

Georgia Senate runoff

Redbaiting derails people’s needs

By Arielle Robinson and Dianne Mathiowetz  
Atlanta

So what’s it like living in the political circus of the Jan. 5, 2021, run-off in Georgia for U.S. Senate — while the deadly scourge of the pandemic rages, fear of mass evictions and the rise of poverty and unemployment grow, and incessant charges of “rigged elections” and threats of violence by Trump supporters persist alongside acts of racist state repression?

Hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent by both the Republican and Democratic parties and a multitude of Political Action Committees funded by millionaires and billionaires to support their Senate candidates in Georgia. They are described as being in a battle for control of the Senate.

On the Republican side are the current incumbents, Senators David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler.

On the Democratic Party ticket are Jon Ossoff and Rev. Raphael Warnock. The Republicans currently have a two-seat majority in the Senate. If both Democrats win, then Vice-President Kamala Harris would break any tie.

Back-to-back Republican television

ads, often as many as six in a row, declare that a victory by Perdue and Loeffler will “save America” from “radical socialism.” On the Democrats’ side, a key charge is that these two very wealthy Republican Georgia senators are motivated by personal financial gain rather than the people’s wellbeing.

It should be noted that the Senate is densely populated

by millionaires from both parties, who generally get richer while in office. Loeffler, owner of the Women’s National Basketball Association’s Atlanta Dream, is the richest U.S. senator. Her net worth is estimated at \$800 million, according to Newsweek. She is a virulent opponent of Black Lives Matter. Her own basketball team has come out in support of her rival, Warnock.

Perdue is a business person who had executive positions with Sara Lee Corporation, Haggard Clothing, Reebok, etc., and has made millions from those connections.

Anti-communist ads and racist slurs

Both parties are using their traditional playbooks to appeal to their base. “Law and order” arguments from the Republicans versus the Democrats’ promises of social and economic programs characterize the media tsunami that fills our mailboxes with glossy flyers, text messages that pop up on our cell phones and a steady stream of robocalls.

Some of the more incendiary media pronouncements depend on outright lies, open red-baiting and racist rhetoric. For example, an oft-played Loeffler ad depicts Rev. Warnock as dangerous and

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Atlanta Dream members from Women’s National Basketball Association.



Stanford Medical Center staff demand vaccine priority for all frontline hospital workers. Dec. 18, Palo Alto, Calif. See p. 10.

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# The youth are the vanguard

By Scott Williams

A talk given at a “Young Communists Speak: Why Join a Revolutionary Party?” webinar sponsored by Workers World Party on Dec. 10.

We are gathered here today to talk about the crisis facing young workers and the intense radicalization of younger generations here in the heart of the empire.

It is clear that young people today carry the entire weight of a collapsing capitalist system on their backs.

By every measure, young people are doing much worse than their parents’ generations.

One of the ways we see this every day is the war on young people’s mental health, which, by every statistic, has drastically deteriorated. We’ve seen skyrocketing suicide rates. Rates of depression are 20 times greater than they were in our grandparents’ time. (tinyurl.com/y7l4lgvk)

Younger generations also face massive increases in anxiety disorders. This is all evidence of the objective decline of capitalism, even here in the belly of the beast.

Since 2010, life expectancy in the U.S. has continually declined. People born today are living shorter lives than their parents.

Twenty four percent of 21-year-olds fall below the federal poverty line of making \$12,760 per year. (healthcare.gov) This doesn’t include full-time students.

Youth unemployment hit a record 27 percent in the U.S. last spring. Black workers in the U.S. face twice as much unemployment compared to whites. Globally, according to the United Nations’ International Labor Organization, the percentage of young people engaged in the workforce continues to decline and young workers face growing precarity in all aspects of life.

We are the millions of gig workers, laid-off restaurant and retail workers, Uber drivers, temp workers and chronically underemployed, particularly now during the pandemic. There is a question if we will ever really be fully employed ever again. Young workers’ jobs are the most likely to become automated and deskilled.

Our wages are over 50 percent lower than those of people in their 40s and 50s and this disparity continues to increase. (brookings.edu)

Fifty-two percent of people ages 18 to 29 are living with their parents because of the pandemic. (pewresearch.org)

We have \$1.6 trillion in student debt, amounting to \$29,200 per young person. (forbes.com) I personally have

way more debt than that.

Meanwhile, July was the deadliest month for young people in modern history, as the pandemic and other crises kill thousands of young people.

The capitalists have no dream, no future in store for us. Prison construction companies plan to build new prisons in the cities, based on third-grade test scores of high school dropouts. Many young people, especially people of color, are more likely to be arrested by the police and incarcerated than go to university.

Taken all together, capitalism is waging war on young people. Young people of oppressed nationalities, oppressed genders, working class youth, all face the greatest impacts of a system that has no future for them.

### What’s the solution?

The laws of Marxism show that intensifying oppression and exploitation by one increasingly desperate class of billionaires will turn into its opposite, into revolution. Many petty-bourgeois youth and young people from wealthier backgrounds have been thrust downward socially. We have survived two economic crises that have been the biggest in recent memory. We are living through a pandemic that is the ultimate result of capitalism.

Yet we have quickly become a generation of resistance. We started occupying city centers across the world at the end of the last economic crisis — the Occupy movement. Since then, young workers have ignited major struggles against racist police brutality, against capitalism’s war on the planet, and against austerity, cutbacks and the growing threat of fascism across the world. Young people have been in the lead.

We study history to understand how to change the future. Young people, throughout history, have been the vanguard of revolutionary movements. Che Guevara was 30 at the time of the Cuban Revolution. Fidel was 32. Mao was 26 when the Chinese Communist Party was founded. Revolutionaries like Mumia Abu-Jamal and Fred Hampton organized branches of the Black Panthers as teenagers.

Here in the center of imperialism and capitalism, young people are leading the way. □



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## NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Due to the upcoming holidays, the issue of Workers World dated Dec. 24 will be the last in 2020. There will be none dated Dec. 31. The next issue will be dated Jan. 7, 2021. Please monitor workers.org for any new online articles during the last week of December. Safe holidays and on to a new revolutionary year of struggle!

## Join us in the fight for socialism!

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth

and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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# WW COMMENTARY Baseball's racist legacy today as MLB recognizes 'Negro Leagues'—at last

By Monica Moorehead

Major League Baseball first announced on Dec. 9 that it would finally incorporate all of the players, statistics and records from the "Negro Leagues" (NL) into its present-day records. Many said it was about time and that this recognition is long overdue. Both sentiments are justified.

Yet the truth is that this announcement was another reminder of one of the most heinous periods in U.S. history: the segregationist Jim Crow era.

The NL, with over 3,400 Black players, existed from 1920 until 1948. The legendary Jackie Robinson had broken the color barrier of the MLB in 1947 when he signed with the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Andrew "Rube" Foster was founder of the original seven teams in the NL, which grew into multiple professional and semi-professional teams in many states.

Segregationist rules barred these thousands of talented players from joining the mainstream MLB, founded in 1903, which remained all-white. The Black players were forced to play in stadiums where Black and white seating was segregated and were relegated to stay in all-Black hotels and eat in all-Black restaurants while traveling in the Deep South. They had to endure racist taunts and epithets from white spectators in the North and South.

Among the legendary players in the NL were pitcher Satchel Paige, catcher Josh Gibson and Hank Aaron, holder of the most home runs in MLB history, until Barry Bonds eventually broke his record. Aaron hit nine home runs in the NL before he joined the MLB, where he played for over 20 years. Will these additional home runs be added to his heralded record?

It is anticipated that, after all the

records are researched, Gibson will hold the single-season batting average record. Referred to as the "Black Babe Ruth" due to his power hitting, Gibson batted .441 for multiple NL teams in 1943.

Paige is considered by many sports experts to be the greatest pitcher ever. He played for a number of NL teams. At age 42, he pitched for the MLB's Cleveland team during the 1948 World series, which they won. He also pitched in a game at the age of 59!

While the MLB has never allowed women to play in their league, three Black women played in the NL: Connie Morgan, Mamie "Peanut" Johnson and Toni Stone.

## The legacy of MLB racism today

Some fear the MLB will attempt to elevate its own status by whitewashing the NL's significance. Clinton Yates, a Black sports commentator for ESPN, wrote in his column: "MLB elevating the status of Negro Leagues is the problem, not the solution. ... It's well known that the reason the Negro Leagues failed is because of MLB's middle-some approach. Once they started stealing the talent, the draw lessened."

"If you want to get hardcore, you could argue that Robinson going to Major League Baseball was a death knell for Black baseball, not the other way around. Why? Because all the systems of development and expertise that came along with us being us were tossed aside to

appeal to the concept of being the apple of the white league's eye.

"If Major League Baseball had simply allowed a handful of teams to operate their businesses within their framework, aka joining the league, we wouldn't be where we are today with less than 10% of players in the bigs being Black." Yates refers to the

MLB as the "sharecropping of American sports." (theundefeated.com, Dec. 16)

Presently, only 7.8 percent of players in the MLB are African American compared to 68 percent in the National Football League and over 81 percent in the National Basketball Association. These low numbers in MLB reflect that racism is integral to baseball's lack of recruitment of Black athletes, starting at an early age.

Michigan University baseball coach Erik Bakich states, "The game of baseball is too white. It needs more opportunities. Look at the cost of travel ball and these showcases. There are 9-year-old kids paying \$3,000 a year for travel ball. That's ridiculous. It prices out all of the lower income families, and that's a mistake."

"You look at every college campus, and the best athletes are on the football and basketball teams. We're losing our best athletes to those sports because we are outpricing them out of baseball, and that's baseball's loss." (USA Today, Aug. 14)

The racism of the MLB did not stop just because it allowed Black players to enter the league in 1947. It took 12 more years for the Boston Red Sox, the last all-white team, to recruit a Black player to their roster in 1959, that player being Pumpsie Green.

Rather than patting itself on the back, the MLB owes a detailed explanation of why it waited for over 70 years to right this wrong. To help repair this injustice, the MLB could financially sustain and help bring more prominence



Pennsylvania's Homestead Grays, founded in 1912.

to the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Mo.

The MLB announcement's timing coincides with the momentous protests during the late spring, summer and fall of 2020, led by the Black Lives Matter movement following the lynching of George Floyd. A number of MLB teams and players, along with basketball players, also refused to play to protest the Aug. 23 police shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wis., who remains paralyzed.

The author's Twitter handle is @mmashecat. Gloria Rubac contributed to this article.



The great hitter, Josh Gibson.



## Baseball team finally retires racist name and mascot

By Martha Grevatt  
Cleveland

It's official. And it's about time.

After months of discussions and rumors, Cleveland's Major League Baseball team announced Dec. 14 that 2021 would be the last season for the racist, offensive name "Indians." With it will go the team's demeaning mascot, which was being phased out after it was taken off player uniforms in 2018.

"For six decades, our community has fought tirelessly to be recognized as diverse and vibrant, instead of portrayed in inaccurate and harmful ways," said the Cleveland Indigenous Coalition after the team's announcement. "By agreeing to change the team name away from Indigenous themes, the Cleveland baseball team is helping to create a place where Native American children and their families feel valued and fully seen."

