejected a plea deal that would have allowed the case to permanently move under the supervision of the juvenile justice system.

The teen's persecution has not only played out in the courthouse, but also in the media. Local television stations, radio programs and newspapers have depicted the accused youth as a monster who represents the criminal and violent nature of the Black community.

This propaganda blitz had one clear goal: to whip up a racist panic and place pressure on the city government to enact harsher “law and order” policies.

As a part of this blitz, Timothy Reynolds' family retained local reactionary attorney Thiru Vignarajah. When the plea deal was announced as a possibility, various members of the Reynolds family, with Vignarajah

by their sides, spoke to the press to express their feelings of betrayal at the idea of a plea that would allow the teen to be prosecuted as a juvenile.

Without knowing the defendant, the Reynolds family nonetheless depicted the young squeegee worker as a monster and career criminal.

According to members of the defendant's family present at the plea hearing, the Reynolds family repeated these lies in their victim impact statements before the judge. One individual went as far as to accuse the defendant of being a gang member. It was after this testimony, filled to the brim with racist tropes and stereotypes, that the judge issued his ruling that the 15-year-old be prosecuted as an adult.

Mayor, prosecutor make intentions clear

Mayor Scott's proposed “squeegee action plan” is the exact product of the aforementioned prosecution and its corresponding media campaign.

At the heart of the plan is a series of “panhandling” bans on intersections identified as squeegee worker hotspots.

Under Scott's program, all “panhandling,” which includes squeegee work, will be prohibited at six major intersections/corridors throughout the city. This brazen plan comes on the heels of incoming Baltimore City State's Attorney Ivan Bates' announcement that he will pursue broader criminal action against squeegee workers.

Bates further asserted that he would press Scott to release restrictions that currently prevent police officers from approaching squeegee workers without a supervisor's approval.

The trial, the plan – it's all part of a deliberate Baltimore City policy effort to expel the Black community, and in particular Black youth, from the majority white gentrified areas and the downtown business corridor.

Nothing demonstrates the corner clearing plan's racist nature more than the fact that the banned corridors seem eerily similar to 1930s Baltimore city redlining maps, which drove interest rates sky high for would-be Black homeowners.

Squeegee workers should not be met with prosecutions and character assassinations. The individuals who should face accountability are those who attack groups of teenagers on a street corner. Baltimore City and other cities like it don't need bans on panhandling. They need a genuine jobs program and an end to racist police terror.

Drop all the charges! Self defense against racism is not murder! Community control of the police now! [L]

To hell with the railroad barons: The railroads belong to the people!

By Stephen Millies

Nobody should be surprised by President Joe Biden's strikebreaking role in imposing a contract on railroad workers. The agreement had already been voted down by workers in several unions.

The imposed contract fails to address the need for sick days or any time off — paid or unpaid — for employees subject to call 24/7. Workers can still be written up for seeing a doctor or taking their children to a clinic.

Remember that "Amtrak Joe" had represented the Du Pont dynasty as a U.S. senator from Delaware for 36 years. He loyally served the Mastercard plastic loan sharks, also based in Delaware, in that U.S. House of Lords.

Biden worked with the late Senator Strom Thurmond, a vicious racist, to fight school integration. In the 1990s, Biden helped pass laws that increased the prison population to over two million.

The man in the White House can stop a strike of working people seeking fair treatment. But Biden refuses to use his pen to free 78-year-old Leonard Peltier. The Indigenous political prisoner, a leader of the Amer-

ican Indian Movement, has spent 46 years in jail after being framed.

What now?

The BNSF Railway's harsh and arbitrary attendance policy remains in place. This scheme assigns 30 points to every employee.

Except for vacation days, two points will be deducted for being absent on any day from Monday through Thursday. Three points will be taken away for taking off on a Sunday.

Workers will be fined four points if they don't come in on Friday or Saturday. Federal holidays are the grand prize.

Being sick on those days will cost an employee seven points. Never mind that workers and their family members get sick on holidays, too. Many days of overtime are required to earn back new points.

Even the capitalist courts claim to consider people innocent until proven guilty. The BNSF — completely owned by super billionaire Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway hedge fund — automatically penalizes workers who "mark off" whether or not they and their children are ill.

One of Buffett's BNSF serfs can be

fired for "losing" 30 points despite having a decades-long good record. Railroad management imposed this crap in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic without any negotiating with the unions.

The contract imposed by Biden and Congress doesn't address any working conditions. Many freight engineers and conductors are on call with no set work schedule. They may be forced to be away from their families for a week or more.

So are the maintenance-of-way employees who fix the track. They have to live in bunk cars or motels during the week, sometimes hundreds of miles away from home.

These issues go beyond wages, although that "big wage increase" that the media mentions will be eaten up by inflation. All workers deserve dignity.

An Amtrak yardmaster told this

writer that when he worked on the Norfolk Southern Railway, a trainmaster demanded that he do stretching exercises. It was as if this worker and father were back in kindergarten.

Profits first, safety last

This lack of respect has only increased since the introduction of the speed-up system called Precision Scheduled Railroading. There's nothing precise about PSR.

Even capitalists in the chemical, food and other industries have complained of increased train delays. "They've cut labor below the bone, really," Surface Transportation Board Chair Martin Oberman told the House Transportation Committee on May 12. "In order to make up for the shortage of labor, they are

Continued to page 10

Baltimore supports railroad workers' right to paid sick leave



Baltimore, Dec. 8.

SLI PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

By Struggle-La Lucha Baltimore bureau

December 8 — A rush-hour protest in downtown Baltimore showed support for railroad workers under attack. The newly formed Ad Hoc Committee To Support Railroad Workers called the action.

Protesters expressed their outrage at the railroad bosses for refusing to pay workers sick pay and at Biden and Congress for the "no strike law" that bars workers from walking out.

Cindy Farquhar, a local activist who emceed the action, exclaimed, "The railroad industry is the most profitable sector in the U.S. today. We in Baltimore will not roll over when they attack unions — rail workers deserve a decent job."

Sharon Black, a local Amazon warehouse worker who came straight from work, proclaimed, "We need a union at our warehouse, and I am here today to show support for the railroad workers."

A group from the newly founded union, Pratt Workers United,

attended and spoke. Ellie McCrow stated, "We are here to say no to government strikebreaking and that all workers have a right to a union."

Maximillian Alvarez, the editor-in-chief of the Real News Network, pointed out that the railroad industry should be publicly owned.

Other union and community representatives participated, including the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); Unemployed Workers Union; Peoples Power Assembly; American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE); and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 24.

Passing motorists honked in support, and two members of the Airline Pilots Association stopped to thank protesters, explaining that they are up against the same thing.

Baltimore is the city where the Great Railroad Strike was launched in 1877. The Maryland governor used armed troops to attempt to crush it, murdering 22 railroad workers. 📌

New York City in solidarity with railroad workers



PHOTO: JOHNNIE STEVENS

Omwale Clay of the December 12th Movement opens the solidarity rally.

Dec. 7 — Hundreds came to New York City's Grand Central Terminal to protest President Joe Biden's strikebreaking against 115,000 railroad workers. Many commuters were sympathetic and took leaflets.

Union members and their supporters marched through the vast Grand Central Terminal, which, because of cutbacks, doesn't have any intercity passenger trains anymore.

