Biden’s Summit on Democracy Hypocrisy

By Sara Flounders

With great publicity, President Joe Biden called a grand, international Summit on Democracy for Dec 9-10. This gathering, held on Zoom, was hardly more than a Washington D.C., webinar with a few hundred well-chosen invitees and a well-controlled microphone.

Biden invited 111 countries. He snubbed another 81 countries, representing more than half the world’s population.

This political theater was an effort to create the appearance of a global political instrument where the U.S., as the dominant force, can claim political and moral authority to act unilaterally. Platitudes on democracy served as a cover for an increasingly aggressive military expansion. The event was scheduled during International Human Rights Day to overwhelm any real attention to human rights.

The gathering had nothing to do with democracy. Its guest list included apart from world leaders of demo-cratic countries, only a few of which are democratically elected governments globally. Guests from the “private sector” were included but unnamed. But capitalists are the ones who really call the shots on a world scale.

The staging was to highlight the claim that the United States, as a democratic country, must and would lead the world against “authoritarianism.” Authoritarianism was a slur used to target China, Russia, Venezuela, Cuba, Iran and a significant number of countries which assert their national sovereignty against imperialist domination.

Political theater

The purpose of this event was sinister. It was to assert U.S. hegemony worldwide by shaping a bloc or alliance directed against numerous countries the U.S. has imposed sanctions on, and especially against China.

The United Nations General Assembly so routinely votes down Washington’s demands and resolutions that the U.N. is no longer as useful to impose U.S. hegemony.

And the U.N. Security Council no longer be counted on for war resolutions or sanctions votes. Even leaders of NATO members and the imperialist countries controlling the European Union are increasingly leery of accepting U.S. unilateral actions. German, French, Italian and Spanish imperialists have their own capitalist economic interests and trade deals to pursue in a shaky world economy.

Trying to shape a bloc of countries against “authoritarianism” loses touch with world reality.

A major purpose of the Summit was to invite and build support for U.S.-armed Taiwan as a way to threaten China. Only 14 out of 193 member countries of the U.N. recognize Taiwan, officially named Republic of China — RoC.

In the midst of this imperialist theater there was a reality check. Uninvited and U.S.-sanctioned Nicaragua announced its official recognition of People’s Republic of China and its break with Taiwan. Every world politician sitting dutifully at attention knows they face the U.S. military with 800 military bases around the world, along with aircraft carriers and 18 intelligence agencies. U.S.-led invasions, coups and drone strikes are hardly secret operations. The United States military has been engaged in wars for 225 of the 243 years of its existence and continuously for the last 20 years until the withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Continued on page 8
Fighting Uber transphobia

By Renée Imperato

On June 1, as part of its “Pride Month” publicity campaign, Uber announced “plans” to “create a safer, more inclusive company” for transgender, nonbinary and other LGBTQ+ identifying passengers and drivers.

Uber said it would allow trans and nonbinary drivers to display their real names, instead of the dead names they were assigned at birth. Uber said it would establish a $60,000 fund to help its driver-workers cover the costs of updating their legal IDs and records.

After June 1, just days later, many transgendered drivers had their accounts suspended, because the pictures they submitted did not match the original pictures they had on file, for years in some cases! Why would they match—before and after they transitioned? Whether deliberate or not, this process has amounted to almost a sort of entrapment.

In mid-June, Adrian Escobedo received an in-app message saying he had submitted fraudulent documentation and was banned from driving for Uber Eats. When Escobedo asked which documents were determined to be fraudulent, he received no response. The ACLU is representing many drivers who have been impacted in this transphobic discrimination, which has a lack of a livelihood and suffering from emotional crisis. Uber has since reactivated Escobedo’s account. (tinyurl.com/yetjmnly)

I might add that Lyft has a similar program, which appears to work and benefit trans and nonbinary workers.

Adding to this factor of online-employment access to those responsible, in an example of how “old school” is sometimes more resolvable than online access to resolution, I am a retired trans woman New York City yellow taxi driver of over 25 years. I must say, I never had this particular problem, though I did have safety concerns as a taxi transit driver at times from passengers. But if I did have an issue of recognition of my reality, together I and other drivers and its Local 3006 Unions would go face to face at the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission on 42nd Street, in person, which would greatly enhance our chances to raise hell. Online drivers do not have any such option, which is a major problem in getting accessibility to resolution of problems with management.

As of this date, some driver-workers like Adrian have finally received justice. But we need to continue this campaign to pressure all online apps to end this transphobic garbage, until our final victory.

The writer is a former chairperson of New York City Taxi Drivers Union, Local 3006.

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Workers World newspaper’s articles and editorials analyze major global and U.S. developments, always with an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist perspective. Our pages report on people’s movements here and abroad, to not only inform our readers but to promote those struggles and show solidarity with them. And,WW aims to advance the struggle for socialism.

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Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the never-ending quest for ever-greater profits. Global capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on immigrants, misogyny, LGBTQ+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means homelessness, 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, as a result, dropped 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.

WW fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

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Mundo Obrero
Workers World
this week

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Amazon union organizing is accelerating, as Staten Island Amazon workers file for union election. On Dec. 22 the Amazon Labor Union resubmitted its petition for a union vote at the facility, known as JFK8, to the National Labor Relations Board. Workers held a lunchtime walkout at the warehouse.

That evening Amazon workers also held a rally for union rights, gathering together their growing New York-area army of supporters at the Red Steps in New York City’s Time Square at 8 p.m.