The Cleveland Indigenous Coalition consists of four Northeast Ohio organizations: American Indian Movement of Ohio, the Committee of 500 Years of Dignity and Resistance, Lake Erie Native American Council and the Lake Erie Professional Chapter of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society.

The Committee of 500 Years was formed around protesting the 500-year anniversary of the destructive arrival of Columbus in 1992. It then began a decades-long struggle, picketing Opening Day year after year, to get the Cleveland team to drop its name and official mascot. Activists were arrested on more than one occasion, including for burning "Chief Wahoo" in effigy.

Earlier attempts were made to hold the team accountable for its racist caricature of Indigenous people, including a 1972 lawsuit brought by Cleveland Indian Center Director Russell Means, who was also a leader of the American Indian Movement.

Why now?

The team has claimed the name was chosen to honor Louis Sockalexis, who was reportedly the first Indigenous player in major league baseball. But team owners, seeing the growing popularity of names like "Boston Braves," were more likely making a business decision when they renamed what had been called the Cleveland Spiders.

"It's a great move on behalf of Major League Baseball to recognize the fact that dehumanizing any race or any creed of man is wrong," said Chris Sockalexis, when the

phaseout of the mascot began in 2018. Sockalexis is a tribal historic preservation officer with the Penobscot Nation and a descendant of the famed player. (CBC.ca, Jan. 29, 2018)

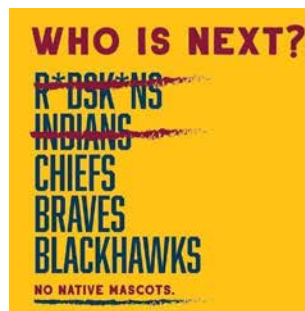
This latest victory follows last year's decision by the Washington Football Team—as it is now known—to discard its previous name, a slur against Indigenous people. Until recently, both the Washington and Cleveland teams had been steadfast in their refusal to break with "tradition"—and risk losing millions of dollars in sales of merchandise featuring their team logos.

What is different this year? The multi-national Black Lives Matter upsurge has

challenged every aspect of white supremacy, including the genocide against Indigenous people and the land theft that went with it. Even the sports industrial complex has had to make concessions.

The fight over racist team names and mascots is anything but over. As the Committee of 500 Years points out on Facebook: "There are nearly 200 schools in Ohio with a harmful, racist Native American sports mascot/team name." A struggle in Parma, a local suburb, to get the high school to change its football team's name and logo is still unresolved.

But for now, good riddance to "Chief Wahoo"! □



Opening Day protest, Cleveland, April 1, 2019.



# California

## Demonstrators besiege prison HQ: ‘Mass releases now!’



By Judy Greenspan  
Sacramento, Calif.

Dec. 17— Under the banner “From Balloons to Bullhorns,” an angry group of protesters converged on the steps of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to demand mass releases of incarcerated people due to the COVID-19 epidemic. The vigil and rally organized by Sistas With Voices began with 104 seconds of silence to symbolize the 104 prisoners who have already died inside California state prisons from COVID-19.

According to the latest reports from the CDCR, there are 8,800 reported cases of COVID-19 among a prison population of 91,000. More than 3,000 guards and other prison staff—the most probable source of the COVID-19 infection—have also tested positive. (Huffington Post, Dec. 18)

Despite a recent state appeals court ruling ordering that the population of the San Quentin prison be cut in half, Governor Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, has done little to ensure that the most vulnerable of the incarcerated, the elderly and immunocompromised, are released. (tinyurl.com/ydyv2mwj) Up until last week, the CDCR was still ordering transfers of incarcerated people from one prison to another, and subsequently the virus has been spreading.



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Protesters gather in front of the California Department of Corrections at the end of the rally.

The legal group which has been meeting with CDCR officials and monitoring the outbreak at San Quentin confirms that most prison transfers have been put on hold.

### Families and activists speak out

Today’s demonstration became a speak-out led by family members of people inside, formerly incarcerated activists, prisoners’ rights advocates and abolitionists. Elsie Lee, of Sistas With Voices, opened the rally stating: “We are demanding that CDCR do releases. CDCR has identified approximately 6,000 individuals who can be safely released back to society, and yet today, they have only released 44 of those individuals.”

Speaker after speaker called out a prison system that has yet to release

any large numbers of elderly and immunocompromised. Lee said that the monthly numbers of releases during COVID-19 are the same as the monthly releases before COVID-19. She led the chant: “CDC you lie, you don’t care if prisoners die.”

A prisoner who had survived COVID-19 called in and gave an alarming report about how incarcerated people with COVID-19 were being treated inside. He reported that prisoners with COVID-19 were being forced to bathe in

cold water. “I couldn’t breathe,” he said. It took repeated phone calls from his wife and sister for this man to be placed on a ventilator.

Courtney Morris of No Justice Under Capitalism, a Bay Area anti-prison coalition, charged that daily endangerment of prisoners with COVID-19 “is intentional.” She asked, “Why else are they transferring people? Why else are they denying single cells or the ability to social distance?” Morris said that the prison system will fight “tooth and nail to deny releases,” She urged everyone to get involved to stop the transfers once and for all and to win mass releases of people inside.

This writer, representing the Prisoners’ Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party, spoke about the need to not only fight for mass releases under COVID-19, but to work toward the abolition of the prison system in this country. People in the crowd eagerly took up the chant: “Brick by brick, wall by wall; now’s the time to free them all!”

The stepson of a man incarcerated in a California state prison said it clearly, “Especially during this pandemic, no matter what kind of case your family member had or did back in the day, they need to get out. The best thing for everyone here is to have their family members at home.”

As the rally drew to a close, several activists using chalk spray paint wrote “CDC Guilty of Genocide” and “Free Them All” on the sidewalks and windows of the building. The police grabbed one of the activists, but later released her without charges. Protesters vowed to continue their campaign against prison transfers and for mass releases. □

## COVID and prisons

# No walls, no borders in the workers’ struggle

By Johnnie Lewis

### Texas

“It’s a nonviolent protest going on right now because the officers [in an unnamed Texas prison], in the middle of the coronavirus, have refused us electricity for several hours, no showers or anything.” The voice is that of an incarcerated human being on video taken inside a Texas prison. The grainy images show smoke wafting across the cellblock, where men shout in the dark.

Desperate to draw attention to their untenable situation, dozens on lockdown throughout the Texas prison system have started fires in their cellblocks and other living spaces, and made videos of the fires for family members, advocates, and media outside the walls. But even as COVID-19 rages—26,000 infections; 168 deaths, an undercount—inside these walls, Texas prison administrators, similar to guards shown in the videos, “pay no attention.” In many of the videos, no fire alarms sound because they are broken, and have been since 2012. (tinyurl.com/yc4sxgm6v)

### Saskatchewan, Canada

“Saskatoon Correctional houses over 500 inmates [142 of whom are infected with COVID-19], with 16 units, six of which are dorms that house 30 or more sentenced/remanded inmates, living in close proximity, sharing bathrooms per unit with no chance of social distancing,” said Cory Charles Cardinal, a member of the Cree Nation incarcerated in the Saskatoon prison. Cardinal was a participant in a late November hunger strike protesting conditions that have allowed COVID-19 to spread like wildfire among the people locked inside. Cardinal added that “Three living units are double bunked, also sharing one bathroom per unit, with unlikelihood of social distancing.” Cardinal said that he and another prisoner were transferred to the segregation unit because of their participation in the strike. (tinyurl.com/ycbda73w)

NOTE: While Indigenous people make up just 16 percent of the population of Saskatchewan, they are 65 percent of those in provincial prisons, and 75 percent of those in the jails. (tinyurl.com/ybak2du2)

### Mississippi

“Parchman is a prison farm plantation,” said Jaribu Hill, a longtime Mississippi human-rights attorney. “Shut it down!” “Shut it down!” shouted back hundreds of protesters on Dec. 18 at the

State Capitol in Jackson.

In December 2019, 10 incarcerated people had been murdered, on top of a dozen more over the previous two years.

Though cellphones are illegal in Mississippi prisons, the incarcerated still get them and send their families, supporters and media shocking videos of people going to the bathroom in garbage bags, killing rats in filthy cells, steel beds with no mattresses, and putrid food with live cockroaches crawling over it.

Even before COVID-19, Mississippi prisons were deathtraps for incarcerated people. Since the beginning of the pandemic, with an absolute worsening of living conditions inside, more than 90 have caught the virus and died. At present, the prisons administration reports 900 infections, certainly an undercount.

Brittany Bell, sister of Charoyd Bell, an incarcerated person at East Mississippi prison in Lauderdale County, told the crowd of protesters: “I feel like the issue here is that because these people are incarcerated, they are not deemed worthy to have the same amount of protections that we are out here, even though they are in even more closely confined spaces with even less capability to social distance on their own.” (tinyurl.com/yxyqo6c8)

### Oklahoma

“Some guards would sit there and talk down on us, and tell us if we hadn’t gotten caught and weren’t in prison we wouldn’t have to deal with [the coronavirus],” said Stephanie Avery. Formerly incarcerated in Bassett prison, she was attending a recent demonstration against COVID-19 conditions within Oklahoma prisons, held in the cold and snow at the state Department of Corrections



Jackson, Mississippi Dec. 18, 2019.

CREDIT: ROGELIO V. SOLIS



in Oklahoma City.

One in four of those locked behind the walls in Oklahoma have tested positive for COVID-19, and 36 have died. Avery added, “They said this is our fault and we deserve this.” One guard told her, “I don’t care if you get sick” after she and 112 of her sister inmates at Bassett prison became infected with COVID-19. She said the women suffered badly.

Now that she’s out, she has joined Ignite Justice, a 1,000-member Oklahoma support organization of people formerly incarcerated and families of those still inside. A co-founder of Ignite Justice, Emily Barnes, who has a son in Davis prison in Holdenville, Okla., said, when asked if her protests would hurt her son: “When [the prison authorities] see you’re not scared of them and you’re not going to back down, they’re not going to do anything.” (tinyurl.com/ybg9krpc)

### California

“Though the leaders have suspended the hunger strike [against rampant coronavirus], our workers’ strike remains alive,” said a striker/spokesperson inside the California Substance Abuse Treatment Facility in Corcoran. The largest prison in the state, it is at 130 percent of capacity!

The hunger strike and the work strike—refusal to perform prison jobs—were called because of the widespread growth of COVID-19 inside the prison. There are currently 859 cases and three have died. Each week more than 100 prisoners are becoming infected in this prison alone. Statewide among incarcerated people, there are at least 6,000 active cases, and 90 have died. A participant in the hunger strike, David S. Cauthen, Jr., 32, said, “I have lost all hope in humanity because of how [the state prison system] has failed to protect individuals like myself.” (tinyurl.com/y7lzo3on) □



Death Row, Texas

A lonely birthday for innocent Rodney Reed

By Gloria Rubac  
Bastrop, Texas



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC  
Rodrick Reed speaks to the media, as supporters — including brother Roger Reed on the right — stand behind him at Bastrop County Courthouse on Dec.18.