Airplane pilots from Southwest Airlines came to the rally in their uniforms. Airline unions are also included under the Railway Labor Act of 1926. Laborers, Electricians, Nurses, Teachers, Teamsters, and Transit Workers were among the other unions represented.

The rally was initiated by the December 12th Movement and co-sponsored by Teamsters Local 808, Amazon Labor Union, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Workers Assembly Against Racism, and Struggle-La Lucha newspaper.

Omwale Clay of the December 12th Movement opened the rally. He denounced President Biden and Congress for imposing an agreement on workers.

Chris Silvera, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 808, denounced the century-old Railway Labor Act

that makes it virtually impossible for railroad and airline workers to strike. Every worker should have sick days, said Silvera, referring to one of the demands of railroad unions.

Charles Jenkins is president of the New York chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) and an officer in Transport Workers Union Local 100. He reminded everyone of the 2005 transit workers' strike in New York City. Jenkins denounced New York State's Taylor Law which makes it illegal for government employees to strike.

A representative from the Amazon Labor Union spoke, as did members of the Workers Assembly Against Racism and the New York-New Jersey Cuba Sí Coalition.

Steve Millies, a retired Amtrak worker, spoke for Struggle-La Lucha newspaper. He said that Joe Biden represented the Du Pont dynasty and the Mastercard loan sharks as a U.S. senator from Delaware.

Millies pointed to a loss of 90% of all railroad jobs since 1947, with over 1.3 million jobs destroyed. Instead of getting jobs at the CSX yard in Hamlet, North Carolina, workers were hired instead at a chicken parts sweatshop where 25 were killed in a 1991 fire. 📌

PHILADELPHIA:

Fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal continues

By Stephen Millies

Dec. 16 – Supporters packed the courtroom at Mumia Abu-Jamal's Post-Conviction Relief Act hearing today before Common Pleas Court Judge Lucretia Clemons. Outside, more supporters demonstrated in the rain.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is a world-renowned political prisoner and past president of the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists who was framed when Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner was killed in 1981. Originally sentenced to death, the former Black Panther Party member has been jailed for 41 years. That's over 13 years longer than the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela.

Defense attorneys pointed out new information about the credibility of prosecution witnesses and bias in jury selection.

One of Abu-Jamal's lawyers, Judith Ritter, raised that prosecution witness Robert Chobert demanded money for his testimony. Another state witness, Cynthia White, sought to have several prostitution charges dropped in exchange for her testimony. Prosecutor Joseph McGill also sought to limit the number of Black jurors.

Evidence of these claims by Mumia Abu-Jamal's lawyers was "suddenly found" in six boxes of material that were stored in District Attorney Larry Krasner's office.

Assistant District Attorney Grady Gervino sought to dismiss these defense claims. His arguments, particularly regarding the bias in jury selection, were flimsy. Former assistant Philadelphia D.A. Jack Mc-

Mahon actually made a 1986 training video teaching younger prosecutors to avoid selecting Black jurors.

"In selecting Blacks—you don't want the real educated ones," McMahon said. "Again, this goes across the board of all races. You don't want smart people."

Although this video was made several years after Jamal was convicted, it shows the bigoted atmosphere in the Philadelphia District Attorney's office.

There are dozens of boxes of material that were withheld from Abu-Jamal's lawyers that have to be searched. All of these facts demand a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal or throwing out his conviction.

Judge Clemons said she would make a ruling in 60 to 90 days. Supporters of justice need to spread the truth: Mumia Abu-Jamal is innocent.

<https://youtu.be/DnEp5hAaKHM>



Philadelphia, Dec. 16.

SLL PHOTO: BILL DORES

U.N. rights group files brief about systemic racism in Mumia Abu-Jamal's case

The United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent filed an amicus brief on Dec. 6 with the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Judge Lucretia Clemons regarding the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

"The United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (WGEPAD) has followed Mumia's case for years and has just filed an amicus brief for his hearing," says Julia Wright, elder daughter

of renowned author Richard Wright. "Given instances of the pervasive systemic racism tainting the case to this day, these experts note that international human rights law requires jurists to take responsibility for ongoing effects of racial discrimination, even decades later."

According to WGEPAD's amicus brief, "Presumed victims of racial discrimination are not required to show that there was discriminatory intent against them ... The case of

Mumia Abu-Jamal may present such concerns. ...

"A significant percentage of the police officers involved in gathering evidence and presenting the case were investigated and eventually convicted and jailed on charges including corruption and evidence tampering, information that was unavailable to the jury at the time it was assessing the credibility, tendency toward bias, and reliability of these officers." □

48,000 student-workers in California strike for their rights

By Scott Scheffer

Los Angeles – Striking University of California workers — 48,000 strong — rallied throughout the state on Monday, Nov. 28. This highly exploited workforce is represented by Auto Workers Local 2865. This is the biggest strike in 2022 and the biggest-ever strike by UC workers.

Workers are demanding higher wages, improved parental leave and childcare support, reduced housing costs and support for international scholars. The strikers are "graduate student workers," who work for extremely low wages and provide important services for corporations and the general public.

The carrot dangling in front of them is the hope that they will eventually land a tenured position. In recent decades tenure and decent wages for educators have been attacked in the entire range of jobs in the education system from public schools to elite private universities.

During the rally at University of California Los Angeles, Struggle-La Lucha spoke with striker Bineh Ndefru.

SLL: Can you tell us what a victory in this strike might mean for you personally?

Bineh Ndefru: I'm in my fifth year, so a win probably wouldn't go into effect in time to impact me. But for those newer to the system, it would mean people not having to go through their savings like I had to.

I've had to borrow money while being a worker for the university. I've been paid \$1,800 per month and had to pay \$1,600 for rent in university housing. So basically I've been living on \$200 a month. That's a very common story for all of us.

It would've changed my life a lot. For a lot of people, it would mean maybe visiting their families more often, or having the ability to maybe have some down time. Some students actually have had to live out of their cars because of the high price of housing in Los Angeles.

On top of all that, I've even had issues with the university not paying me on time, which is not uncommon.

SLL: Can you explain what kind of work and research are done by UC



Striking UCLA workers march on Nov. 28.

SLL PHOTOS: SCOTT SCHEFFER

student-workers?

BN: My lab is pretty unique in a way, and there's a variety. For instance, PG&E [giant California utility company] has funded some of our grants to study how to prevent wild-

fires caused by their equipment.

The California Energy Commission had us study statewide infrastructure projects, so it's contributing to a lot of the risk assessments that benefit California, like earthquake assessments and that sort of thing.

Anyone in this crowd is probably working on amazing research projects that are benefitting the city, the state and even the whole world in different ways. We bring a lot of value not just to the university but to the community surrounding us as well.

Solidarity with UC workers! □

Report from Honduras on the new government of Libre Party leader Xiomara Castro

By Lallan Schoenstein

Honduran Vice Minister of Foreign Relations Gerardo Torres was introduced by a teacher, Lucy Pagoada — Coordinator of D19: Libre Party USA–Canada and Costa Rica, which is coordinated in Honduras by former President Manuel Zelaya — at a full house in the People’s Forum in New York on Dec. 6. Following is a summary of his remarks, addressed to the enthusiastic gathering of Hondurans and their supporters.

Honduras did not have regular elections for 13 years. After the government of Honduran President Manuel Zelaya was overthrown by a military coup d’état in 2009. Xiomara Castro Zelaya, the first lady, went to the streets and became the leader of a revolutionary process that put an end to one of the most violent, weaponized dictatorships in Latin America.