The demand of the rally was that Amazon immediately recognize the ALU. The urgency of this demand is underscored by the heartbreaking deaths of workers at the tornado-destroyed Amazon warehouse in Edwardsville, Illinois, where bosses prevented workers from entering or leaving even for an hour.

“As a matter of public health and a matter of reparations, Amazon should immediately recognize the union without a drawn-out NLRB election,” Amazon Labor Union leader Chris Smalls has stated.

Workers are calling on Amazon to bring back hazard pay, allow cell phones or even leaving. “This has not only destroyed the morale of workers, it has also destroyed the union’s ability to negotiate with the company,” Smalls said.

The Intercept reported Dec. 13 that Amazon warehouses rarely have fire drills, because the bosses don’t want to take time away from production. What an example of profits-over-people: Amazon requires workers to come off the line and sit in anti-union captive audience sessions but won’t schedule lifesaving emergency drills.

Reasons to immediately recognize the ALU

The NLRB election can be skipped, because the Amazon Labor Union has already signed up thousands of Staten Island warehouse workers who want a union. Amazon could simply recognize the union now. The 2020 attempt to form a union at a Bessemer, Alabama, warehouse showed that the long-drawn-out NLRB voting process is detrimental to unionization.

Bosses use that period to lie, intimidate and threaten the workers into voting against the union. Amazon can’t be trusted not to union bust. The NLRB found Amazon engaged in anti-union activity that ended up denying mostly Black, mostly female warehouse workers at the Bessemer warehouse the right to vote for a union.

Amazon isn’t unique in its illegal behavior – one of four employers actually fire workers for trying to form a union.

Amazon has organized a union to resist the racism and gender bias of a company that has been sued multiple times by workers and the law firm from previous cases. They disagreed with the choice further on the grounds that WilmerHale has a known reputation as a union-buster and as such is not impartial when it comes to securing and ensuring the rights of workers.

ABK Workers Alliance block entrances to Activision Blizzard, Nov. 16.

Justice for workers through official channels takes forever — or simply never comes. After the Alabama vote Amazon lied, cheated and intimidated workers, the NLRB took over six months to complete a report finding Amazon guilty — and another three months for a decision to authorize a new vote. Now, a full year from the start of the Bessemer campaign, the notorious 150% Amazon worker turnover per year means many union supporters have quit or been fired. Organizing for the union has to be rebuilt with workers who come and go rapidly, leaving because of fear and stress on their bodies or having been fired for not "making rate" or having too much "time off task" to meet Amazon’s impossibly standards.

"Making rate" injures huge numbers of workers. Amazon has sky-high rates of injuries, more than double the average of other companies doing the same work. Many of those injuries are musculoskeletal disorders, which come from repetitive lifting or other repetitive motions. These are injuries that linger, sometimes for the rest of a worker's life. The enormous volume of work intensifies injury. Ambulance responses to Amazon warehouses increase by almost 50% in the weeks leading up to Black Friday shopping day, because of the punishing demand. (tinyurl.com/yckpppd)

Amazon drives down prevailing wages for other workers. Because Amazon is the minimum federal wage is so appallingly low at $7.25 per hour, Amazon claims to pay decent entry wages. But the company only began to pay more than $15 per hour in 2018. The breakneck expansion of Amazon warehouses threatens to reduce wages for everyone in society. One of the worst examples is in Minnesota, where real wages for warehouse workers declined by 15% in 2020 as Amazon facilities opened there. A union in Staten Island or at any Amazon facility will keep wages higher for all workers. (tinyurl.com/y4xatj9d)

Amazon has failed to protect workers from COVID-19. The company has rolled back the few coronavirus safety protocols put in place in 2020 and concealed information from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration by reporting that of 20,000 infections in its workforce, only 27 occurred on the job. Amazon! Recognize the Amazon Workers Union now! Stop union busting! Galaxy not gravy: General Electric workers rally whenever and wherever Amazon workers raise their "Union now" banner!

For more information, please visit: amazonlabourunion.org, or Twitter: @Shut_downAmazon.

ABK Workers Alliance block entrances to Activision Blizzard, Nov. 16.

CEO Bobby Kotick made a performative apology for the response and promised an internal review of the company’s policies – to be done by infamous anti-union law firm WilmerHale. The workers refuted this choice, stating a conflict of interest between the company executives and the law firm from previous cases. They disagreed with the choice further on the grounds that WilmerHale has a known reputation as a union-buster and as such is not impartial when it comes to securing and ensuring the rights of workers.

Sakurin Software layoffs

Amid the recent layoffs of 12 contractors at Sakurin Software, a game studio owned by Activision Blizzard, employees initiated a work stoppage. Unified at the moment as the ABK Workers Alliance, they responded to the sudden layoffs on Twitter, stating: “This is not only the death of our workforce but obliterated trust in the company that has been relentlessly asking us for patience in improving our work lives. We will not back down from this fight for more than the double the average of other companies doing the same work. Many of those injuries are musculoskeletal disorders, which come from repetitive

ABK Workers Alliance strikes vs. Activision Blizzard

The importance of this unionization effort in an industry mostly devoid of unions must be acknowledged as an important part of the tide of unionization we see happening across the country today.

This case shows good timing on the part of the workers for knowing when to strike. When a company faces litigation following some misconduct it is irrefutable to pay more attention to the company’s initial response to the lawsuit, starting at the very end of July. Amazon will pay more attention to the time-honored methods of denial, “strong suggestions” and the hiring of union-busting lawyers; and in that, nothing is too outrageous.