Rodney Reed’s family and supporters had a press conference and rallied outside the Bastrop County Courthouse, with its Confederate monuments 25 yards away on the lawn. Reed was railroaded to death row inside the courthouse in 1998 by Bastrop County’s historically racist injustice system.

On Dec. 19, three days before Reed’s 53rd birthday, a crowd gathered to wish him a Happy Birthday and to let him know that they are fighting for him until he is home with his family.

When a reporter asked what people need to know about his brother’s case, Rodrick Reed replied, “It is a fact that four or five medical examiners who have examined all the evidence found that it is medically and scientifically impossible for my brother to have committed this murder. This same evidence gives a time of death that puts the victim, Stacey Stites, in her apartment with Jimmy Fennel, her fiancée. If we can get a new trial, with

the expert help of lawyers with the Innocence Project, this evidence will free Rodney.”

After taping signs on their cars, people paraded their car caravan around downtown Bastrop with horns blazing, calling attention to this unjust case. Two decades of events in Bastrop have made most people in this small town, 30 miles outside Austin, familiar with the Reed case. Many shoppers gave thumbs-up and smiled as the caravan passed them.

Closing out the events, Rodrick Reed said, “If we move and work together, we can not only free Rodney, but we can also abolish this death penalty. It’s racist! It’s inhumane! At the end of the day, it’s just plain corrupt.”

Reed’s evidentiary hearing, which was granted following a Nov. 15, 2019 stay of execution has been postponed twice and is now set for May 17. The family’s Reed Justice Initiative is planning to have one event each month leading up to the May hearing. □

Court removes barrier to Mumia’s appeal: Case can move forward

By Betsey Piette

A significant roadblock to Mumia Abu-Jamal’s appeal of his unjust 1982 murder conviction was removed on Dec. 16, when Pennsylvania Supreme Court justices dismissed an attempt by the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police to obtain a change of venue in the case.

With this new ruling, all of Abu-Jamal’s pending appeals and motions in the Pennsylvania Superior Court will move forward from where they left off in February, when the state Supreme Court stayed all proceedings until the justices decided on the FOP’s King’s Bench petition.

In late February, Abu-Jamal and his supporters were waiting to see if Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner would agree to a request by Abu-Jamal’s attorneys to remand his case back to the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. Their request stemmed from findings of significant evidence of police, prosecutorial and judicial misconduct in six boxes of hidden evidence that had been discovered in the district attorney’s office in late December 2018.

After lower courts in October 2019 denied their request to be “parties of interest” to the case, the FOP and Maureen Faulkner — once the spouse of the police officer Abu-Jamal was unfairly accused of killing — intervened in February. They filed a rare King’s Bench petition seeking a change of venue.

Falsely claiming that members of DA Krasner’s staff were biased in favor of Abu-Jamal, the FOP and Faulkner used the archaic King’s Bench — generally reserved for “extraordinary relief” — to have Krasner’s office removed from handling the appeals in the case. They sought to have the more conservative Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro take over as prosecutor. Several former Philadelphia prosecutors who played a role in Abu-Jamal’s prosecution, but had been fired when

Krasner took office, now work for Shapiro.

The state Supreme Court accepted the petition submitted by the FOP and Faulker and then appointed retired Judge John M. Cleland, of McKean County, to serve as a special master in the case. Although Cleland concluded his investigation and made recommendations late this summer, the court delayed a final decision until now. They have yet to make Cleland’s findings public.

Three of the seven state Supreme Court justices recused themselves from participating in the decision. Three other justices — David Wecht, Christine Donohue, and Kevin Dougherty, a former Philadelphia Common Pleas Court judge — concurred with the order. Justice Sallie Updyke Mundy filed a dissent.

Appeal involves former justice’s misconduct

While King’s Bench was not intended for use by an individual or group simply displeased with a government action, it appears that the state Supreme Court continues to make exceptions when it comes to the police. Many justices on this court, including two on the panel that ruled in favor of the petition, receive FOP funding.

This court’s actions delayed Abu-Jamal’s pending appeal, which involves charges of misconduct by retired Justice Ronald Castille, a former member of the same court. His well-established alliance with the FOP and bias against Abu-Jamal is central to this case.

In 2016, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Williams v. Pennsylvania* that it was improper for a prosecutor who had sought the death penalty to later rule, as a judge, against the same defendant’s appeal. That decision involved Castille, who was Philadelphia district attorney during Terrence Williams’ murder trial. Later, after becoming a state Supreme Court justice, Castille rejected Williams’ appeal.

The FOP’s “Hail Mary” efforts in this petition reflected



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE  
Demonstrators denounce FOP efforts to delay Mumia’s appeal on Feb. 28.

their futile efforts to prevent the truth from ever seeing the light of day in Abu-Jamal’s case. Many politicians whose careers were built on their participation in this case stand to lose their status.

As of last February, Abu-Jamal’s attorneys had submitted briefs rearguing issues that have been unconstitutionally dismissed by the state Supreme Court over the course of almost two decades. This was because of the conflict of interest involving Castille, then a justice in that court.

Abu-Jamal’s lawyers asked the state Superior Court to remand the case to the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas to review the new evidence in the case. The district attorney’s office can now submit its responding briefs to the Superior Court.

Not waiting for the court’s ruling, Abu-Jamal supporters have continued to advocate for him in this case, despite limitations imposed by the coronavirus pandemic. In April, they held a virtual press conference and a teach-in on his case and those of other political prisoners. A second virtual press conference on Nov. 16 featured statements by Dr. Angela Davis and former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick calling for his release. They are determined to win Mumia Abu-Jamal’s freedom after 38 years of unjust incarceration. □

Washington State

Incarcerated rise up against COVID deaths, infections

By Johnnie Lewis

On Dec. 9 an incarcerated person at Stafford Creek “men’s” prison, near Aberdeen, Wash., died of COVID-19. The same week, coronavirus infections tripled from 85 to 237 among the imprisoned there.

In response to this person’s death and the alarming increase in infections, the imprisoned people staged a protest. They demanded warm food, clean clothes, and showers. Importantly, they demanded the prison stop censoring their mail so they could tell family and friends the truly bad conditions under which they contend with COVID inside the walls. They also demanded not to be additionally punished with the extremely harsh and inhumane



PHOTO CREDIT: STEVE BLOOM  
Protestors carry a casket past the Capitol Building in Olympia, Wash. for people who have needlessly died in prison due to COVID-19.

conditions of solitary confinement if they tested positive for the coronavirus.

Family members say the response from the prison administration to these basic demands for humans rights was a “riot.” Guards attacked the protesting people. One was forced into their cell, beaten viciously, and as they lay unconscious on the floor, their cell was filled with pepper spray. Their comrades in neighboring cells — all on lockdown — thought they were dead. The people were locked-down in whatever place they happened to be when the lockdown began; some were locked in spaces without access to toilets. (tinyurl.com/yacb7s3h)

Katie Wilks, whose husband is in G unit [at Stafford Creek], said her biggest concerns have to do with staff “playing musical cells” in his unit. She said her husband

had been placed in four different cells with three different people in the last four days.

“We are still American citizens and still have the same rights as everyone else,” her husband wrote in a message to her Wednesday. “We were sent to prison to be helped and returned to normal life. How does anyone think that someone could ever be able to properly re-enter this country when our own citizens don’t care if we live or die?” (tinyurl.com/y9bn4lkw)

Danna Anders, who has a close friend incarcerated at Stafford, said last week that conditions there were “horrible.”

*Note: The writer corresponds with a transwoman in Stafford. The word “men’s” is in quotes because it is the state of Washington’s gender designation for this prison, even though transwomen and a spectrum of gender nonconforming people are imprisoned there. Also, transwomen, while allowed to transition, are known officially only by their dead names; they cannot use their chosen names in any official capacity, unless legally changed. □*



# Black Panther in struggle

## The continued imprisonment of Russell Maroon Shoatz

By Ted Kelly

Since 1972 — nearly half a century ago — Russell Maroon Shoatz has languished in a prison cell built on stolen land, poisoned and irradiated by the fossil fuel industry.

A Black Panther Party member and soldier in the Black Liberation Army, Shoatz was falsely accused of killing a cop in the Cobbs Creek area of Philadelphia in 1970.

His family, pillars of their community, have tirelessly fought for his release and carried Maroon’s revolutionary message through the years, whether in solidarity with MOVE, Mumia Abu-Jamal, George Floyd, Walter Wallace Jr., or other struggles demanding justice.

After 48 years of imprisonment, Shoatz, 77, is currently held at SCI Dallas in Luzerne County, Pa. In 2015 the state Department of Health found the cancer rate there was “significantly higher than expected.” Shoatz survived prostate cancer only to develop Stage Four colon cancer in 2019. In November, he tested positive for COVID-19.

Shoatz described conditions in the prison COVID unit in a recent phone conversation. “I’m looking at 22 [people] who look like [they’re in] a refugee camp. For real. And they got one toilet.

“I’m supposed to be in a single cell. I reported to the nurses. I reported to the guards. Everyone says they can’t do nothin’ about it. They might not. But that’s not my concern. I got to be able to get to the toilet. ... I can’t be sick, messin’ on myself.

“I’m trying to be patient with it.”

The utter horror and indignity of the situation Shoatz is enduring shocks the conscience. To hear it firsthand, from an elder ill with a life-threatening disease, is even more painful. But it must be heard.

### Prison conditions kill people

A recording of Shoatz’s call was broadcast at a Dec. 11 on-line teach-in for Russell Maroon Shoatz, “We Are Maroon!” hosted by Kempis Ghani Songster and Lavinia “Vee” Davis. They emphasized the fact that prison conditions always have created illness, even before the new coronavirus was brought in by guards—immediately sweeping through the population of incarcerated workers.

MOVE 9 member Mike Africa, Sr., spoke at the event: “If you’re in a state like Maroon is [with cancer], it’s especially crucial that he gets the nourishment he needs to battle that disease. That they don’t give it to him is just some cruel stuff. And they know it.

“I myself became anemic in there trying to eat. And I was working in the kitchen and I still became anemic! Because I wasn’t getting the nutrition I needed.”

Emphatic in MOVE’s philosophy, which is centered on life and the protection of living creatures, is physical fitness and maintaining a healthy, just diet. Africa Sr., like many MOVE members, is an avid athlete who, Mumia Abu-Jamal



said, “could run like others walk.” But even the MOVE 9 have experienced life-threatening health problems as the result of decades incarcerated in toxic Pennsylvania prisons.

Chuck Africa, the last of the MOVE 9 members released in early 2020, contracted cancer after 42 years in prison. Prison conditions killed both Merle Africa and Phil Africa before they were eligible for parole. Delbert Orr Africa died in June 2020, only six months after his release.

Mumia Abu-Jamal has nearly had his life stolen by the prison-industrial complex many times. After being shot by police and then brutally beaten in 1981, he was one of hundreds of people incarcerated in Pennsylvania to contract hepatitis C, a disease running rampant in the

state’s prisons. Finally, in 2017, after a protracted legal battle won by Abu-Jamal and supporters, the state’s Department of Corrections was forced to provide hep C treatment to prisoners in its custody.

Abu-Jamal has also suffered with cirrhosis of the liver, various skin rashes, cataracts and other issues. Supporters have waged massive political and legal struggles to get even basic treatment for each of these symptoms.