The regime was violent and, at the same time, one of the largest drug cartels in Central America. In November 2021, despite the years of brutal repression and murder, the Honduran people defeated the Juan Orlando Hernández regime by electing President Xiomara Castro, making her the first female president of Honduras.

Immediately after the inauguration of President Castro, the U.S. extradited Hernández for drug trafficking and money laundering. Obviously, the U.S. had not just discovered that Hernández was running a drug cartel. If the Hondurans did not have an election victory, that cartel would still be flourishing.

Why did they have to wait for a political and electoral defeat to bring down the cartel? Why did it last 12 years? Why were the heroic Hondurans — who struggled for their country, its natural resources, for control of the Honduran military forces — condemned and murdered? Would they allow this criminal organization to take over the country and enrich themselves under their extremely violent rule?

A couple of years ago, the U.S. government may have asked themselves, what do we do with this country that has been historically the most conservative and obedient to the U.S.? It is a country that the U.S. used as a base for attacks on revolutions in Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador. This country, with valuable resources, has been one of the most important U.S. military bases in the region.

They saw that Hondurans were trying to create a new constitution. They were trying to establish relations in Latin America with countries like Brazil and Venezuela. They didn’t accept the “free trade” policies that were robbing their resources and destroying the environment. So the U.S. said, do we let this socialist, leftist movement get into power, or do we stop them by allowing a drug cartel to take over Honduras?

Why, when they are willing to do so much to stop progressive movements from gaining power — why is it still possible that elections can be won in Venezuela, Uruguay, Brazil, Colombia, and Chile? [Cheers] Why



SLL PHOTO: GARY WILSON

Lucy Pagoada introduces Gerardo Torres at the meeting on Honduras.

are progressive elections taking place in Honduras and Mexico despite years of brutal repression?

[Torres said that he was visiting New York as Libre Party International Secretary, Director of the Political Education Institutes to take part in The New International 1974–2024 Economic Order (NEIO). This meeting is called to analyze the possibility of creating alternative economic models. He said the discussion is opening now because many countries are moving away from the destructive capitalist, neoliberal economic model.]

When Fidel Castro and Berta Cáceres and other fighters, intellectuals (the majority of whom came from underdeveloped countries) told us that if you continued to extract natural resources to expand industry and exploit people, to reduce them just to merchandise with no wages or jobs, the consequences is that our way of life will be destroyed. If we don’t resist the greed of the small minority of capitalists, all will be lost.

If we want to participate in the transformation of our society, we have responsibilities. First of all, we have to organize in our communities. Second, we have to understand our environment, have critical thinking to see the truth behind what we are being told, and to be able to grasp reality. The third is to have the imagination to see a different way of moving forward. We need to rethink economics, culture, social relationships, couples, children, neighbors and friends. That is revolutionary ideology, and in Latin America, that is an anti-capitalist, anti-neoliberal model that is winning elections. Now it has the responsibility to change things.

We are most focused on the way wealth is produced and distributed. Wealth in Honduras has always been concentrated among a rare few. It has been based on extracting resources and also on the monoculture of agriculture, bananas and sugar. In our country, a small group of powerful businesses benefits from their

relationship to the government.

The Venezuelan government of President Nicolas Maduro is currently creating an International Commission Against Corruption and Impunity at the U.N. Within the next two years, it plans to bring this body from the international community to Honduras with the goal of ending corruption.

Changes under the Castro government

Until now, Honduran people have only had electric light if they can pay for it. It is expensive. President Castro’s government is guaranteeing access to electricity and other forms of energy to all Hondurans.

In another area, Castro is planning new development that will come from the communities. The process may be slower, but it is the only way economic growth will be democratic. In the past, development was concentrated in small isolated areas with enormous capacities for production.

We are a social-political movement that focuses on human rights. We organized our party in the streets, protesting against the coup, calling ourselves the resistance. We are the resistance. President Xiomara Castro has stood up to the police forces, to the military forces. One of her main goals is to promise that there will never be another coup, that the police and military will never again be used to torture, criminalize and murder the Honduran people who protest.

We are reestablishing connections with the international community. With the support of this community, the government is investigating incidents carried on by the coup, such as the disappearance of Garifuna leaders and hate crimes like the murder of transsexual woman Vicky Hernández on the same day as the coup in 2009.

The electoral victories in Latin America are only part of a much larger struggle. While each country is making its own way, we see the alliance with each of these progressive movements as a base of support for our own development. 🇸🇵

The U.S. egged on the coup in Peru

By Vijay Prashad and José Carlos Llerena Robles

On December 7, 2022, Pedro Castillo sat in his office on what would be the last day of his presidency of Peru. His lawyers went over spreadsheets that showed Castillo would triumph over a motion in Congress to remove him. This was going to be the third time that Castillo faced a challenge from the Congress, but his lawyers and advisers—including former Prime Minister Anibal Torres—told him that he held an advantage over the Congress in opinion polls (his approval rating had risen to 31 percent, while that of the Congress was just about 10 percent).

Castillo had been under immense pressure for the past year from an oligarchy that disliked this former teacher. In a surprise move, he announced to the press on December

7 that he was going to “temporarily dissolve the Congress” and “[establish] an exceptional emergency government.” This measure sealed his fate. Castillo and his family rushed toward the Mexican Embassy but were arrested by the military along Avenida España before they could get there.

Why did Pedro Castillo take the fatal step of trying to dissolve Congress when it was clear to his advisers—such as Luis Alberto Mendietta—that he would prevail in the afternoon vote?

The pressure got to Castillo, despite the evidence. Ever since his election in July 2021, his opponent in the presidential election, Keiko Fujimori, and her associates have tried to block his ascension to the presidency. She worked with men who have close ties with the U.S. government and its intelligence agen-

cies. A member of Fujimori’s team, Fernando Rospigliosi, for instance, had in 2005 tried to involve the U.S. Embassy in Lima against Ollanta Humala, who contested in the 2006 Peruvian presidential election. Vladimiro Montesinos, a former CIA asset who is serving time in a prison in Peru, sent messages to Pedro Rejas, a former commander in Peru’s army, to go “to the U.S. Embassy and talk with the embassy intelligence officer,” to try and influence the 2021 Peruvian presidential election. Just before the election, the United States sent a former CIA agent, Lisa Kenna, as its ambassador to Lima. She met Peru’s Minister of Defense Gustavo Bobbio on December 6 and sent a denunciatory tweet against Castillo’s move to dissolve Congress the next day (on December 8, the U.S.

Continued on page 10

Zero COVID: Don't be deceived by U.S. reports on the protests in China

By Scott Scheffer

The opportunism of the major U.S. media was on full display in late November over the protests against China's anti-COVID lockdowns. The protests began in the Xinjiang city of Urumqi after a terrible fire took the lives of 10 people on Nov. 24. People in the district responded to the tragedy by protesting the lockdown that had gone into effect after a COVID outbreak in late summer.

The protests occurred in somewhere between 15 and 20 cities, including Beijing and Shanghai. The numbers reported by the U.S. press were purposely vague. The liberal PBS claimed thousands in a Nov. 29 headline and then "tens of thousands" in the article. Some reports indicated hundreds in Shanghai, and many pieces didn't estimate crowd size at all.