The company responded fearfully to this first step in the establishment of a union by sending out a mass email grovelling to the workers, strongly suggesting they refuse to unionize and quietly accept their oppression.

The ABK Workers Alliance is demanding the reinstatement of all laid-off employees, the conversion of all quality assurance contractors to full-time employees, improved representation, transparency in pay and an unbiased, third-party audit of the company. Jessica Gonzales, founder and organizer of the ABK Workers Alliance and a prominent voice in this class struggle, has started a strike fund to support the striking workers.

Since the sexual harassment and gender discrimination cases started against Activision Blizzard in the summer, workers have held two other strikes. In mid-November, employees at an Irvine, California, branch location held a strike, calling for the resignation of Kotick and a workers’ audit of the company. The first strike on this timeline was in response to Amazon’s decision to authorize a new vote. The few coronavirus safety protocols put in place in 2020 and concealed information from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration by reporting that of 20,000 infections in its workforce, only 27 occurred on the job. Amazon! Recognize the Amazon Workers Union now! Stop union busting! Galaxy not gravy: General Electric workers rally whenever and wherever Amazon workers raise their “Union now” banner!

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Japanese workers have held two other strikes. In the summer, employees at a game studio owned by Activision Blizzard, employees initiated a work stoppage. Unified at the moment as the ABK Workers Alliance, they responded to the sudden layoffs on Twitter, stating: “This is not only the death of our workforce but obliterated trust in the company that has been relentlessly asking us for patience in improving our work lives. We will not back down from this fight for more than the double the average of other companies doing the same work. Many of those injuries are musculoskeletal disorders, which come from repetitive lifting or other repetitive motions. These are injuries that linger, sometimes for the rest of a worker’s life. The enormous volume of work intensifies injury. Ambulance responses to Amazon warehouses increase by almost 50% in the weeks leading up to Black Friday shopping day, because of the punishing demand. (tinyurl.com/yckpppd)

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Portland community backs grocery workers

By Lyn Neely
Portland, Oregon

Massive community support was shown on Dec. 17 for thousands of grocery workers who walked off the job at Fred Meyer and QPC stores across four Oregon cities. After only one day of the walkout, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 settled with Kroger, the parent company of Fred Meyer and QPC, ending the strike.

Lawmakers and community leaders were on hand to show support for the workers. Picketers turned away scabs, delivery trucks and so many shoppers that the parking lot was almost empty. People in passing cars were honking horns and waving their support.

Jobs With Justice member Jamie Partridge said, “I think that management underestimated the community support. So, they don’t want people to cross the picket line, and they were in a hard place because it’s peak season.” He said stores were scrapping for workers. They expected more people to cross the picket line.

For workers, a fair contract would mean equal pay and respect. Meanwhile the company has been making record profits. In violation of their contract, Kroger refused wage increases that workers deserve and has been withholding information about workers’ wages. They are currently offering a two-tier system which divides workers, offering raises for long-term employees but not for the vast majority of newer employees.

The DULF in Vancouver, Canada, distributes these drugs to people in their community. Another organization, the Users Liberation Front, want to get rid of the divisive two-tier pay and benefits and restore equal pay for equal work.

By Princess Harmony

Drug users need unions, compassion clubs

Drug users and abusers, as a group of people, are among the most oppressed of our class. Because of this, we are in need of an organization or organizations that protect us and our human rights. We also need an organization that is fighting the war on drugs, addressing the problems it causes:

1. Illicit drug markets create dangerous conditions for everyone.
2. The “War on Drugs” continues to cost millions of taxpayer dollars that could go to programs such as education, healthcare and clean energy. The war on drugs diverts resources away from these programs. It also creates deplorable conditions through money bail systems.
3. Because of this, users are often hospitalized and that hospitalization takes beds from others.
4. The “War on Drugs” continues to cost millions of taxpayer dollars that could go to programs such as education, healthcare and clean energy. The war on drugs diverts resources away from these programs. It also creates deplorable conditions through money bail systems.
5. The criminal “justice” system is crowded with people who are charged with drug-related offenses. These people are incarcerated under deplorable conditions through money bail systems.
6. The “War on Drugs” continues to cost millions of taxpayer dollars that could go to programs such as education, healthcare and clean energy. The war on drugs diverts resources away from these programs. It also creates deplorable conditions through money bail systems.
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By Martha Grevatt
Battle Creek, Michigan

Bulletin: Kellogg’s workers voted Dec. 19 to approve the latest contract offer, ending the strike.

Close to 1,000 Kellogg’s strikers and their supporters rallied near corporate headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan, Dec. 17. The strike here and at three other plants in Nebraska, Pennsylvania and Tennessee began Oct. 5. The 1,400 workers, represented by the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Union, want to get rid of the divisive two-tier pay and benefits and restore equal pay for equal work.

The rally featured BCTGM Local 3-G President Trevor Bidelman and Senator Bernie Sanders. Those who turned out in support of the 3,350 Battle Creek Kellogg’s strikers were members of many different unions, who traveled from around Michigan and neighboring states, as well as young people of the local community. An example of community support was the donation of hundreds of donuts by Sweetwater Bakery, a Battle Creek institution.