### Framing up revolutionaries

Every prisoner mentioned here is a Black political activist framed by the Philadelphia Police Department during or immediately after the tenure of Mayor Frank Rizzo. Russell Shoatz, framed for killing a cop in 1972; Chuck, Mike, Debbie, Phil, Merle, Janet, Janine, Delbert, and Eddie Africa — all framed for killing a cop in 1978; Mumia Abu-Jamal, framed for killing a cop in 1981. Ramona Africa, who contracted lymphoma after serving seven years, was charged in 1985 with “rioting” for the crime of surviving the May 13 police bombing of Osage Avenue in the city.

To frame Black activists, Frank Rizzo used a well-known recipe — blaming revolutionaries for the death of cops. Marxist-Leninist political theorist George Jackson, who co-founded the Black Guerrilla Family, was accused of killing a prison guard after his transfer from San Quentin to Soledad prison in 1970. Black Panther members Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace were falsely accused of killing an Angola prison guard in 1972, and then held in solitary confinement for 40 years — one of the longest known cases of this torture method in U.S. history.

“Cop killing” was the charge used to take out Maroon’s Black Liberation Army comrades Sekou Odinga and Mutulu Shakur, in separate incidents in 1981. In 2000 the state finally got its hands on Imam Jamil al-Amin (the former Black Panther H. Rap Brown) by blaming him for shooting a cop.

### Legal and extra-legal executions

History proves that the capitalist state ruthlessly eliminates any challenge to its power and authority. After the Civil War, in the fascist counterrevolution against Reconstruction, the re-unified

U.S. capitalist class empowered the Ku Klux Klan, law enforcement and local white property owners to target and kill anyone organizing for Black power in the U.S. South.

By the mid-20th century, the organized labor movement in the U.S. — once a militant front against imperialism and exploitation — had been quite literally beaten into submission by mercenary Pinkertons, cops and McCarthyite persecution. In the 1960s and 70s, the political police force known as the Federal Bureau of Investigation identified the Black liberation struggle and the Black Panther Party as the greatest domestic threat to the U.S. empire, as well as targeting the American Indian Movement and those it identified as its leaders.

When assassination is not an option, the capitalist state will carry out executions in the many prison concentration camps it operates for this purpose. During the final days of the Trump administration, the U.S. federal government has revived the death penalty and is killing federal prisoners at a sickening rate.

Other executions have been stopped by legal challenges or political pressure — as in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, rescued from the death chamber through the power exerted by millions of people who took to the streets internationally.

But imprisonment itself is a form of execution, a cruel and torturous and gradual method.

The toxic, unsanitary conditions in prisons mean that the continued imprisonment of Russell Maroon Shoatz and other human beings is an atrocity. This is an even more urgent truth during the coronavirus pandemic. In a system of mass incarceration that reportedly holds 2.5 million people in cages on any given day, over 275,000 U.S. prisoners are reported to have contracted COVID-19. That’s ten times the infection rate worldwide.

To say that U.S. prisons are concentration camps is no exaggeration — it is historical reality. Mass death through a policy of willful neglect in U.S. prisons is written all over this moment. It compares to the Spanish imperial Reconcentration Policy in Cuba, when 30 percent of those forced into enclosures died, to the U.S.-operated reconcentrados or “zones of protection” in the Philippines, and to the Israeli occupation of Gaza. □

## Protesters denounce capitalist failure in COVID-19 crisis

Community members gathered at the steps of Buffalo City Hall Dec. 19 to mourn the victims of COVID-19. To emphasize that Erie County has reached over a thousand

dead from the virus, the demonstrators read the names of 1,000 of the deceased over a loud speaker.

People stood silently with signs displaying their

demands, such as free health care for all, direct monetary relief to every person, cancellation of rent, and a stop to evictions. They laid a tarp out on the street with mock body bags labelled “COVID Victim” to remind the city and state governments that every death from COVID-19 is blood on their hands.

Some people also held signs reading “Planned economies respond better to crisis” and “Capitalism has failed the people.”

After the demonstration, the few protesters who remained were attacked by white supremacists and anti-maskers, who had arrived at the square shortly after the vigil. Members of the Proud Boys, a fascist street gang, and New York Watchmen, carrying stun guns, tear gas, and other weapons, swarmed the group.

Buffalo police had been present on the scene and had been harassing attendees of the vigil, but they stood by and watched as the white supremacists attacked. White supremacist groups in Buffalo have been directly connected with the anti-mask movement, and have a pattern of traveling with them.



PHOTO: CLIFF PARKS

— Workers World Buffalo bureau



## WW COMMENTARY

# The real ‘People of the Year’ — workers & oppressed people of the world!

By Devin Cole

In what can only be described as a big middle finger to health care workers, essential workers and all workers and oppressed persons who are rising up against police terror and fascism, the bourgeois weekly Time has named President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris as its Persons of the Year.

By mid-September, the death toll of health care workers in the U.S. from COVID-19 had topped 1,700 and climbing. (National Nurses United) By Dec. 15, the death toll overall in the U.S. from the virus had climbed to almost 304,000, with more than 16.7 million cases reported.

Yes, in the middle of this catastrophe, Time magazine found it appropriate to shine yet another spotlight on the bourgeois ruling class, ignoring health care workers entirely and disrespecting the historic revolutionary uprisings and mass marches that followed the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.

### Battling the capitalist media

It is easy to dismiss Time, Forbes or any sort of capitalist-funded media as “against the people” — because they are! There is no doubt that the mainstream magazines, papers and television news channels are corporate-sponsored and capitalist-funded, right down to local news stations.

It is appropriate to say that the ruling class has a total monopoly on major press. It is also appropriate to say that one task of the working class is to wage a struggle against that monopoly and that bourgeois press, to forward the fight for socialism and anti-imperialism.

One example of this in action was the 2018 appearance of Workers World Party founding member Deirdre Griswold on the television talk show of right-wing reactionary Tucker Carlson. Griswold schooled him on the Democratic People’s



Health care workers on the front lines.

Republic of Korea — but most importantly, she spoke directly to millions of viewers, giving them the real story of why socialism matters. In that capitalist forum, Griswold defended a revolutionary socialist nation fighting U.S. imperialism. She defended the DPRK unequivocally, as Workers World Party has always done.

In the midst of bourgeois media propaganda that champions the capitalist ruling class and spreads the lies of U.S. empire, it is a critical task of workers and oppressed people of the world to struggle to fight for our own autonomy and self-determination in the media.

### Time magazine ignores victims of U.S. capitalism

Who were the real People of the Year in 2020? Time could have shone a much-needed spotlight on healthcare workers across the country, from nurses to technicians to custodial workers, who have saved lives in underfunded hospitals with no beds and little or no PPE. Many have had to wear trash bags over their clothes! They are working grueling hours with few or no breaks, many for poverty wages. Many have died from the virus itself.

Instead, Time published a massive article on how Joe Biden and Kamala Harris “saved the U.S.” from President Trump. What that coverage glossed over is Joe Biden’s long record of building up the death-dealing military and prison-industrial complex, and Kamala Harris’ habitual mistreatment of sex workers and transgender people when she was prosecutor and “top cop” of California.

Time humanized two staunch supporters and creators of the U.S. capitalist-imperialist empire while ignoring and dehumanizing the countless workers and oppressed people who have died alone and often penniless due to capitalist ruling class negligence and outright hostility to workers and oppressed people during the pandemic.

### ‘Overdue awakening’

In June, Time’s cover was a photo of a Black Lives Matter uprising with the headline, “The Overdue Awakening.” The article briefly outlined the uprisings, at that point only about a month old, along with police attacks on protesters in D.C., the mass arrests, the rise of U.S. citizens beginning to understand police terror as

a very real problem and, of course, how Trump and his administration were adding fuel to the fire.

The article gave an even briefer look at the U.S. history of anti-Black terror, from chattel slavery to the underlying anti-Blackness of Social Security and other federal programs, to the current prison-industrial enslavement system. After acknowledging the murder of George Floyd, the Time article ended with an ironic statement: “Awakening can be painful. But in America, a reckoning is overdue.”

Time called for a supposed “awakening.” But after a Black-led uprising brought millions and millions of workers and oppressed people — multi-gender, multinational and multi-generational — into the streets, what did this capitalist propagandist do?

The bourgeois magazine glorified as “People of the Year” two people who ran on a platform directly, explicitly opposing the uprisings. Two people who have supported the police and criticized the protesters.

So what sort of “awakening” is really needed? What about more mass protests and actions to build solidarity with those who are saving lives in the middle of the pandemic and those who are challenging death-dealing institutions of racism and incarceration, of woman-hating and queer-phobia, of ableism and ageism.

What about an awakening to the need to defeat capitalism and imperialism and build socialism?

We as Marxist-Leninists know who the real People of the Year are — the workers and oppressed people of the world, united, who are waking up the planet!

*Devin Cole is a transgender Marxist writer and organizer. They are the president of Strive (Socialist Trans Initiative), a transgender advocacy organization, and a member of Workers World Party, Central Gulf Coast (occupied Muscogee Creek land — northwest Florida).*

## Alabama warehouse workers take on Amazon

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Amazon workers at a Bessemer, Ala., warehouse took a big step toward organizing the first union ever in that behemoth company, when the National Labor Relations Board green-lighted their request for a unionization vote. Bessemer is a former steel-producing city adjoining Birmingham.

On Dec. 18 the NLRB affirmed it was “administratively satisfied that there is a sufficient showing of interest to proceed,” in a statement by Terry D. Combs, assistant director for the agency’s Atlanta region.

The BAmazon union, as local organizers dubbed it, goes forward with the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union. The RWDSU has a strong Southern membership, with 6,000 in the Mid-South Council based in Birmingham.

Organizers’ main demands are to increase bargaining power, especially in “safety standards, training, breaks, pay, benefits.” (bamazonunion.org) The workload in Amazon warehouses is physically and mentally grueling, with the pace set

to match what a machine could do.

On the BAmazon website, organizers report: “We face outrageous work quotas that have left many with illnesses and lifetime injuries. With a union contract, we can form a worker safety committee and negotiate the highest safety standards and protocols for our workplace.”

For workers to petition the NLRB to set a vote, at least 30% of workers have to sign a nonbinding “union card.” To ask the NLRB for vote authorization, organizers would usually have even more worker support — if possible a strong majority.

The potential of a Bessemer victory is heightened by Amazon’s vulnerability to organized labor action during the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike manufacturing production, which can be moved out of state or even overseas, Amazon needs its merchandise warehoused near customers — ideally for “last mile delivery.” Amazon can’t stockpile packages and wait out a strike or protest — that would upend its “instant shipping” promise.

The pandemic pressure on increased online shopping makes warehouse workers

more essential than ever — and gives these workers more weight and incentive to organize against their bosses.

Amazon will fight back against the warehouse workers — and fight dirty.