For context, there are about 60 cities of a million people or larger in China, and about 20% of the world lives in China. So even if the claim by PBS of "tens of thousands" is true, this brief series of protests was not the mass uprising against the leadership of China that the U.S. capitalist class and their loyal media salivate over.

Hoping the protests would mark the beginning of their long-desired "color revolution" in China, the U.S. media's elation got the best of them and led to the overblown coverage. But the hyperventilating reportage wasn't limited to slander. There are reports of Western journalists using Telegram channels to guide "activists" from Hong Kong and Taiwan to the locations of some of the protests.

When the "color revolution" failed to materialize, their giddy predictions gave way to another distortion of the facts. They claimed the CCP is being pushed by the momentum of the protests to ease its COVID policy, which they claim is the result of Xi's

authoritarianism and his desire to always be correct regardless of consequences.

Zero COVID

Their omission of the fact that President Xi Jinping had already signaled a relaxation of the "Zero COVID" measures a full two weeks before the protests broke out was not an error. It was imperialist media policy.

The decision to announce adjustments to the Zero COVID policy in a major speech by President Xi on Nov. 11 is only one indication that the national leadership of China was cognizant of the fact that people's patience was exhausted.

Even before the Nov. 11 speech, it was clear that national authorities were trying to address a gap between the thinking of national health officials and the officials in some provinces using a one-size-fits-all approach to lockdowns. The website of Friends of Socialist China reports that national officials reminded "authorities in Henan's capital Zhengzhou ... of the exceptions that need to be made to stay-home orders" and rebuked "police in Anhui for over-strict enforcement of quarantine."

Moving toward a relaxation of quarantine times and lockdowns shows that China's battle against COVID is based on not only physical science but also social science. From the beginning of the outbreak, it was meant to be a dynamic approach that would adjust based on the ever-changing characteristics of the virus and even on differences between locations.

Even if greatly exaggerated by the U.S. press, the tragedy in Urumqi brought frustrations to the surface after three years of dealing with the pandemic. But that doesn't mean there is broad dissatisfaction with the leadership of the campaign against COVID.

Just 5,000 COVID deaths

On the contrary, what was smeared in the Western media as extreme has limited the number of deaths in China to just over 5,000. Moreover, the success of the "People's War" against COVID, with widespread testing, lockdowns, and quarantines as essential elements, is nothing short of astounding compared to major capitalist countries. With quadruple the population, the Chinese death toll is 200 times less than the more than 1 million deaths in the U.S.

China's sustained policy of lockdowns was unique in the world. It was borne out of necessity and likely saved millions or tens of millions of lives. After more than a hundred years of being ravaged by colonizers and then imperialist countries, the physical health of Chinese people was among the priorities of the 1949 revolution.

China was weak and sick. When Mao Zedong declared that "the Chinese people have stood up!" foremost on his mind must have been bringing the health of a giant, poverty-stricken nation up to par. Britain and France had waged war to force opium on the Asian giant, and opium addiction was widespread. Diseases that were inexpensive to treat and, in many cases, eradicate, were rampant at the time of the revolution.

China's campaign of "barefoot doctors" headed to the countryside. Hospitals were constructed. But bringing a nation of hundreds of millions of people back to health isn't an overnight process.

A developing country

While China is now on its way to achieving a higher GDP than the U.S., it is still a developing country, and building a complete health care system is an ongoing process. When COVID emerged China still had only



Epidemic control workers wear PPE to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as they stand next to equipment for cold weather in an area where some communities are under lockdown on Nov. 29, 2022, in Beijing, China.

four ICU beds per 100,000 people.

Even though health care has improved dramatically over the seven decades, the availability of ICU beds was, and is, inadequate for dealing with COVID. During February 2021, the severe symptoms of the original Delta variant quickly overwhelmed hospitals. That hurdle had to be overcome, and China's leadership and people swung into action.

Some 10,000 volunteer medical workers from all over the country traveled to the areas hit hardest by the virus. Emergency, makeshift hospitals were constructed at speeds the world had never seen. Given the highly transmissible feature of the virus, and as-of-then unavailable treatment, widespread testing, quarantine and lockdowns emerged as the best plan to prevent catastrophic death rates. Early on, China's scientists shared the DNA of the virus with the world and then developed vaccines that protect from severe symptoms and death. The campaign to continue vaccination — especially among the elderly — is ongoing.

COVID-19 has tested the world's health care capabilities more than anything in living memory. Socialist planning and science saved tens of millions of lives in China and will keep China on the right path as the virus ebbs and flows. Socialism must be the future. 🇨🇳

U.S. sanctions Haiti

By Lallan Schoenstein

Crime has played a dominant role in Haiti since the Taíno and Arawakan people were decimated by Spanish and French colonialists, and its earliest workers were kidnapped from their homes in Africa and exploited with unimaginable violence.

When those early workers freed themselves from bondage, they were forced to pay France reparations — a looting and impoverishing of Haiti's economy. Can it be today that they are still being punished for the first revolution led by Toussaint L'Ouverture in 1804, the world's first Black republic guaranteeing the rights and freedoms for all Black people?

The Haitian Lavalas Movement overthrew the U.S./French puppet dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1990 with the popular election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Aristide was ousted from Haiti by a CIA-backed coup d'état in 1991 and then again in 2004. The Fanmi Lavalas Party has been denied an electoral role in Haiti ever since.

Today, the U.S. political administration speculates on the exploitation of an extremely low-wage workforce as well as Haiti's strategic location in the Caribbean.

In 2021, President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated. Ariel Henry, a suspect in the assassination, is now Haiti's acting president, with U.S. support.

The global conditions of inflation, food and fuel shortages caused by the U.S./NATO war drive are taking a toll on the poorest countries like Haiti. New cases of cholera, first introduced by the U.N. intervention following the 2010 earthquake, have reemerged in Haiti along with a crisis in potable water.

A deepening crisis is sweeping Haiti. The racist mainstream U.S. media reports unimaginable violence of gang wars and drug trafficking. Their unsympathetic reports are designed to justify one more intervention by the governments of the U.S., Canada and France in the sovereign nation of Haiti. On Oct. 15, the United States submitted a

Jimmy Cherizier addressing a rally of Haiti's poor in La Saline, one of Port-au-Prince's poorest shantytowns.



PHOTO: JEAN WESLEY AMADY, [HTTPS://YOUTUBE/RLGD5POZR5U](https://youtu.be/RLGD5POZR5U)

draft resolution to the U.N. Security Council calling for the "immediate deployment of a multinational rapid reaction force" to Haiti. Haiti is the most intervened-in country in the hemisphere. Each previous invasion and intervention has destabilized the economy and left people stranded on the edge of survival.

Haitians want to secure their own country

In Haiti, anti-government protests are sweeping the country. There are reports that the "gangs" most targeted by the White House are actually those struggling to liberate their

country. The newspaper *Haiti Liberté*, in conjunction with *Uncaptured Media*, has released a documentary: "Another Vision: Inside Haiti's Uprising." *Haiti Liberté* says that "the film plumbs the origins, actors, and tactics of a multi-faceted demonization campaign against Jimmy Cherizier, the FRG-9 and its allies."