“With a safe consumption site in place, users would be able to use drugs without the high risk of death. But drug prohibition causes other problems. Here are some of the problems it causes:

1. It creates stigma around the use and abuse of drugs.
2. It stigmatizes the medical field; drug addicts and people who use drugs are exposed to health care disparities.
3. Drug supplies are adulterated with highly toxic cuts such as methamphetamine, acrylamide, and phencyclidine. Because of these cuts, users are often hospitalized and that hospitalization takes beds from others.
4. The “War on Drugs” continues to cost millions of taxpayer dollars that could go to programs such as education, healthcare, and clean energy. The war on drugs diverts resources away from these programs. It also creates deplorable conditions through money bail systems.
5. Felonies and other drug-related crimes are automatically ruled to be a felony.
6. The “War on Drugs” continues to cost millions of taxpayer dollars that could go to programs such as education, healthcare, and clean energy. The war on drugs diverts resources away from these programs.

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court struck down a school mask mandate imposed by the Commonwealth at the beginning of the 2021 school year on Dec. 10. The court’s ruling left it up to each school district to set policy. Three days later, Alyana Thach, a beloved 17-year-old student at Aspira Olney Charter High School in Philadelphia died of COVID Dec. 13, shocking students and staff and propelling them to take action. The school has over 60% Latinox students. Several of the charter school’s teachers walked off their jobs Dec. 20, demanding penalties for those who don’t wear masks and policy changes in the school’s cafeteria, where students, who are not socially distanced, eat without masks.

Sarah Kenney, head of the union at the charter school, American Federation of Teachers Pennsylvania, called for a return to virtual education until the school develops a plan for increased safety to prevent further deaths. (tinyurl.com/yckpyua6)

Teacher LaShante Cox said, “Alyana was the type of student who would be with us right now, writing petitions and speaking out on how to keep our community safe.” Following Thach’s death, staff and students gathered on the school’s steps to demand increased mitigation. (tinyurl.com/yckpyua6)

Kailah White, a co-teacher of Thach, noted that unvaccinated students are dying all over the U.S. Thach, not vaccinated, waited for an appointment in the Commonwealth at the end of November. (tinyurl.com/yckpyua6)

Within weeks of schools reopening for in-person education in September, the Pennsylvania Department of Health reported nearly 28,000 children, ages 5-18, had tested positive for COVID—ten times higher than the same period in 2020. (tinyurl.com/yckpyua6)
‘We have to become emancipators’

By JaII MuntaqIm

These slightly edited remarks were made by recently freed political prisoner, JaII MuntaqIm, during a Dec. 9 webinar to mark the 40th anniversary arrest of Mumia Abu-Jamal and to demand his freedom.

On October 25, international jurists at the Spirit of Mandela Tribunal found the United States guilty on all counts of charges of genocide. Mumia Abu-Jamal is confronting genocide. Imam Jamil al-Amin is confronting genocide. Leonard Peltier is confronting genocide. All our comrades inside the prison system and many of them in mass incarceration are facing genocide.

The world has never like this practice of genocide for over 400 years. We are finally catching up to this reality.

On Dec. 17, 1951, the great Paul Robeson and William Patterson were the first to bring the charges of genocide to the United Nations, and because of that they were hounded by the FBI. It’s important for us to raise this question today, because from this day forward we are changing the narrative of our conditions here in the United States — Black, Brown and Indigenous.

We are no longer engaging in issues of civil rights. We are engaging in issues of human rights. Our problem, as a people, is that we have been so colonized in our minds that we accepted, been normalized to, these conditions of colonization, that we have even been, to a certain degree, complicit in our own genocide.

What we need to do is decolonize our thinking about our relationship to the corporate government of the United States. We have not done that yet. A form of decolonization is the process of liberating our minds. We’re not there yet.

I am raising these questions out of necessity, not only for myself, but for my great-grandkids. How are they going to live in a system that has been promoting white supremacy, that is, naturally, against Black, Brown and Indigenous people?

There is no supremacy. There is no supremacy. There is that idea that white supremacy is an aberration in human society and civilization.

Abolish it!

So we have to raise ourselves up. Black Lives Matter? Black lives have always mattered — but not to white people. That’s a problem. So we have to raise the issues of Black Lives Matter to ourselves, and within ourselves, and decolonize our thinking with regards to how we have identified ourselves. We’ve been called everything under the sun except a child of God by white supremacists. So now’s the time that we need to identify ourselves.

Personally, I identify myself as a New African. I am divorcing myself from any idea of being part of America, period. Can we raise ourselves, build ourselves up, in that kind of thinking? Can we separate ourselves mentally, psychologically from that idea of being American, African American? That is a process.

So here I am today raising these questions to you in the spirit of Mandela, in the spirit of Mumia Abu-Jamal. We enjoin all of you, nationally and internationally, to support the endeavors of what we’re moving forward on with regards to the People’s Center.

We all know what happened on Jan. 6 when white supremacists stormed Congress. They essentially made a declaration of war to again reassert the idea of white supremacy. In order for them to be successful at doing that, they have to kill Black people, decrease the number of Black people in this country.

We’re not prepared; we don’t understand the depths of what they’re talking about. And if this idiot Trump runs again in 2024, this country will split in half. We have to be prepared for that.

We are telling the international community that we need their support.