The company has fired countless workers during other organizing attempts. (See Workers World, “Interview: Amazon worker battles billionaire Bezos,” April 7)

Documents leaked from Amazon’s Global Security Operations Center show the company has monitored union-organizing activity of workers and hired Pinkerton union-busting operatives to gather intelligence on warehouse workers. (Vice, Nov. 23, [tinyurl.com/yxcpmzqh](https://tinyurl.com/yxcpmzqh))

Despite reactionary right-to-work-for-less laws and pressure in Alabama, the state has a militant tradition of workers organizing, especially Black workers. From 1928 to 1951 the Communist Party USA organized throughout Alabama — from the Sharecroppers Union to the



Metal Workers Industrial League. (See Workers World, “Lessons of ‘The Hammer and the Hoe,’” Dec. 21, 2017)

Earlier in 2020, Birmingham city bus drivers, members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 725, walked out to protest lack of adequate COVID-19 protection measures. Alabama, of course, was the site of the historic 1955-56 Montgomery bus boycott, when Black workers and the entire Black community walked to work for 381 days to end segregated bus service in the state and ultimately in the U.S.

Here’s to victory for Alabama workers — winning against billionaire Jeff Bezos and his behemoth Amazon! □



# Since Paris Agreement — the five hottest years ever

By Mayana Ashley-Carner

On Dec. 12, 2015, politicians and world leaders signed the Paris Agreement, an international pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to decrease the effects of climate change. But as climate activist Greta Thunberg reported in a recent video, data shows that the past five years have been the hottest on record. (tinyurl.com/yymlgkrd)

The Paris Agreement isn’t nearly enough to combat climate change to the extent necessary for the continuation of human life. It does not bode well for the accord that Exxon Mobil Corporation, which stated its support for the Paris Agreement, remains one of the world’s largest producers of greenhouse gases.

Although reducing greenhouse gas emissions is vital for human survival, the Paris Agreement is used by politicians and corporations as a facade to hide their continuous fossil fuel emissions behind the guise of green policy.

President Trump’s formal U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement took place Nov. 4, but President-elect Joe Biden plans to reenter it in 2021 as part of his administration’s climate change policies. However, Biden’s reentry into the Paris Agreement is no sign of a strong commitment to stop climate change on his part.

Biden’s plan to combat climate change can be described as weak at best. On his campaign website, he calls for a “clean energy revolution.” Yet much like Exxon Mobil’s “support” for the Paris Agreement, the Biden campaign’s linguistic choice is simply a facade designed to deceive the public into thinking he will fight for a liveable future for the working class.

Biden’s campaign was funded by billionaires and super PACs, meaning his vested interest is in upholding the conditions that make his donors money — capitalist conditions that exploit the working class are dangerous for the environment.

Many of Biden’s Cabinet picks were closely affiliated with Biden and former president Barack Obama during

his administration, which proved weak on combating climate change. Biden’s domestic climate advisor, Gina McCarthy, is a former head of the Environmental Protection Agency, which colossally failed to respond to the Flint water crisis under her tenure.

Biden is being praised for diversity in the race and gender of his Cabinet picks, but although he may have picked women and people of color to fill his Cabinet, this diversity is simply an example of the administration obscuring its moderate policies. Biden promised a Cabinet that “looks like America,” but his catchphrases should not deceive people into thinking he’s doing what is good for us.

Biden hasn’t even signed on to the Green New Deal, which in and of itself is nowhere near enough to end climate change. Only with the abolition of capitalism can we stop the assault on the atmosphere, the oceans and all of nature.

## Capitalism alienates humans from nature

The German philosopher Georg Hegel held that humankind is the spirit of god alienated from itself. The German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach responded to this claim by reversing it — maintaining that god is the spirit of man alienated from itself. When humans project an idealized version of themselves into heaven and worship it as god, Feuerbach claimed, they alienate themselves from themselves.

When humans accredit human history and development to a heavenly being, as opposed to our earthly existence, we create a type of alienation — alienation from the Earth. What’s good for humans and what’s good for nature are falsely seen as separate things. This alienation of humankind from Earth is the dichotomy that justifies capitalist devastation of the Earth.

Essentially, separation from the Earth is fundamental to the conditions that created capitalism. Abolishing capitalism is coextensive with negating the alienation between human interests and the interests of the environment — of



Philadelphia youth march during Climate Strike on Sept. 20, 2019.
WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

nature itself, of which humanity is part. Furthermore, Marx expanded upon this theory of Feuerbach’s and applied it to the political realm to analyze other types of alienation. One example is the alienation of workers from the labor we sell to the capitalist class.

This theoretical perspective is relevant now more than ever. Although Greta Thunberg was born more than a century after Marx died, the activist’s urgent calls to action reflect the alienation Feuerbach and Marx wrote about so many years ago.

Joining the Paris Agreement is not enough to stop climate change. Only a Marxist analysis of capitalist alienation, and subsequent struggle to negate said alienation, can reconnect humans with the Earth and eliminate the alienation between what is good for humans and what’s good for the environment.

Mayana Ashley-Carner is a student at Community College of Philadelphia and a candidate with Workers World Party.

# U.S. attempts ‘soft coup’ in Cuba

By Rosa Miriam Elizalde

From Resumen English

Dec. 10 – Invasions get bad press — those close-ups of foreign boots marching over a beach or a neighborhood like El Chorrillo in Panama in 1989, where they still don’t know the total number of people who the U.S. troops killed. After more than a century of relentless experience, U.S. military interventions in Latin America have fallen into disrepute, lost their glamor, gone out of style. Now they prefer to use soft coups.

The soft coup consists of decorating a minority to look like a majority, broadcasting their complaints, stirring up controversies and confrontations, and wearing down the true majority running the government until it’s possible to take them down through some farce: a judicial one in Honduras, a parliamentary one in Brazil, or an electoral one in Bolivia, or forcing a foreign intervention, as they are attempting in Venezuela, and as some dream of doing in Cuba.

The soft coup is more complicated than the coups done through invasions by the Marines, but, in contrast to that, it has modern-day local color, with archetypes of the evil dictators as the bad guys, a bunch of good guys with “freedom fighter” stereotypes, so that it looks like a re-edited version of an epic film and, complete with false narratives of civic heroism, and with all of them, good and bad guys, performed by actors in a Grade Z action movie to play on those great tools for domination: corporate media and social media platforms.

Well, that’s what Cuba has been going through in these past days. Fake artists barricaded themselves in a house in the San Isidro neighborhood of Old Havana, in a context in which a lot of things have gotten all mixed up together: legitimate needs of dialogue with cultural authorities, confusions, political opportunism, the pandemic, and economic tensions aggravated by a whole panorama of measures the Trump regime imposed:

cutting off remittances, stopping ships carrying fuel, financial sanctions. ...

In a few hours, the operation of the “artists” was deactivated without anyone suffering so much as a scratch. But from this starting point, we’ve seen another rerun of an old movie: the Chargé d’Affaires of the United States Embassy in Havana using his personal auto to transport these “artists,” while high-level functionaries of the State Department call these local employees of the soft-coup apparatus their colleagues. Some of those involved made a display of their liking for Donald Trump, whom they proclaim as their president, and of receiving financing from the U.S., federal government funds intended for the “promotion of democracy.”

As researcher Tracy Eaton has documented, the United States government has spent between \$20 million and \$45 million annually since 1996, when a blank check was given, for financial support to local groups and international observers with the goal of instituting “regime change in Cuba” under Section 109 of the Helms-Burton Act.

More than \$500 million have been directed to these operations by this means, although this is not the only route for this money, nor even the most common one for stirring up “dissidence” in Cuba. No one knows for sure how much these undercover operations receive, nor what the total sum is that has been sent to San Isidro for this attempt to throw a lighted match into the gunpowder.

A good chunk of change also goes to a cluster of online media platforms created by the U.S. government to do “dis-information” about Cuban affairs. Hundreds of internet publications have appeared in Florida since 2017 with “Cuba” as part of their on-line names. The objective is to add weight and volume to the toxic information about Cuba, repackaging the same agenda for different audiences and portraying the opinions of the United States as if they were something coming from Cubans themselves.

This differs from other periods in the so-called Fourth

Generation Warfare or Unconventional Warfare in that the new Soft Coup laboratories operate simultaneously in the physical, psychological, perceptual, and virtual realms, so that, after the confusion settles, only a cultural scorched earth remains.

## USAID calls the tune

The Guardian recently interviewed the correspondent of one of these Florida digital media outlets, which had received a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) subsidy of \$410,710. The ADN Cuba journalist told the Guardian, a British newspaper, that the measures taken last month by the White House to forbid remittances from being sent to Cubans by family members in the U.S. are “perfect,” because most of the money ends up in the state treasury — a shocking lie. [ADN is a Florida-based counterrevolutionary news agency.]

“If I were in the United States, I would have voted for Trump,” added this “impartial reporter,” who has been carrying fuel to the San Isidro fire for weeks, just as many others have done. It’s not the same as invading a country, but it is still a flagrant attempt to disguise a violent minority as a freedom-seeking majority.

In the midst of all this, the reality of what is actually happening in truly cultural terms in Cuba has been concealed from the poor misinformed world audience. Right now, more than 1,800 films and more than 800 scripts have been entered in the International Festival of New Latin American Film in Havana. We prepare this annual festival, which is intended to keep culture alive without allowing the effects of the soft coup to resonate beyond the dense mass of misinformation.

“Hate is a long wait,” said French-Caribbean-African writer René Maran. And also, almost always, a big failure.

Source: La Jornada, México, and Cubadebate; translated: Resumen Latinoamericano, North America bureau; edited: Workers World.



## WW COMMENTARY

# France: Black Lives Matter and the Global Security Law

By G. Dunkel

It is sometimes hard to realize the worldwide impact of the Black Lives Matter movement. Language, culture and media indifference can all get in the way. Some countries just don't have the type of events — protests, marches, rallies — for a variety of reasons, where the influence of BLM would appear.

France is different. A major part of its politics plays out in the streets. Workers, generally at the call of their unions, hit the streets — not only over pay, employment and working conditions, but over political issues like the new labor law and a new retirement plan. Workers for private employers have the legal right to strike without imperiling their jobs. Like all workers' rights in a society run by the bourgeoisie, this right is constantly under attack, but the strike was used consistently in the Yellow Vest movement.

And it's not just workers who hit the streets to protest. Doctors, farmers, fishers, all sorts of community groups and students — some of whom are in unions — and women's groups, all from time to time collectively raise their voices.

All these groups — particularly the unions — rely on solidarity and making alliances with other organizations. Since it is generally the case that more than one union represents workers in a particular plant or industry, to shut it down they need to work together. This is especially the case if a mass mobilization like a general strike is projected.

### Black Lives Matter in France

Searching through archives of pictures of protests in France beginning in 2015, I found thousands of pictures from hundreds of demonstrations explicitly referring to BLM slogans, such as “pas de justice, pas de paix, stop aux violences

policières” (No Justice, no peace, stop police violence) and “est-ce un crime d'être black?” (Is it a crime to be Black?) And of course in English, so the international audience could not mistake it, “Black Lives Matter.”

“Vies Volées” (“Stolen Lives”), is a French organization led by Ramata Dieng that supports the families of murdered and injured victims of police brutality. It has created a petition for Mumia Abu-Jamal's release with a video of Colin Kaepernick's statement supporting Mumia (dubbed in French). On its website, there is another petition voicing solidarity with U.S. victims of cop killings and with U.S. political prisoners, along with a powerful rap in French. (viesvolees.org)

Police violence and racism have historically been problems in France, which has been and still is an imperialist power in West Africa, North Africa and the Caribbean.