In Washington, D.C., and in other U.S. cities, Haitians and their supporters are holding protests to demand that the Biden administration end its support for the regime of Ariel Henry. Protesters demand that Haitian sovereignty be respected,

Continued on page 7

75 years after partition, U.S. guns and dollars still murder Palestinians

By Bill Dores

Dec. 2 – Seventy-five years ago, on Nov. 29, 1947, the United Nations partitioned the land of Palestine against the wishes of its people. The chief architect of this crime was the U.S. Truman administration. The State Department threatened dozens of countries with economic retaliation if they did not vote to create a colonial settler state on 57% of the land of Palestine.

Most countries in Africa and many in Asia and the Caribbean were still under West European colonial rule and not allowed to vote.

Within months Al Nakba began—the campaign of mass murder and ethnic cleansing that drove the majority of Palestinian people from their homes and created the racist state called “Israel” on their stolen land. In 1967 that state seized all of Palestine and part of Syria and Egypt as well.

The United Nations now marks Nov. 29 as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The U.S.-armed and -funded Israeli occupation forces marked that date this year with a murder spree in the camps and villages of the West Bank, killing 10 people in four days.

At 4 a.m. on Nov. 29, in the village of Kafr Ein near Ramallah, an Israeli military hit squad murdered Bir Zeit university students Jawad Al Rimawi, 22, and Zafer Al Rimawi, 21. The two brothers were the only sons of their family.

Around the same time, Mufid Khalil, 44, was murdered when Israeli occupation troops invaded the town of Beit Ummar, near Al Khalil (Hebron). Eight other villagers were wounded.



PHOTO: TIMES OF GAZA

Thousands of Palestinian students at Bir Zeit University take part in the funeral procession of Jawad and Zafer Al Rimawi, two brothers murdered by Israeli occupation forces Nov. 29 near Ramallah.

Rani Abu Ali, 45, was shot near Jerusalem after he rammed an Israeli soldier with his car in retaliation for the murders. Raed Nassar, 21, was gunned down in Al Mughayyir near Ramallah. His “crime”: joining with people from his village to block Israeli troops from demolishing “illegally built” homes. The Israeli occupation regime denies Palestinians building permits.

On Nov. 30, Israeli troops invaded the village of Ya’bad near Jenin and murdered Mohammad Tawfiq Badarna, 25. The same day Issa Hani Talaqat, 13, died of gunshot wounds. He had been shot by an occupation cop on Nov. 1. The young Palestinian was from Arara, a Bedouin community in the 1948-occupied territories

and held “Israeli” citizenship.

Early in the morning of Dec. 1, the occupation forces invaded Jenin Camp, home to 12,000 people whose families were expelled from their homes when the Israeli state was created in 1948. They are crowded on less than a quarter of a square mile. Muhammad Al Saadi and Naim Zubeidi, resistance fighters of the Jenin Brigade, gave their lives defending the camp.

Also on Dec. 1, 17-year-old Wadi’h Sidr was found unconscious in Al Khalil after being beaten by a mob of Zionist settlers.

On Dec. 2, in Huwwara near Nablus, an Israeli “border” cop shot and murdered unarmed Palestinian Ammar Mefleh, 22, after a scuffle. Witnesses described the shooting as a “cold-blooded execution.” Mefleh died as Israeli soldiers prevented him from getting medical aid. Israeli Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai said the killer cop “acted professionally.”

These murders are part of an escalating reign of terror by Israeli occupation troops and armed settlers against Palestinians on the West Bank, in Jerusalem and inside the 1948 territories. Shootings, beatings, arrests without charge, home invasions, home demolitions, fire bombings, settler mob attacks, destruction of olive trees, crops and farm animals, desecration of places of worship and cemeteries and other crimes are daily occurrences under the occupation.

These are the tactics the U.S.-funded Israeli state uses to grab more land for racist settlers from the U.S. and Europe and pump up the profits of its real estate industry.

Israeli occupiers have murdered 216 Palestinian people this year, 54 of them children. More than 5,000 Palestinians, 153 of them children, languish in Israeli occupation prisons. Nearly 500 are held under “administrative detention,” without charge or trial. The Israeli military also holds the bodies of 117 Palestinian martyrs, refusing to return them to their families.

When blood flows, money flows

This reign of terror is funded entirely by U.S. tax dollars. Palestine’s blood

is on the hands of Joe Biden, Donald Trump and every other U.S. president going back to Harry S Truman.

It is on the hands of every member of Congress who has voted for the constant flow of arms and dollars to the racist settler state.

It is on the hands of the Pentagon brass, who view Israel as “our unsinkable aircraft carrier” in Washington’s permanent state of war against the people of the region.

It’s no coincidence that Truman forced the partition of Palestine within months of signing the National Security Act of 1947, which created the Defense Department, National Security Council, U.S. Air Force and CIA.

Under a 2018 “memorandum of understanding,” the U.S. promised the occupation regime \$3.8 billion a year in direct military aid through 2028. This includes the most advanced weapons in the Pentagon’s arsenal.

On his visit to occupied Palestine in July, President Biden pledged that aid would continue until at least 2038. In the “U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Joint Declaration” issued in Jerusalem, he promised even more money whenever Israel starts a war.

That direct military aid, which began under the Nixon administration, is only the tip of the iceberg. Loan guarantees, massive tax-exempt donations, state and city investment in Israel Bonds and the \$35-billion-a-year free-trade agreement signed by Ronald Reagan are among the mechanisms that ultimately send Israel tens of billions of dollars a year.

This massive flow of arms and dollars allows the racist settler state to maintain a permanent state of war against the people of Palestine. It has not, however, defeated their resistance, which intensifies daily. The Palestinian people are defending their homes and land, both with mass action and with arms in hand.

In the face of overwhelming force, young Palestinians take to the streets every day to confront invading colonial troops and settlers. On Friday, Dec. 2, 60,000 Palestinians gathered to pray at Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, which is a target of Zionist settlers and authorities.

The Lion’s Den, the Jenin Brigade and the Balata Brigade are among the armed groups that have sprung up in the last three months to resist the colonizers’ attacks. In a Nov. 30 statement, the Lion’s Den, based in the Old City of Nablus, said, “It is worth asking the occupying regime who has surrounded it. Freedom-loving resistance fighters have their fingers on the trigger and besieged the Zionist regime. Israel and its allies will be caught by surprise in the aftermath of our unexpected measures.”

The past 75 years have shown that the Palestinian people will never accept colonial occupation. They will fight for their right to live in peace and freedom in every corner of their land. They also show that the Israeli occupation regime cannot exist without the constant infusion of U.S. arms and dollars.

Those dollars could save lives here rather than destroy lives in Palestine. This must end! 🇵🇸

Continued from page 6

that there be no intervention. Haitians are the only ones who can solve their crisis and determine their own future. The U.S. and Canada have already announced the dispatch of military aircraft to carry weapons for the country’s security services, Resumen reported Oct. 24.

Sanctions

Demands for self-determination coming from almost every social sector of Haiti may have temporarily stalled the imperialist intervention. But it has not paused the sinister machinations of the U.S. Treasury or FBI.

Brian Nelson, Undersecretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, issued a hypocritical statement stressing U.S. “commitment to act against those who encourage drug trafficking, allow corruption and seek to profit from the social-economic crisis that is facing the country.” Nelson’s ridiculously transparent statement cannot hide the source of weapons, drugs, and corruption in one of the world’s poorest countries.