In a Pennsylvania jail

A COVID-19 related death

By Marie Kelly

A 52-year-old man, Melvin James Anderson IV, died while incarcerated in the Chester County Correctional Complex and Youth Center in Pocopson, Pennsylvania, Dec. 7. He was jailed while waiting to be tried for a charge of burglary, which he may or may not have committed. How did he die? He succumbed to COVID-19, after testing negative upon arrival at the facility. He contracted the coronavirus while under the state’s supervision and died.

The prison is overwhelmed with a COVID-19 outbreak. So far 170 cases have been confirmed as of Dec. 14. That is triple the number first reported earlier that week at the facility.

Why lock up more people, when efforts to contain the virus are failing miserably? That is triple the number first reported earlier that week at the facility.

Instead, law enforcement crams people who have not even had their day in court into dangerous, overcrowded prisons that become a death sentence due to COVID-19 outbreaks, poor medical care and callous officials.

Law enforcement and a racist judicial system have an abysmal track record of wrongful convictions of the innocent. The number of exonerations following wrongful convictions has reached 2,800 nationwide.

At least 80 people in Philadelphia (Chester County is part of greater Philadelphia) have been exonerated of violent crimes; 23 of them since 2008. Currently, two young men, A.J. Ford and Hasein Strand, are incarcerated in another Philadelphia suburb jail because the Delaware County District Attorney wants to hold them accountable for the murder by police of 8-year-old Fanta Bility last summer. They are in their teens; and given that the vaccine was only recently age qualified for their generation, the justice system guarantees their health and safety.

The pandemic has given us another lesson of how the class divide between the wealthy and the rest of us works. If you have the monetary means to hire a well-connected lawyer and post bail, you can escape the cruel inhumane treatment which the workers and oppressed, predominantly Black and Brown people, face when they come up against the police.

Prison abolition is something we must achieve if we want to liberate our class.

Give an incarcerated person a gift of WW

“Inmates need Workers papers. When you’ve locked up, you need an intellectual light to shine through the darkness of state oppression. If you’re a free person reading this, and you care about the struggle against mass incarceration, please take out a subscription for an incarcerated person. It means more than you could possibly imagine.”

— Makasi Motema

Workers World is an independent, revolutionary communist organization founded in 1939. We are committed to building solidarity among workers and oppressed peoples around the globe. For that reason, Workers World has always provided FREE subscriptions and other radical printed materials to incarcerated members of our class in the U.S. One in three subscribers to WW is a person who is currently behind bars — in hundreds of prisons across dozens of states.

This holiday season, we ask that you consider contributing to our mission of sending life-affirming, socialist analysis to our siblings behind the walls. This time of year can be especially hard on those forcibly separated from the gift of connection via committed communists reporting on fighting oppression at home and abroad can help to keep the spirit of fight-back alive, and it lasts longer than just through the holidays. Connection to our collective struggle can be vital to those locked away from society.

Our ability to break through the walls of isolation imposed by capitalists holding the keys to these cages is made possible by your generous support. By supporting our incarcerated subscriber program, you can help us as we raise awareness and build for the abolition of prisons, jails and detention centers used to oppress our most vulnerable populations. Any donations directed at detainees of this rotten, racist, sexist, anti-LGBTQ+-, ableist, dehumanizing capitalist system can be made at www.patrons.org/wwp.

Send your support and holiday regards to an incarcerated member of your class, the working class, today! It is the gift that keeps on giving.
Contrary to the narrative of U.S. politicians and journalists, the August 2021 withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces from Afghanistan did not mark the end of the United States’ so-called “forever war” but rather a shift in U.S. policy—from direct military intervention and occupation to one based on economic sanctions and indirect political subversion. Although the tactics change, the goal is the same: the accumulation of wealth and power through daily warfare against the Afghan people.

Just days after Kabul fell to the Taliban on Aug. 15, Washington took measures to turn off the flow of funds to the new government and paralyze the Afghan banking system. The Treasury Department quickly issued a freeze order on nearly $9.5 billion of the Afghan Central Bank’s assets held in U.S. financial institutions, including the New York Federal Reserve Bank.

Although the Taliban was entitled to receive over $460 million from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in currency reserves known as Special Drawing Rights, or SDRs, the U.S.31 insisted those funds would be blocked. Notably, these punitive measures are in addition to the economic sanctions also imposed on the Taliban following the 9/11 attack.

Horrific consequences of sanctions

As reported in Workers World at the time: “Seizing the central bank’s money and cutting all international aid, in a poor country where three-quarters of the population is under the age of five, will make daily life so unbearable that the Afghan people will demand the withdrawal of U.S.-imposed sanctions. Sanctions will be lifted demonstrates the hypocrisy and callousness of U.S. foreign policy. States as culpable. On Oct. 25, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization and the U.N. World Food Program published a report urging humanitarian assistance, warning that Afghanistan is on a “countdown to catastrophe.” According to the report, over 50% of Afghans will face “crisis” or “emergency” levels of acute food insecurity, including over 3 million children under the age of five.

The beginning of the film focuses on Tamir Rice, the 12-year-old boy shot by Cleveland police while playing at a local recreation center. The killing of young Tamir plays a central role in the film, which pieces together all the parties involved in the racist cover-up.

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Despite the Taliban’s success in forcing the U.S. government to the negotiating table in Doha and then ousting the U.S. military from Afghanistan, Washington has made it clear that it has no plans to respect Afghanistan’s sovereignty. Indeed, the Biden administration’s response to pleas that the asset freeze be lifted demonstrates the hypocrisy and callousness of U.S. foreign policy.