In 1804, France was defeated in Haiti, which had been the most profitable colony of the 18th century; Haiti made more profits for France than Britain extracted from all its North American colonies. In 1825, Charles X, the last and most reactionary Bourbon king of France, sent a flotilla to

Haiti and forced it to pay for all the “property,” that is, the enslaved people France lost to the Haitian Revolution. These payments were a huge economic burden on Haiti for the next 100 years. Haiti was forced to pay back with money that which it had won with the blood of its people.

In 1830, Charles X's armed forces began the conquest of Algeria, which took about 20 years to complete. Algerians, and later North Africans from Tunisia and Morocco along with West Africans, were treated as a cheap labor pool when France needed workers in its expanding industries. When it needed soldiers in World War I, France recruited 450,000 from its African colonies. Current President Emmanuel Macron admitted in a 2018 tweet that 200,000 of them had died.

The French bourgeoisie fought bitterly to retain control of Algeria, which, like the islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique in the Caribbean, was treated as an overseas department of France. Algerians charge that the French killed over a million people during the war for Algeria's independence.

Now the religion with the largest number of practicing believers in France is Islam, which is the faith of most of the



Anti-racist protesters in LeMans ask ‘Is it a crime to be Black?’

North African and many of the West African communities in France — like the Malian community, estimated to have 250,000 members.

### Weekly protests hit racist laws

Nationally coordinated demonstrations against two new bills the Macron government is pushing have occurred every Saturday since the last Saturday in November. One bill, the Global Security Law, would give cops in France, who are directly under the control of the Macron government, more power to gather intelligence on protesters and make it illegal for the public to film cops.

The other protested bill is known as the “separatist law.” This legislation would force groups similar to the Collectif Contre Islamophobie en France (CCIF), which offers legal counseling on anti-Muslim bigotry, to disband — the minister of the interior has ordered CCIF to stop — and prevent Sharia schools from teaching Islam on the weekends.

The Dec. 5 demonstrations were held jointly with the General Confederation of Workers (CGT), which was protesting against unemployment and demanding permanent, full-time jobs. Philippe Martinez, secretary general of the CGT, told the press at the start of the demonstration in Paris: “There is no opposition between public and individual liberties and the struggle for permanent jobs and against unemployment, especially in this period.”

The Dec. 19 demonstrations raised the needs of undocumented immigrants.

*The author's Twitter handle is @dunkel\_greg.*



Protesters led by Baba Traoré supporters speak the names of people killed by the cops.

## Georgia Senate runoff

# Redbaiting derails people's needs

*Continued from page 1*

“anti-American.” Warnock is the senior pastor of Martin Luther King Jr.'s family church, Ebenezer Baptist.

Film footage is shown of Rev. Jeremiah Wright saying “God damn America.” This quote is from a sermon denouncing U.S. imperialist wars in Vietnam, Iraq and the continued theft of Indigenous lands. The same quote was used against Barack Obama during his presidential campaign.

In another ad, Warnock is shown repeating those words while adding that America's actions today may merit that condemnation. More footage of Warnock criticizing Israeli attacks on peaceful Palestinian protesters shows him saying loudly, from the pulpit, “Palestinian lives matter.”

Perdue's campaign features an ad declaring that Jon Ossoff works for the Chinese government, “the same Chinese government that gave the U.S. the COVID virus.” Ossoff's documentary company was once paid for a film that aired on Chinese TV.

Other ads say that an Ossoff victory would mean “illegal immigrants voting” and the “end of private [health]

insurance.” Ossoff has criticized the Trump administration's immigration measures. However, he has stated his opposition to Medicare for All.

On the other hand, Loeffler has entertained the support of the far-right QAnon and convicted white supremacist Georgians. And Perdue's campaign remains plagued by investigations into his financial dealings. Both Republican candidates, during most of their public appearances with a slew of Trump political allies, including both Trump and Pence, have not worn protective masks. In defiance of public health measures, their supporters refuse to practice social distancing.

### Class struggle is only alternative

Both parties employ thousands of paid staffers to coordinate their respective campaigns. However, the emergence of grassroots organizations in communities of color, among young voters, immigrants, women and LGBTQ2S+ groups and others to promote their demands, while participating in the electoral process, has lent a struggle aspect to what's happening.

It was voters from many of those demographics who defeated Donald Trump

in the November presidential race — although by less than 12,000 votes in Georgia. Current polls indicate a virtual tie for both senatorial seats.

In this political maelstrom, the emergence of Black women, in particular, as recognized leaders in community-based mobilizing, portends more progressive mass, class-based struggle ahead.

Joe Biden famously said during the Democratic primaries that “not much would change” in his administration. That claim is evident in the number of past officials named for positions in his cabinet. Despite a few exceptions, they are pro-business defenders of a U.S. foreign policy of war, intervention and sanctions.

What should be the strategy of the workers and poor in Georgia regarding this election? Perdue and Loeffler represent a white supremacist, anti-working class world view. Both have been Trump “America first” sycophants.

Ossoff and Warnock come from a different social and economic stratum and both have experience in challenging the inequities of this country. Yet both deny supporting the demand to “defund the police” and tout their working relationships with police agencies.

It is clear they can only go so far in promising to meet the needs of the people in the midst of the dying capitalist system, that puts profits first no matter how dire the situation.

As of this writing, Congress is expected to pass a \$900 billion coronavirus aid bill that will include \$600 stimulus checks, extended unemployment benefits until March and a one month extension on the moratorium on rental evictions.

There have been nine months of inaction while over 315,000 people have died — and now every state in the country is experiencing an unprecedented surge of critically ill patients due to COVID.

Yet at the same time, both capitalist parties had no difficulty in uniting to speedily vote for an enormous military budget bill.

Continued Republican control of the Senate will be an impediment to the Biden administration's program of modest measures meant to stave off the growing capitalist crisis. Regardless of who wins the Senate seats from Georgia, the multinational, multigenerational, multi-gendered working class will have to unite and organize to achieve genuine workers' democracy, equity and justice. □



Too little, too late

The reported reaction of many to the CARES Act 2—which is about to be passed as we write this editorial—is that it’s too little, too late and, sigh, better than nothing.

In truth it is the minimum that a ruling-class dominated Congress could pass—just before layoffs, evictions and a spreading virus were about to cast tens of millions more working-class families into poverty, houselessness and capitalist chaos.

While the Democratic Party shares the blame for this travesty, Mitch McConnell’s Senate Republicans led the attack on the working class. They did this by sabotaging pandemic relief for the past seven months before announcing an agreement Dec. 20.

The number of unemployed grows each week, coupled with increased mass hunger. The poverty rate rivals that following the 2008-09 capitalist collapse. Inequality increases daily with the all-too-usual racist bias, as the rich few grow richer. And families are already being evicted and forced to live on the streets or in COVID-19 susceptible shelters.

The looming eviction crisis is so bad that the Dec. 20 New York Times ran a feature story about a Springfield, Mass., sheriff who felt remorse about kicking people out of their homes. He still evicted them.

Instead of a comprehensive emergency measure to rescue the population, we get CARES 2. Too little because it runs out quickly. Too late, because a June deal could have stopped much pain. Compare this measly CARES 2 with what should be possible even under 21st century U.S. capitalism.

The first CARES Act, passed in March, was a big

pandemic relief package—\$2.2 trillion (million million)—with many problems. It omitted aid for undocumented workers. Gig workers applying for unemployment insurance faced major obstacles. But in the end, it still kept tens of millions of workers’ heads above water.

To supplement the CARES Act, in mid-May House Democrats passed the HEROES Act. It allocated \$3.4 trillion to bail out small businesses, leave most unemployed workers a livable income and finance cash-starved state, local, territorial and tribal governments—while preventing evictions and delivering COVID-19 medical care. Had it passed the Senate, it would be saving tens of millions of people from poverty.

McConnell wouldn’t even let it be discussed. And the Democrats knew that was what to expect from him.

After a seven-month delay, the two parties finally agreed on a CARES Act 2 bill. It costs about \$900 billion, less than one-third of the HEROES Act. Compared to the first CARES Act, it halves the one-time payment to every documented worker with income under \$75,000 from \$1,200 to \$600. It shrinks the supplemental unemployment insurance payments from \$600 to \$300 a week and only extends these for another 11 weeks.

Too late to save millions of workers already lost. Too little to let people relax.

McConnell called the bill a “triumph,” because for the super-rich it avoided massive turmoil at minimum cost. The Democrats called it a “down payment,” because they promised much more to their working

class constituents, including Black and Brown people.

Sen. Chuck Schumer and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi imply that the Democrats will fight for more and do it soon, i.e., after Biden takes office. But they have already shown that they will go the extra mile to “compromise” with the Republicans and the ruling class.

Republicans hypocritically insisted the budget be balanced. The truth is that they do not need to balance the budget to meet the emergency. This issue is a pretext for imposing inequality.

Democrats agreed to pass the total funding budget this same Dec. 20 weekend to keep the federal government running. This included funding the Pentagon budget for nearly three-quarters of a trillion dollars. If Congress really needed to balance the budget, the Pentagon’s a good place to drastically cut costs.

Nor did the Democrats insist on restoring taxes on those with the highest incomes, the taxes that the Trump administration cut.

In Workers World’s editorial about the relief bills last August, we wrote “Regarding this week’s negotiations, there is a risk the Democrats will agree to a bad compromise for the U.S. working class. That may avoid complete disaster and chaos, but still throw more millions into poverty, hunger and houselessness.”

Four months later, the lessons of the bad compromise is that both ruling parties represent the interests of the U.S. ruling class. This is obvious with the Republicans, it has to be underlined regarding the Democrats. It will take a struggle outside and independent of these two parties to make any durable gains for working people. □

The vaccine: class division and chaos

By Martha Grevatt

To spotlight the need for COVID-19 vaccinations of hospital workers, residents at Stanford Medical in Palo Alto, Calif., staged a photo op on Dec. 18.

A group of medical residents created a media event of their own to protest their exclusion from the first group to be immunized. These doctors, who are finishing their medical education and serve on the front lines treating COVID infections, complained they were “First in the room, back of the line.” (NBC Bay Area, Dec. 18)

While only seven of 1,349 residents were in the first group getting the shot, other doctors who are not in close contact with COVID-19 patients, including some currently working from home, were vaccinated right away. The residents were not only protesting on their own behalf; they said nurses, janitors and food service workers should be in priority groups.

“Disparities in distribution of the vaccine can be seen at a micro-level at Stanford today,” resident Dr. Christine Santiago posted on Twitter. “I worry that the situation we see at Stanford is a harbinger of population-level inequities of vaccine distribution for our underserved communities.” (Los Angeles Times, Dec. 18)

She hit the nail on the head. Were the wrongdoings at Stanford a microcosm of problems to come in this racist capitalist society? How long will it take before Black and Latinx communities, who have already suffered disproportionate rates of infection and death, get widespread access to COVID vaccines?