The Nov.15 issue of Haiti Progress reported that the U.S. and Canada have jointly placed sanctions on Haitian politicians and the business sector, as well as suspected gang

leaders. On Oct. 21, the U.N. passed a resolution establishing specific sanctions, most notably on Jimmy Cherizier, the FRG-9, and all who give them support. It is widely recognized that sanctions, however specifically targeted, are intended to deny critical support to the whole population and force them to accept foreign domination.

Further, the FBI is bringing criminal charges against alleged gang leaders in Haiti, using the kidnapping in 2021 of 16 U.S. missionaries in Port-au-Prince as their excuse. In addition to the indictments for the kidnapping, the U.S. Department of Justice has announced charges against the leaders of other gangs. According to Christopher Wray, director of the FBI: “These charges are a reminder of the bureau’s ability to reach criminal actors overseas.” In so saying, Wray is asserting the U.S. intention to police the world.

Once again, Haitians are being punished for struggling to liberate their country. They suffer an inflation rate of 33%, and 4.7 million people are suffering from food insecurity, according to data from the United Nations World Food Program.

What Haiti needs is solidarity – food and fuel – and support for their liberation struggle. NOT sanctions and criminalization. 🇵🇸

Uncertainty in Peru as the people remain in the streets

By Alejandra Garcia and Bill Hackwell

Peru is experiencing a new episode of its long history of institutional crisis. Today, a new president occupies the seat in the Government Palace, only 16 months after the country elected the leftist teacher Pedro Castillo, and Peruvians are once again suffering uncertainty about the political future of their Andean nation.

In his time in office, the teacher of humble origins has been cornered and unable to implement any social change because of a neoliberal unicameral congress that spent its time not legislating but plotting non-stop to impeach Castillo.

Congress's decision to remove Castillo from office came after he tried to dissolve it, and that political move gave his former vice president Dina Boluarte a free hand to abandon Castillo's loyalty, which got her there in the first place, to take his seat. The bottom line is that the coup was orchestrated by the rich elites of the country with encouragement from abroad.



Supporters of President Pedro Castillo gather in front of Congress in Lima, Peru, Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022.

According to Sebastian Fernandez De Soto, Peru analyst for Control Risks, "Castillo made a hasty decision to try to dissolve Congress, probably hoping to have the support of the people and the Armed Forces, but the reaction of the power elites was the opposite."

Today, people are in the streets demanding justice and urging new elections. The death toll has risen to seven, and the number of people injured, including children, has increased to more than 100 due to police brutality. Meanwhile, the international community has strongly

rejected this development in a sister country of the region, including strong statements from the presidents of Bolivia, Venezuela, Argentina, and Mexico condemning the coup and demanding Pedro Castillo's release from prison.

The leftist teacher is the sixth president Peru has had since 2016, and this political instability has shaken confidence in the country's credit rating, which had already been downgraded.

Analyst Fernandez de Soto explained, "Peru has a dysfunctional political system, and this has once again become evident. The recent situation has accelerated the country's deterioration, along with the depreciation of the local currency, which would compromise the evolution of the Gross Domestic Product in 2023. The crisis is deepening economic uncertainty, which could stimulate the paralysis of investments in key sectors such as mining," he said.

But the people who popularly elected Castillo as their president are furious and believe the election has

Continued on page 9

Miami hearing continues for illegally jailed Venezuelan Ambassador Alex Saab

By Sharon Black

On Dec. 12, the U.S. federal court in Miami began hearings in the case of Venezuelan Ambassador Alex Saab, who has been falsely arrested and is presently imprisoned in a Miami federal penitentiary on trumped-up charges of money laundering.

His attorneys called on District Judge Robert Scola to dismiss the charge as Saab's status as a diplomat gives him immunity. Alex Saab was on a diplomatic mission from Venezuela to Iran to buy fuel and humanitarian supplies when he was seized as his plane refueled in the Cape Verde islands.

A decision is expected to be rendered by Dec. 20.

Who is Alex Saab?

The Venezuelan people consider Alex Saab a national hero. Saab helped procure and arrange shipments of desperately needed food, medicine, and supplies to Venezuela's population, who have suffered immensely because of U.S. sanctions that block the shipment of crucial supplies.

U.S. sanctions have not only caused deep hardship from lack of food, fuel and medicine; they have led to death, especially for children and the elderly. In the film "Alex Saab, a Kidnapped Diplomat," Ana Araujo, from Caribe La Guaira, Venezuela, describes the death of three of her five children, deaths that could have been prevented if there were no U.S. sanctions. The most recent death resulted from not getting diabetic medicine.

Dr. Alfred de Zayas, who served as an independent expert for the United Nations Human Rights Council, estimates 100,000 Venezuelans have died as a result of the sanctions im-

plemented by the U.S. government.

You can see Alex Saab's picture painted on murals and posters on street corners calling for his release. Massive protests have brought out workers and poor people from Venezuela's communities to demand his release.

To his family, Alex Saab is a loving father of five children and husband of Camilla Fabria Saab, who has also been the target of official U.S. harassment and sanctions. Alex Saab's two youngest children, three years old and five months old at the time of his arrest, have not seen their father for over two years.

In the U.S., he is mostly unknown

The State Department, which orchestrated Saab's kidnapping, and the paid corporate media are not publicizing the U.S. kidnapping of the Venezuelan diplomat. So it is no surprise that few inside the U.S. are familiar with his case. What has been reported has been a shameful gaggle of lies.

Ambassador Saab was illegally seized and arrested for allegedly violating the Vienna Convention when his plane was refueling in Cape Verde. While jailed, Saab was tortured by English-speaking captors who demanded that he denounce Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro. He was denied medical treatment for cancer, beaten and cut on his ankles and wrists.

This is despite the Economic Community of West African States, the African Bar Association, and the United Nations Human Rights Committee speaking out against his false imprisonment and plans to extradite him to the United States.

The appeals process in Cape Verde



had not been completed, nor were his lawyers or family informed, when Ambassador Saab was shuttled out of the Cape Verde jail on an aircraft to the U.S. Suspiciously, this took place the day before the election in Cape Verde. The winning party had announced they planned to release him.

While he remained jailed in Cape Verde, both of Saab's parents, who were immigrants from Palestine and Lebanon, died due to the COVID pandemic.

Why and how can such cruel and illegal actions take place?

It is through sheer might and arrogance that the State Department has scuttled international law and has used covert and overt military violence. The mentality of U.S. imperialism is "no one can stop us since we have the guns and economic might."

The same flagrant disregard for

world opinion and law has fueled the U.S. blockade of Cuba. For the last 30 years, the member nations of the U.N. have voted to end the criminal blockade of Cuba. Only two countries, the United States and Israel, continue to vote no.

Similarly, Cuba, which has neither threatened nor perpetuated violence, continues to be classified by the U.S. as a terrorist country.

Remember the Cuban 5

Despite the military might of U.S. imperialism, the united action of the world's people, particularly Cuba, ultimately freed these five heroes who were falsely accused of being spies.

Well-documented facts confirm that the five Cuban heroes were on a mission to stop terrorist attacks on Cuba, not spy on the United States.

Continued on page 9

Peru

Continued from page 8

been stolen from them. Not only do they reject Bularte because of her illegitimacy, but they are also calling for a new constitution to replace the one imposed on them in 1993 by the reactionary Alberto Fujimori with one that would not grant power of the Congress over the figure of the president, who on this occasion was democratically elected.