On Nov. 22, the United Nations Development Program published a report warning that Afghanistan’s financial and bank payment systems are “in disarray” and on the verge of collapse. The UNDP report, citing the IMF, predicts the Afghan economy could contract by 30% for 2021-2022.

On Dec. 6, the International Crisis Group issued a scathing report, warning that the “hunger and destitution” caused by “economic strangulation,” imposed by the West in response to the Taliban takeover, could “kill more Afghans than all the bombs and bullets of the past two decades.”

In other words, U.S. policy of intentionally starving the Afghan people through economic sanctions on Afghanistan is going as planned. As many predicted, blocking funds from the Taliban and curtailing foreign aid and assistance would lead to a rapid financial meltdown and exacerbate the ongoing famine plaguing Afghanistan.

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The Taliban’s November 2021 letter to the U.S. Congress correctly noted that “the fundamental challenge of our people is financial security, and the roots of this concern lead back to the freezing of assets of our people by the American government.”

U.S. retaliates for Taliban’s military success

The U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan, Thomas West, rejected the Taliban’s request in a series of revealing tweets. West’s remarks effectively confirmed that the United States was preventing “critical” international aid from reaching Afghanistan as retribution for the Taliban’s military success, while recognizing that Afghanistan’s economy is “enormously dependent” on aid, including for basic services.

Further, in typical bourgeois fashion, West condescendingly lectured the Taliban that “[i]legitimacy and support must be earned” and confirmed that the United States would consider lifting the murderous sanctions if the Taliban only learned to “respect the rights of minorities, women and girls.”

The irony was not lost on Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, who questioned the tortured logic: “The U.S. froze assets and blocked aid to us—why would it not provide us humanitarian aid. What does it mean?” Muttaqi reiterated the demand to release Afghanistan’s assets: “The assets should be freed immediately. The Americans don’t have any military front with us now. What is the reason for freezing the assets? The assets don’t belong to the Taliban (Islamic Emirate) but to the people of Afghanistan.”

The Biden administration has shown no signs of easing the sanctions. In fact, the Biden administration is reportedly entertaining the idea of permanently depriving the Afghan people of the funds needed to combat the current humanitarian crisis, by transferring those funds instead to U.S. beneficiaries with outstanding debt judgments against the Taliban. That is what two groups of judgment creditors are arguing to U.S. federal judges.

Although its formal statement is not due until the end of January 2022, the Biden administration seems willing to go along with the plan—the only apparent obstacle is how to seize the Afghan funds without recognizing the Taliban as the legitimate Afghan government.

Following its imperial playbook, the U.S. escalated its threats against the Taliban—like the sanctions imposed on Venezuela, Cuba, Iran and many others—having their intended effect, which is to punish the whole population of Afghanistan for the Taliban’s refusal to surrender the country’s resources and sovereignty to the demands of U.S. and European capital.

The intended consequence is the destabilization of Afghan society, making daily life so unbearable that the Afghan people will demand the withdrawal of the Taliban for their misery and providing the United States and its proxies an opening to enact regime change.

But then, Tamir Rice is shot dead by racist cops, the shooting caught on nearby security cameras; the protests could no longer be ignored. Over 1,500 protesters shut down Cleveland highways and downtown streets. Then the documentary starts to show the ongoing movement for justice for Russell, Williams and Tamir Rice.

Another police officer, Timothy Russell, was shot by Cleveland cops responding to a wellness check called in by her family. Anderson’s death was not covered in the documentary, but her name was chanted at every street action.

Previously unseen footage of investigators reviewing the police log is especially instructive. The cops were treated with kid gloves, given months to coordinate their stories involving the 137 shots and subsequent car chase. The interview with Timothy Loehmann, the trigger man in the Tamir Rice execution, is especially infuriating. Such obvious lying cannot be covered up forever.

The documentary finally hits its stride and exposes the whole damn (in)fascist system of cops and courts. The prosecutor and the judges to the media and the Cleveland Police Patrolmen’s Association.

The families of Russell and Williams as well as Tamir’s family became heroes featured in their own voices, as they are shown as powerful advocates for their loved ones.

The end of the film features the Republican National Convention held in Cleveland in 2016. This highlights the intense police occupation of Cleveland, which was very scary in its firepower and numbers. Unfortunately no coverage of demonstrations protesting Trump and the right-wing bigots occupying downtown Cleveland made the final cut.

Any weakness of “137 Shots” is minor, considering the overall power of the film. It is skillfully made, first telling unknowledgeable viewers into believing the slimy, fake sincerity of the various bigots carrying out their job of protecting racism in Cleveland. By the end of the movie, it is proven beyond a reasonable doubt that a grave injustice was done to Timothy, Malissa, Tanisha and Tamir and to everyone who loved and cared about them.

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This statement was issued by the International Action Center (iacenter.org), posted at wp.me/p4Ymer-4Rf and available in PDF at wp.me/P4Ymer-4SF.

Claiming that it is acting in defense of human rights, the U.S. tries to cover its own criminal record on international human rights violations and its record of endless wars, assassinations, coups and devastating sanctions by making up charges against other countries.

Propaganda fuels U.S. wars.

The “2021 Annual Treatment of the U.S. Intelligence Community,” issued April 9 by Avril Haines, Director of National Intelligence, labeled China as “the greatest threat to the United States.” Numerous other reports and official statements claim Washington must prepare an intensifying level of U.S. intelligence operations, cyberattacks and investment in military technology to counter China.