The crying need for vaccines in the Global South exposed the glaring inequalities on the world stage.

Countries devastated by poverty, sanctions and imperialist war and domination will face greater difficulties accessing and distributing a vaccine.

**Class divisions exposed**

With rich people offering thousands of dollars to get to the head of the shot line, questions are being raised about how the poor and the uninsured will get access. The federal government, which is coordinating distribution to all 50 states, promises to FIRST vaccinate “essential workers” and people in nursing homes. But right now there are not enough doses to cover even the 20 million health care workers in the U.S., let alone grocery workers, delivery workers, teachers and others who provide necessary services while risking COVID-19 exposure.

The government should have a plan to assure all “essential workers” receive the vaccine as soon as possible. Likewise there should be no unnecessary delays in protecting the elderly, especially those in nursing homes, and people with immune system deficiencies. This could be done, similar to the mass vaccination campaign after Jonas Salk developed the polio vaccine.

There also needs to be a plan to prioritize incarcerated people. Prisons are super-spreading hotspots, with an infection rate four times that in the general population.

The government and big corporations owe the descendants of enslaved Africans billions upon billions in reparations for the unpaid labor of their ancestors. A down payment on the debt — a debt drenched in blood — could go a long way in addressing the racist disparities in health care and stem the genocidal COVID-19 death toll in communities of color.



Stanford frontline medical residents demand vaccine access on Dec. 18.

With rich people offering thousands of dollars to get to the head of the shot line, questions are being raised about how the poor and the uninsured will get access.

This is not just an example of bureaucratic ineptitude. At the core is the lack of planning and chaos inherent in the capitalist mode of production. It’s what Karl Marx called “the anarchy of production”—anarchy meaning the absence of order.

“Operation Warp Speed” reinforced the profit motive, contracting to give billions of dollars to eight different competing drug companies. Pfizer, BioNTech, Moderna and other drug companies all stand to reap huge profits off the mass suffering caused by the pandemic—and they’re fighting each other over the spoils, rather than collaborating to manufacture the most effective vaccine in the shortest possible time frame.

The profit train doesn’t stop with Big Pharma. Walgreens and CVS will be handling much of the vaccinating, the cost to be paid by the government rather than the individuals receiving the vaccine. FedEx and UPS will score a bundle transporting the vaccines.

We are in a crisis of epic proportions. The drive for profit—which fosters inequalities—stands in the way of saving lives. □

**Capitalism on a Ventilator**  
**The impact of COVID-19 in China & the U.S.**  
 A new anthology contrasting the effective Chinese response to COVID-19 with the disastrous response here in the U.S. It pushes back against the racist anti-China campaign in the media.  
**Now in print and available**  
*Available from Kobo.com as an e-book.*

**Capitalist chaos**

Vaccine distribution and production overall is a chaotic mess. As of this writing [Dec. 21], the number of people vaccinated comes to less than the number of COVID-19 deaths, which continues to climb. Thanks to federal government “planning,” at least 12 states will see their ration of doses much lower than expected. There is no clear plan for how to disburse the millions of doses now being warehoused.



# How long will Peru last?

## History weighs on today’s events

By Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein

*The writer was the director of international relations in Venezuela’s presidential office and the country’s ambassador to Nicaragua. Currently, he is a guest professor at Shanghai University in China. This article was posted at [sergioro07.blogspot.com](http://sergioro07.blogspot.com) on Nov. 13. Translation: Michael Otto.*

In his “Seven Essays on the Interpretation of Peruvian Reality,” José Carlos Mariátegui explains how the Spanish colonizers destroyed the “phenomenal production machine” of the Incas in Peru without being able to replace it. [The Inca empire created 25,000 miles of roads and stretched from the current borders of Colombia and Ecuador through Peru and Bolivia to northwest Argentina and Chile in the south.]

The Inca empire was characterized by the nationwide integration of agricultural and sedentary communes that enabled the whole population [of 10 million] to live with material well-being.

### Spanish colonizers raze Inca empire

The Spanish dissolution of societal unity isolated scattered Indigenous communities, which was the beginning of the problem. This colonial exploitation of the mines of gold and silver and of the soil transformed an Indigenous socialist economy into one of a feudal character.

This empowered a viceroyalty [appointed by the Spanish monarchy] to super-enrich itself and to form a “military and ecclesiastical enterprise,” rather than a political and economic structure. That is the origin of the Peruvian political class, which in its first moment was made up of a tiny population of “viceroys, courtiers, adventurers, clergy, doctors and soldiers.”

According to Mariátegui, revered as the most extraordinary thinker in Peruvian history, the basis of that colonial economy still maintained such a [class] structure, although it had started its transition towards a bourgeois [capitalist] economy by 1928. That year he wrote his colossal “Seven Essays.”

Mariátegui said: “The problem lies in the very roots of this Peru, the fruit of the conquest. We are a people that assimilates the ideas of the people of other nations, only while infusing them with our feelings and environment, and thereby enriching them without deforming the national spirit.” [Anti-colonialists] General José de San Martín and Simón Bolívar lived it themselves.

We are a nation in which Indigenous and conquistadors lived together without ever merging or understanding each other. The Republic identifies with the viceroyalty and even confesses it is what it feels itself to be. As with the viceroyalty, the Republic is the Peru of the colonizers, more than of the colonized. The sentiments of four-fifths of the population play almost no role in the formation of the nation and its institutions. After almost 100 years, this X-ray created through the record of the Amauta [a periodical started by Mariátegui] remains intact.

### Anti-colonialist struggle

Peruvian society of the [early] years of independence was chaotic. Anti-colonialists General José de San Martín and Bernardo de Monteagudo, tried — under pressure from the secret anti-colonial society to which he belonged — to give some order to the management of government. But a feudal structure was still present.

Used to its splendors and noble titles, that aristocratic parasitic class made organizing impossible and initiated a conspiracy from the very moment of San Martín’s arrival into Peru from Rio de la Plata. They even murdered Monteagudo, a cultured Black man whom they did not forgive for being intelligent, efficient, uncorrupt in his administration.

Neither did they imagine that San Martín would take such drastic measures as the expropriation of goods from the Spaniards and even expelling them from the

national territory. The Peruvian oligarchic caste that emerged from independence sided with the Spanish and against the independence leader, San Martín, who came with an international army to give Peru a homeland and freedom.

The same thing happened to Simón Bolívar. After the installation of the new Congress and San Martín’s resignation in September 1822, Peru’s new government was unable to resist the Spanish attack that sought to regain power. Under those urgent circumstances, on several occasions, the support of the pro-independence forces in Colombia and the presence of Liberator Bolívar himself were needed to save the situation and to lead the war of independence.

### 1823: Role of Liberator Simón Bolívar

In January 1823, a critical horizon was looming. In March of that year, Bolívar decided to send a large military contingent under the command of General Antonio José de Sucre, who had absolute powers to try to resolve the conflict that emerged from the division among the Peruvians and the dual power that emanated from it. Sucre’s task was difficult. Despite offering his services to General Andrés de Santa Cruz, a Bolivian in the service of Peru, it was impossible to organize an army to contain the Spaniards, due to Santa Cruz’s military incompetence and excessive political ambition.

Bolívar arrived in Peru on Sept. 1, 1823. On Sept. 11, Congress gave him the supreme command and leadership of the war, which awakened the anger of the Peruvian General José de la Riva Agüero, who was bankrolled by Lima’s merchants to act separately from the forces commanded by Bolívar. Bolívar’s troops were under the command of President Torre Tagle.

Riva Agüero had a secret understanding with the Spanish to try to dissolve the new Congress and destroy Bolívar. This constituted a betrayal that would continue contributing to a practice that became traditional in the evolution of the Peruvian oligarchy. It was Peru’s good luck that this betrayal was discovered, denounced and dismantled by the patriotic Colonel Antonio Gutiérrez de la Fuente.

### 1968: New civic-military government

More than 100 years passed until Oct. 3, 1968, when a nationalist and progressive sector of the armed forces decided to overthrow the dysfunctional government of Fernando Belaúnde Terry.

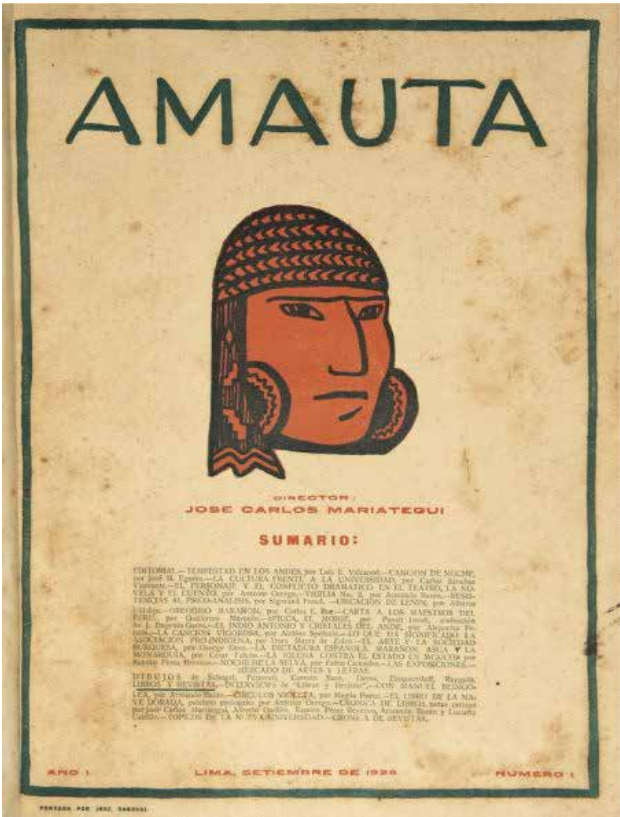
Under the command of General Juan Velasco Alvarado, a process of rescuing dignity and national heritage began, directly affecting U.S. transnational companies that campaigned for privileges in Peru.

At the same time, extensive agrarian reform was implemented under the control of peasant cooperatives and agricultural societies of social interest. These reforms opened a true revolution in the countryside. The civic-military government decreed Quechua [the Inca language] as the official language and expropriated agro-industrial and mining complexes and big monopolies that assisted in shaping a powerful state economy that could serve the people.

### 1975: A pro-imperialist ‘soft’ coup

On May 1, 1974, the Peruvian popular process took a leap forward when General Juan Velasco Alvarado announced new measures to benefit the workers and the people. But, in the first months of 1975, he became seriously ill, creating the conditions for a new betrayal. Then, sectors of the armed forces led by General Francisco Morales Bermúdez colluded with the oligarchy, the U.S. Embassy and the international financial organizations to carry out a “soft” coup d’état.

These forces systematically eliminated all the social advances achieved in the previous seven years. Agrarian reform was paralyzed. The governmental structures that supported the reforms were dissolved. Popular organizations were persecuted and repressed. Many



JUAN FAJARDO, PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

### José Carlos Mariátegui’s magazine, Amauta.

businesses were reprivatized, and companies eliminated the unions. By 1978, once again, the betrayal had been consummated.

### 1985: Popular government brings reforms

In 1985, at the hands of a young politician named Alan García, the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), which was founded 60 years earlier by Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, came to power for the first time. García’s government implemented a series of popular measures under the slogan “Aprismo is Latin American socialism.”