There is a repetition now of the painful images of the protests that occurred in the country at the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 under the mandates of the ousted Martin Vizcarra (2018–2020) and Manuel Merino (2020). People beaten, the nights illuminated by firelight on barricades, and people fleeing police tear gas.

Thousands of Peruvians remain in front of Congress, demanding its closure. What will happen next? The only sure path to peace will be for Peru's political leaders to respect the vote of its citizens and the human rights of its people, and for them to do that, the people will have to remain determined and mobilized.

Source: *Resumen Latinoamericano* – US

Cluster bombs: Biden considers sending banned weapons to Ukraine

By Gary Wilson

CNN reports that the Biden administration is considering adding cluster bombs to the mass of weapons it is pouring into Ukraine. The production and use of cluster bombs is prohibited under international law.

The \$858-billion National Defense Authorization Act passed by the House of Representatives includes billions for weapons for Ukraine and Taiwan, reports Defense News. “The U.S. Army is seeking a ‘dramatic’ ramp up in monthly production of weapons and munitions for Ukraine,” another report adds.

According to CNN, “Ukrainian officials and lawmakers have in recent months urged the Biden administration and members of Congress to provide the Ukrainian military with cluster munition warheads ...

“Top U.S. officials have public-

ly stated that they plan to give the Ukrainians as much support as they need to give them an upper hand at the negotiating table with Russia, should it come to that. But Western military equipment is not infinite, and as stockpiles of warheads dwindle, the Ukrainians have made plain to the U.S. that it could use the cluster munitions currently gathering dust in storage.

“For Ukraine, cluster munitions could address two major issues: the need for more ammunition for the artillery and rocket systems the U.S. and others have provided, and a way of closing Russia's numerical superiority in artillery. The Biden administration has not taken the option off the table.”

In a report on “9 weapons banned from modern warfare,” Blake Stillwell says: “A cluster bomb releases



South Korean Air Force personnel prepare to load U.S.-made and supplied cluster bombs — internationally banned weapons — during an exercise in 2017 at an air base in Suwon, South Korea.

a number of projectiles on impact to injure or damage personnel and vehicles. The 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions banned these for two reasons. First, they have wide area effects and are unable to distinguish between civilians and combatants. Second, cluster munitions leave behind large numbers of dangerous unexploded ordnance.”

Alex Saab

Continued from page 8

Their mission followed the horrific bombings orchestrated by Posada Carriles, a former CIA operative. This included the infamous bombing of Cubana de Aviacion Flight 455, which was in flight from Barbados to Cuba. This was the first bombing of a civilian airplane in flight in the Western hemisphere.

All 73 people on board perished, including the entire Cuban Olympic fencing team who had just won all the gold medals in the Central American and Caribbean Championship Games. Most were teenagers. The Cuban pilot averted crashing into the beach, saving the lives of countless tourists.

Cuba's people, led by comandante Fidel Castro, made it a priority to gain the release of the Cuban 5. Millions of people in Cuba and worldwide protested and joined a massive campaign. What seemed impossible happened when the last of the Cuban 5 were released in 2014 and returned to Cuba.

It proved that what seemed impossible was possible.

People's actions can change history, and we can free Alex Saab. An important step is to break the information blockade. You can watch the film “Alex Saab, a Kidnapped Diplomat” on YouTube for a detailed explanation of his case. View it and make sure your friends and family see it too.

‘Challenge the U.S. justifications for this war’

Continued from page 1

planning the provocations against Russia? It didn't matter what Russia did — the imperialists had a plan of action that was determined to cause war by any means, regardless of Russia's actions.

Ukraine's Nazi problem

While investigating the war in Ukraine in the Donbass region last May, I visited a tuberculosis hospital in Krymskoye that had been retrofitted for war by the Ukrainian military. They were forced to leave a week or so prior by the Lugansk People's Militia and Russian soldiers.

I observed the 122mm shells used by Kiev to make Swiss cheese of the houses just a mile away in Solkynki. These shells were also used to target the families I interviewed to the north in Rubizhne, in a shelter that had housed 350 people fleeing the Ukrainian military assault on their apartment buildings.

Although the loud noise I heard often from the continued shelling by Ukrainian forces was disturbing, the people in that shelter told me they felt much safer than before, now that the Russian troops were protecting them and providing water, food, and other essentials for survival.

I should mention that at that tuberculosis hospital, there was a giant swastika painted on the wall,

and next to it, the *sonnenrad*, a symbol appropriated by the Nazis in World War II and used today by the Ukrainian Azov Battalion.

When some people say that Ukraine's Nazi problem is “minor,” they callously ignore the 10 Black people killed at the Tops Supermarket in Buffalo, New York, by an 18-year-old white supremacist. He was wearing the emblem of the Azov Battalion — the same *sonnenrad* I saw on the wall in Krymskoye.

This youth said he was inspired by New Zealander Brenton Tarrant, who killed 51 Muslims in a mosque. In his manifesto, Tarrant wrote that he was in direct contact with the Azov Battalion and was planning to go to Ukraine for military training.

In 2019, Time Magazine interviewed a former FBI agent who admitted that 17,000 white supremacists had gone to Ukraine for military training. Azov and its partners have used some of the billions of dollars Ukraine has received in funding and training from the U.S. since 2014 to build a very successful social media presence aimed at alienated youth.

Erasing people of Donbass

Playing into the narrative of Russia as invader can only be done by disappearing the over 6 million people in the Donbass region, targeted for more than eight years by a military openly led by neo-Nazis. By Feb. 22 of this year, the bombing of the region had increased 20-fold in seven days to 1,400 bombings per day. Kiev amassed 150,000 troops on the border, preparing for a genocidal massacre.

This is why, on Feb. 23, the Lugansk and Donetsk People's Republics formally requested Russia's protection.

If you want to know what imperialism really looks like, consider this: According to the United Nations Development Program, the U.S. freeze on Afghanistan's assets is causing the starvation of 1 million children. With a snap of his fingers,

Biden could stop that today — but he won't. There you have real imperialist power, real evil.

Without challenging the main justifications for this war, we are simply allowing lies to take hold, which will, at worst, garner popular support for U.S. imperialist strategies and, at best, encourage resignation and apathy.

That's why CovertAction Magazine is an invaluable resource: It challenges those primary lies fueling the U.S. proxy war against Russia and China.

It's that whole truth that will ultimately inspire our working class into action. And any effective peace movement must be made up overwhelmingly by our multinational working class and people's movements fighting racism, for union rights and tenant rights, for LGBTQ2S and women's rights, for the right of self-determination of Haitian, Palestinian, Indigenous, Black, and Brown peoples.

All these components are necessary for a peace movement to have any real power because these are the forces most targeted by U.S. imperialism domestically and internationally. It's these forces that have the most to gain by stopping imperialist wars that steal the resources necessary for the survival of their children. And these are the forces whose exploitation this economic beast depends upon for survival.

Therefore, they contain real potential power.

As a news source dedicated to the truths relevant to the struggles of our class and for countering the barrage of misinformation by the Pentagon and its corporate tools, CovertAction Magazine continues the proud legacy of CovertAction Quarterly. It's an indispensable resource that must be supported by our movement and our class. So give generously, as if World War III were right around the corner — because so is the solution if we build it.