The U.S. military has encircled China. With joint Democratic and Republican Party backing, the U.S. has imposed economic sanctions, an onerous trade war and ramped up its military presence in the region for fear of losing influence in the Pacific and the Indo-Pacific. This is highly profitable for the U.S. military-industrial complex.

Tales of forced birth control and sterilization against the Uyghur minority are exposed by census data. The Uyghur population has actually grown from 3.61 million in 1953 to 10.62 million in 2020. Like the other minority (non-Han) peoples, the Uyghurs were exempt from China’s one-child policy.

More than 60 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America support China against these false U.S.-initiated claims, including more than a dozen members of the Non-Aligned Movement of developing nations.

Supporting the U.S. charges are non-Muslim countries in Europe, plus Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. These countries are the historic colonizers, which supported decades of U.S. wars in the Muslim world.

U.S. proposes endless funding for conflict with China

The $82 billion U.S. Innovation and Competition Act (USICA) was passed in late 2021 and was signed into law by President Joe Biden on January 5, 2022. USICA integrates the previously proposed Endless War in the Pacific Act of 2021 and the Meeting the China Challenge Act and others.

USICA’s more than 2,000 pages lay out plans to invest tens of billions of taxpayer dollars to give the U.S. technological edge over China in semiconductor manufacturing, require “buy American” requirements for federally funded infrastructure projects and slow down or sabotage China’s technological development.

Measures against China include allocations of $300 million a year for four years ($1.2 billion), in what is called the “Chinese Communist Party Influence Fund.” It provides funding for charging China with “forced labor” in its Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and “unlawful competition” and “intellectual theft.”

A congressional provision funding for military operations include $865 million for Foreign Military Financing in the Indo-Pacific region.

Who makes the charges on human rights?

Sensationalized claims that China is guilty of rights violations in Xinjiang come from the Washington-based and funded Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders and the World Uyghur Congress. These groups receive most of their funds from the CIA-linked National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a major source of funding for U.S. “regime change” operations around the world.

Other sources of unverified reports by the International Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Foundation and the Uyghur American Association, are also funded by NED. The information sources include Radio Free Asia, a news agency the U.S. government has funded for decades.

The Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders share their charges against China with Radio Free Asia, a news agency the U.S. government has funded for decades.

Can these U.S.-funded organizations be trusted?

This entire network of shadowy, well-funded, civil society groups, think tanks, nongovernmental organizations and news sources operate under the cover of “protecting human rights” to promote Washington’s policy of escalating sanctions and war preparations.

Like the “weapons of mass destruction” pretext for the war on Iraq, Washington is justifying its aggressive policy against China with false claims that China is committing “genocide” against the Uyghur minority. The U.S. claims this is based on a so-called “genocide” report by the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. However, the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has confirmed that no U.N. body or official has made any charges against China similar to what Washington charges.

The U.S. and its corporate media claim that the Chinese government has rounded up 1 million people and turned 40 million people into refugees. Washington has imposed economic sanctions against China’s government and the Uyghurs. The U.S. government has threatened economic sanctions against China, which will affect the Chinese government’s plans to make the Xinjiang region a major logistics center for China’s ambitious Belt and Road Initiative.

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Washington has threatened economic and diplomatic sanctions against Russia over the conflict with Ukraine and has raised the possibility of military action. In an interview with Fox News Dec. 7, Mississippi Republican Senator Roger Wicker even discussed U.S. troop intervention and a nuclear first strike!

Moscow countered with a series of demands on the U.S. government and the NATO military alliance. These demands would prevent NATO's further military penetration toward the Russian border and stop NATO from absorbing other states in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus region. Some of these countries border Russia or were part of the Soviet Union before 1991.

NATO is an aggressive military alliance under U.S. leadership. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact in the early 1990s, the military apparatus of its imperialist allies within NATO behind its attempt to reconquer former colonial countries worldwide. These countries had won some sovereignty when the Soviet Union existed; examples include Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Libya.

NATO has absorbed some former Warsaw Pact and Soviet republics that have become Western imperialism's neocolonies. NATO uses these countries' troops as potential cannon fodder and their territory for missile bases aimed at Russia.

Unlike the Soviet Union, Russia is a counter-imperialist force. This provides a model of potential socialist development that by its very existence threatens capitalist exploitation.

Nevertheless, the U.S. and its allies have applied sanctions and military pressure to prevent Russia from becoming a competitive capitalist rival.

U.S. use of NATO
Washington keeps its Western European imperialist allies lined up behind NATO's military leaders, who have always been U.S. generals. Last spring's NATO war exercises sent troops and tanks from dozens of countries toward the Russian border.

Republican Party leaders like Ricker have made the most aggressive anti-Russian statements and criticized President Joe Biden for being soft on Russian President Vladimir Putin. Despite the Republican rhetoric, U.S. aggressive foreign policy has been and is bipartisan. Both Republican and Democratic Party leaders fully back U.S. imperialism and militarism — the $768 billion military budget.

Regarding Ukraine, the Democratic administration orchestrated the coup that overthrew an elected president and installed a rightist, anti-Russian regime in 2014. Then-Vice President Biden was involved. And Ukraine's racist and fascist elements played a role in the U.S.-backed coup.