The APRA government set out to regain control over oil production and expropriate the banks. In addition, it introduced the novel measure of reducing payment of the foreign debt to 10% of the value of the exports.

However, the government’s inability to generate a real and profound transformation of society with popular participation, as well as the exhaustion of financial resources, the increase in terrorist action by Sendero Luminoso and the elites’ repulsion for the popular measures, were diminishing popular support.

### 1990: Right wing takes over

The Peruvian people once again felt betrayed, opening the way for two demonstrations by the extreme right wing which sought to regain power. These forces had President Alberto Fujimori and the reactionary intellectual Mario Vargas Llosa as leaders of a regression that began in 1990. The country still has not been able to extricate itself from it.

Thus began a process that lasted during the rule of six successive presidents: Fujimori, Alejandro Toledo, Alan García, Ollanta Humala, Pedro Pablo Kuczynski and Martín Vizcarra, who were taken from the Casa de Pizarro to be judged and/or imprisoned later (except for Valentín Paniagua and also Garcia, who committed suicide as a last resort). This scenario had two common characteristics: a corrupt management and governance so much at odds with their campaign platforms as to constitute a betrayal of the mandate and the feeling and will of the people. It is the cursed fate of the Peruvian oligarchy.

Parenthetically, the name of the Peruvian presidential palace, Casa de Pizarro, is noteworthy in that it evokes and honors Francisco Pizarro, the brutal conqueror who betrayed [the last] Inca [leader] Atahualpa, brutally murdering him and tens of thousands of Indigenous people. Pizarro’s brother, Hernando, in turn, betrayed his partner, Diego de Almagro. All of this inaugurated a lineage that likely still exists in the rancid Lima oligarchy.

Who can then be surprised by what has just happened in the country? In reality, two rotten sections of the elite have clashed in the search for the power which allows them to continue defending their interests with impunity. Corruption, deception and marginalization of the people — omitting them from decision-making — is, of course, all done in the name of democracy and freedom.

It is also worth mentioning the unflattering environment that the so-called “Lima Group” created in that city in its attempt to overthrow Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, who remains in office. Meanwhile, two Peruvian presidents have been pushed aside for their corruption, and a third is barely hanging on. □





PHOTO: TELESUR

Desde 1998, médicos y enfermeras cubanos han viajado a Haití para ayudar en emergencias de salud y después de desastres.

# Las brigadas médicas de Cuba luchan contra la pandemia

Por Kathy Durkin

La Cuba socialista encarna el espíritu de solidaridad internacional mediante su constante ayuda médica a países de todo el mundo, especialmente a los afectados por el imperialismo. Esta no es solo una frase vacía. El verdadero significado de la solidaridad lo demuestran todos los días equipos de trabajadores de la salud cubanos, los médicos y enfermeras que han llevado sus habilidades y dedicación a otros países del Caribe, América Latina, África, Medio Oriente e incluso a Europa.

Cuando los gobiernos solicitan ayuda en emergencias médicas, este país socialista y sus profesionales de la salud están ansiosos por brindarla. Combatiendo enfermedades o ayudando después de desastres, siempre que se ha necesitado ayuda médica, Cuba ha respondido rápidamente.

Esto sigue siendo cierto durante la pandemia del COVID. Dado que los investigadores de Cuba han desarrollado tratamientos y medicamentos avanzados para hacer frente a la enfermedad, los cubanos están felices de compartirlos y de enviar equipos médicos para ayudar.

La nación insular ha enviado 53 brigadas de trabajadores de la salud de las Brigadas Médicas Internacionales Henry Reeve a más de 40 países durante la emergencia pandémica mundial, además de cubanos que ya trabajan en 58 países.

(Granma, 23 de noviembre)

El líder cubano Fidel Castro estableció las Brigadas Henry Reeve en el 2005 para ayudar a las víctimas del huracán Katrina en Estados Unidos, pero Washington rechazó la ayuda de Cuba.

## Solidaridad con Haití

Se ha alcanzado un hito que merece un reconocimiento especial por parte de los partidarios de Cuba y Haití. Este diciembre, la Brigada Médica Cubana cumple 22 años brindando ayuda a Haití, el país más pobre del hemisferio occidental y una de las naciones más afectadas por la pobreza del mundo.

En 1998, cuando el huracán Georges devastó Haití, Cuba dio un paso al frente y ofreció asistencia médica y de otro tipo. Los cubanos acordaron mantener médicos en Haití, durante el tiempo que fuera necesario, y capacitar a médicos haitianos que regresarían a casa y cuidarían de sus propias comunidades.

En ese momento, el sistema de salud de Haití estaba empobrecido y la esperanza de vida promedio era de 54 años. Los estragos del colonialismo e imperialismo estadounidense y europeo habían dejado el sistema de salud pública casi inexistente.

Con la ayuda de Cuba, se lograron mejoras en la salud pública y también en la alfabetización. Los cubanos ayudaron particularmente a las comunidades más

pobres y remotas con tratamientos, medicamentos y educación para la salud.

Cuando ocurrió un terremoto catastrófico en Haití en el 2010, 344 trabajadores de la salud cubanos ya estaban trabajando allí. La Brigada Henry Reeve envió 350 profesionales médicos más. Durante las primeras 72 horas, fueron los cubanos quienes brindaron atención médica de emergencia después del terremoto, realizaron cirugías y trataron a los heridos, trabajando junto a sus compañeros haitianos, antes de que llegara la ayuda de otros países.

## Bienvenidos a ‘amigos cubanos’

La primavera pasada, después de que se informaran por primera vez los casos del COVID-19 en Haití, los médicos cubanos que ya estaban estacionados en Haití y listos para regresar a casa se quedaron para ayudar a una delegación recién llegada de 348 trabajadores de la salud. La ministra de Salud de Haití, Marie Greta Roy Clement, dio la bienvenida a los “amigos cubanos”, recordando su asistencia crítica después del terremoto del 2010, durante una epidemia de cólera provocada por los

“cascos azules” de la ONU en octubre de ese año y después del mortal huracán Matthew en 2016. (Workers World, 15 de abril)

Luis Olivero, coordinador de la Brigada Henry Reeve, dijo que los equipos cubanos han “enfocado nuestros esfuerzos en la lucha contra la pandemia”. Incluso cuando aumenta el número de casos, “el desarrollo de la enfermedad no es caótico, gracias al apoyo de nuestra Brigada”.

(Telesur English, 4 de diciembre)

Un contingente especial de profesionales de la salud cubanos ha apoyado a los médicos haitianos para contener la propagación viral. Desde que apareció COVID-19, los cubanos han tratado a los enfermos más graves. Elizabeth Segura, vicecoordinadora de la Brigada Henry Reeve, explicó: “Esto se debe a que el pueblo haitiano tiene mucha confianza en nosotros”.

Decenas de organizaciones de paz, justicia, medicina y solidaridad han pedido que la Brigada Médica Internacional Henry Reeve sea galardonada con el Premio Nobel de la Paz por sus importantes contribuciones a los pueblos del mundo durante la actual pandemia. □

## MUNDO OBRERO editorial

El presidente saliente dio otro paso público engañoso el 2 de diciembre: ordenó a los 700 soldados estadounidenses restantes que salieran de Somalia. Estas tropas son parte de la fuerza estadounidense AFRICOM que promueve los intereses imperialistas estadounidenses en toda África.

Primero se trasladarán a la cercana Kenia, también en África Oriental. Las tropas estadounidenses han estado llevando a cabo una extensa guerra con drones contra la organización con sede en Somalia, al-Shabab. Además de retirar las tropas de Somalia, el secretario interino de Defensa, Christopher Miller, anunció planes de la administración en noviembre para reducir las tropas estadounidenses de 3.000 a 2.500 en Irak y de 4.500 a 2.500 en Afganistán a mediados de enero.

Ambos grandes partidos capitalistas han iniciado guerras. No espere que esto cambie.

Tanto las administraciones republicanas como las demócratas han ordenado, desde 1990, importantes guerras de agresión contra Irak, Yugoslavia, Afganistán, nuevamente Irak y con fuerzas más pequeñas contra Siria, Libia y Ucrania. Han llevado a cabo huelgas en África y se han involucrado en la subversión con el objetivo de derrocar gobiernos progresistas en América Latina.

Los establecimientos del Partido

Republicano y Demócrata comparten un objetivo común de política exterior: mantener y, si es posible, aumentar la dominación económica y estratégica de Estados Unidos en el mundo. El Pentágono, el Departamento de Estado, la CIA y varios otros sectores del aparato estatal hacen cumplir esta estrategia, independientemente del partido que dirija el gobierno.

Cada invasión, bombardeo u otra intervención de Estados Unidos ha provocado un enorme sufrimiento en los países objetivo, a menudo con millones de víctimas. Las intervenciones llenan de ganancias a las industrias militares estadounidenses.

Si bien el pretexto para estas intervenciones pueden ser los derechos humanos, los derechos de las mujeres o detener el terrorismo, la mayor parte de las veces la verdadera razón es apoderarse de recursos, generalmente petróleo, o eliminar un problema estratégico.

A medida que la autoridad económica y moral del imperialismo estadounidense declina en comparación con los rivales

imperialistas (Europa, Japón) y especialmente con la China socialista, Washington recurre a las armas, donde todavía es el número uno. Por lo tanto, el impulso por mantener la hegemonía empuja al mundo hacia la guerra sin importar qué partido ocupe el cargo.

Washington a veces recurre a otras herramientas, desde mercenarios contratados hasta sanciones económicas, para lograr el mismo objetivo de dominación, con o sin subversión o bombardeo. Las sanciones a veces matan a tanta gente como la guerra.

En 2016, como táctica electoral, Trump criticó “las guerras interminables de Washington”, aunque las apoyó a todas cuando comenzaron. Después de sus cuatro años en el cargo, continúan los más largos, Irak y Afganistán. Puede parecer que sus últimos “retiros” están tratando de

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mantener una promesa electoral de 2016, pero el escepticismo está justificado.

Mientras tanto, aumentó el presupuesto del Pentágono a niveles récord, exacerbó una confrontación con China, se retiró del tratado de misiles de alcance intermedio con Rusia, llevó a cabo muchos más ataques con aviones no tripulados en África, abandonó un acuerdo histórico con Cuba, arruinó el tratado nuclear con Irán y asesinó a un importante líder político iraní, o dos.

Sin embargo, la errática agresión de Trump no es motivo para darles un paseo gratis a los demócratas. El representante Jim Langevin, uno de los principales demócratas de la Cámara y presidente del subcomité de inteligencia y amenazas emergentes de la Cámara, expuso el belicismo del Partido Demócrata. Calificó la retirada de Trump de Somalia como “una rendición a al-Qaida y un regalo para China”. (theguardian.com, 4 de diciembre)

Para las fuerzas pacifistas y antiimperialistas dentro de los EE.UU., cualquier debate sobre Somalia debe tomarse como una apertura a las demandas de la prensa para sacar a las tropas estadounidenses de sus más de 800 bases militares en todo el mundo, detener todas las sanciones impuestas por EE.UU. y acabar con la dominación mundial por Estados Unidos. □