U.S. proxy war in Ukraine and Donbass

Articles and interviews, 2013-2022

By Melinda Butterfield

Soon to be released

The military conflict in Ukraine didn't start with Russia's intervention in Feb. 2022. After a U.S.-backed coup in 2014, Ukraine waged a genocidal war against the people of the Donbass region (Donetsk and Lugansk) for eight years, while repressing internal opposition. Learn the truth behind Washington's multi-billion-dollar proxy war against Russia in this collection of articles written as events unfolded.

Melinda Butterfield is co-editor of *Struggle-La Lucha* newspaper. In 2014, she visited Crimea, where she met with exiled Ukrainian anti-fascists, and was deported from Ukraine at gunpoint. In 2016, she went to the front line in the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics.

¿Derechos Humanos en una colonia?

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Este fin de semana se conmemora la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos que la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas proclamó en París en el 1948. Desde entonces, ha servido de guía para la implementación de políticas que garanticen la justicia y la dignidad del ser humano.

Sin embargo, en una colonia, estos derechos no existen. La colonización de por sí, la pertenencia de un país por otro más fuerte, que dispone del territorio y sus habitantes para satisfacer solo a sus intereses, es un crimen a nivel internacional.

Pero incluso, si nos detenemos en algunos de los 30 artículos de la Declaración, salta a la vista el atropello que los EUA comete contra el pueblo boricua.

El más significativo y que conlleva la naturaleza de todos los demás crímenes, es el del Artículo 15 que dice que "Toda persona tiene derecho a una nacionalidad". Y aquí se nos ha negado el derecho inalienable a tener la ciudadanía puertorriqueña.

Y los gobiernos criollos han sido unos meros garantes de los intereses gringos que defienden con uñas y dientes las corporaciones foráneas



en contra de los intereses del propio pueblo que juraron defender cuando llegaron al poder. En estos momentos el ejemplo más claro es la defensa de la privatizadora de energía, Luma Energy, que fue impuesta por EUA, a pesar del terrible e incompetente servicio, que además es más caro y que a causado muertes y un enorme sufrimiento al pueblo.

Así que tanto EUA, como el gobierno puertorriqueño que lo asiste, son culpables de muchos crímenes bajo los artículos 3 y 5 de los DDHH que hablan del derecho a la vida, a la libertad y a la seguridad y prohíben los tratos crueles, inhumanos y degradantes.

Sólo la descolonización con independencia absoluta, será el camino hacia una vida digna y justa en PR.

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



To hell with the railroad barons: The railroads belong to the people!

Continued from page 3

overworking and abusing the workforces."

PSR helped destroy 62,000 railroad jobs between March 2015 and November 2022. The 30% plunge in jobs and service delays is linked to increasing the average train length by 25%. Many railroad yards were closed or downsized.

A relentless drive to reduce crew size resulted in the Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, tragedy. Forty-seven people were killed there in 2013 when a runaway train of oil tank cars exploded. There was only one crew member, an engineer, on the train.

PSR was the brainchild of the late Hunter Harrison, the son of a Memphis, Tennessee, cop. Harrison's daddy helped enforce racial segregation laws for a local ruling class who helped kill Dr. Martin Luther King.

Harrison introduced PSR on the old Illinois Central Railroad, which was gobbled up by the Canadian National

Railway. Harrison became the Canadian National's CEO and imposed PSR on all the railway's workers.

Yet as of Dec. 1, all Canadian railroad workers and a million other "federally regulated" employees in Canada will get 10 sick days annually. Why are Canadian railroaders getting sick days while the U.S. Congress refused to provide any?

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau serves the bankers just as U.S. politicians do. A big difference is that a million workers joined a general strike called by the Canadian Labor Congress on Oct. 14, 1976. They were protesting the cutback policies of Justin Trudeau's father, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.

Many Canadian workers vote for the New Democratic Party, which was co-founded by the Canadian Labor Congress. That's unlike the U.S. Democratic Party, which was founded by the slavemaster and rapist Thomas Jefferson.

This greater political awareness includes labor defending former Black Panther Party member Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was framed and has spent 41 years in Pennsylvania prisons. The Ontario Federation of Labor voted in 2011 to "reaffirm its support of Mumia Abu-Jamal and step up its efforts to win his freedom."

We need a people's takeover

The mere threat of a strike has forced both the Union Pacific and CSX railroads to slightly modify their severe attendance policies. As Frederick Douglass declared, "If there is no struggle there is no progress."

In 1877, a co-worker of Douglass, Peter Clark, addressed striking railroad workers in Cincinnati. ("1877: Year of Violence" by Robert V. Bruce.)

The drop in railroad employment from 2 million workers in 1920 to 150,000 a century later has devastated communities coast-to-coast. These job cuts accelerated as Black workers and women workers were finally being hired in more jobs.

Hamlet, North Carolina, was an important junction on the old Seaboard railroad, now part of the CSX system. Because of the loss of railroad jobs, many local workers were hired by the non-union, low-wage Imperial Foods plant instead.

Twenty-five workers were killed there on Sept. 3, 1991, when a fire broke out. The plant's owner, Emmett J. Rowe, locked the doors because he thought workers – many of whom were Black – would steal chickens.

White and Black workers died together because of Rowe's racism. Forty-nine children were orphaned.

Over 50,000 miles of U.S. railroad lines have been abandoned. The seven big U.S. and Canadian "class 1" railroads hauled in profits of \$27 billion last year.

That's more than double what these railroads paid in wages. Meanwhile, CSX CEO James Foote raked in \$20 million.

The railroad monopolies owe not only sick days but reparations. Nine thousand miles of track were laid by enslaved Africans before the Civil War.

Thousands of more miles were built afterward by Black prisoners like John Henry, the "steel driving man." Henry was worked to death by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, then run by Collis P. Huntington, and now part of CSX.

Hundreds of Chinese workers died building Huntington's Central Pacific Railroad across the Sierra Nevada mountains. General George Custer had it coming, and he died while leading an incursion into Lakota Sioux land for the Northern Pacific Railway, now part of BNSF.

Instead of BNSF being owned by Warren Buffett with his \$100 billion-plus fortune, it should be run by the people. To guarantee jobs, service, and safety, we need a people's takeover of the railroads.

The writer is a retired Amtrak worker and a member of the American Train Dispatchers Association and Transportation Communications Union.

The U.S. egged on the coup in Peru

Continued from page 5

government—through Ambassador Kenna—recognized Peru's new government after Castillo's removal).

A key figure in the pressure campaign appears to have been Mariano Alvarado, operations officer of the Military Assistance and Advisory Group (MAAG), who functions effectively as the U.S. Defense attaché. We are told that officials such as Alvarado, who are in close contact with the Peruvian military generals, gave them the greenlight to move against Castillo. It is being said that the last phone call that Castillo took before he left the presidential palace came from the U.S. Embassy. It is likely he

was warned to flee to the embassy of a friendly power, which made him appear weak.

This article was produced by Globetrotter. Vijay Prashad is an Indian historian, editor, and journalist. He is a writing fellow and chief correspondent at Globetrotter. He is an editor of Left-Word Books and the director of Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research. He is a senior non-resident fellow at Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies, Renmin University of China.

José Carlos Llerena Robles is a popular educator, member of the Peruvian organization La Junta, and representative of the Peruvian chapter of Alba Movimientos.

STRUGGLE ★ **LA LUCHA**
for Socialism | por el Socialismo