The coup was really a successful maneuver to divide Ukrainians and Russians using right-wing nationalist ideology. In February 2014, the new ultratight Ukraine government threatened the rights of the Russian-speaking residents, including the Russian army. The new Ukraine regime virtually forced Russia to annex Crimea, a peninsula jutting into the Black Sea that housed the Russian fleet. Control of Crimea province had been shifted from Russia to Ukraine in 1954. Then it meant little, as the Soviet armed forces kept the use of Crimean's vital naval base, something the Russian government had no intention of giving up.

The population of Crimea — like that of the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine — was predominately Russian-speaking and identified more with Russia than Ukraine. In a referendum, the Crimean population supported the Russian takeover. Consequently, the population of these regions could not withstand the Donbas, Donetsk and Lugansk, chose to secede from Ukraine, and the central government waged war on them. This battle has recently heated up.

Drone strike in Donbas
Ukraine opened a war on the new Donbas countries, which was muted by an agreement signed in Minsk, Belarus, in September 2014, that set terms for a cease-fire. In October 2018, the U.S. launched a missile from a drone that hit the artillery base of the forces defending the pro-Russian regions.

Ukrainian generals have stated that their army is incapable of confronting the Russian military. In a diplomatic initiative, Putin demanded on Dec. 17 that NATO countries withdraw the 2008 invitation to Ukraine over Georgia and install NATO and WTO as they control the use of offensive weaponry in states neighboring Russia. Putin held a well-publicized and friendly video conference with Chinese President Xi Jinping Dec. 15 underlining their common interests.

The NATO leaders have so far rejected these reasonable Russian demands. There are signs that the Biden administration will use any tension with Russia to impose sanctions on Russia and demand a stoppage of the Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline from Russia to Germany.

Antiwar forces in the United States can confront increased tension by taking public positions and mobilizing protests to demand NATO's immediate withdrawal from Eastern Europe — and the rapid dissolution of this aggressive military alliance.

Biden's Summit on Democracy Hypocrisy
Continued from page 1

Domestically, the U.S. image is grim, with more than 1,000 police killings a year, the largest prison system and number of prisoners. The U.S. police force at the national, state and urban level exceed the repressive apparatus of all other countries. As former billionaire Mayor Mike Bloomberg bragged: “I have my own army in the NYPD, which is the seventh biggest army in the world.” This one urban force has submarines and drones and its own overseas operations. (Salon, Sept. 28, 2012)

The U.S. record regarding the racist suppression of voting rights, gerrymandering and support for billionaire funding of both political parties is global news.

While Biden declares the U.S. the center of democracy, his own notorious record as the leading crusader for mass incarceration and mandatory prison sentences for nonviolent crimes exposes his cynicism. The State Department set up the Dec. 9-10 virtual event with handcuffed invitees. Biden’s opening talk on a soundstage to a virtual audience lasted 10 minutes. Then the event went into a “closed door session.” Several hours later it reopened with a few scripted “round table panels.”

Paying for free media
Biden’s opening talk declared: “A free and independent media is the bedrock of democracy.” Then, he announced that his administration would commit “critical seed money” to pay for “indepen dent media.” Some $47.5 million would be distributed by USAID and the State Department for initiatives meant to boost nongovernmental media.

It is unclear if this $47.5 million is in addition to or part of the $930 million a year for four years ($1.2 billion) spent in what is called the “Countering Chinese Influence Fund.” This fund pays media for news stories attacking China — whatever the source or lack of sources — charging China with “forced labor” in its Xinjiang region and parties with “intellectual theft.” This fund is called the “Countering Chinese Influence Fund.”

Several countries and political forces responded to Biden’s challenge by open ing a discussion of democracy. The China State Council issued a paper: “China—Democracy That Works,” explaining how China had developed its own model of democracy. China’s National Peoples’ Congress has 3,000 members chosen from across China’s regions and provinces and even the armed forces. There are programs throughout China discussing “peoples’ democracy.”

The summit illustrates America’s weakness and its inability to endure criticism of its foreign policy at the United Nations,” said Cuban Foreign Affairs Minister Bruno Rodriguez.

Fernando Le Cosio, director general for U.S. affairs at Cuba’s Foreign Ministry, tweeted: “The arbitrary list of invitees shows it is an exercise in dem agoguery. The meeting will not solve any weakness and its inability to endure criticism of its foreign policy at the United Nations,” said Cuban Foreign Affairs

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Wildfire surge of omicron confirms
Health care for profit more deadly than coronavirus
By Sara Flounders

The ominous toll of 800,000 deaths from COVID-19, reached in the U.S. Dec. 27, confirms that health care for profit is more deadly than the virus itself. The U.S. has consistently had the most COVID-19 deaths of any country. (tinyurl.com/jjx4chak)

Since the omicron variant surfaced here Dec. 1, infection rates have jumped off the charts with 293,305 new cases on Dec. 17. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) forecasts more than 1 million new COVID-19 cases during Christmas week. (tinyurl.com/sij3qchak)

Yet China, where COVID-19 was first identified and brought under control, has had no reported COVID-19 deaths since April. (tinyurl.com/3y7z6dfl)

This fact alone confirms that a scientific approach with fully accessible health infrastructure, universal vaccination and national coordination at every level is decisive.

Despite last year’s grand promises that vaccines could mean the crisis had passed and the pandemic was over, since December 2020 COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. have tripled.

The lack of a coordinated national health plan, the chaotic-for-profit approach to testing and the corporate ebbs and flows of distribution continue to have a devastating impact in the U.S. and throughout much of the world.

In comparison, in a country of 1.4 billion people, China has been able to decisively break the chain of infection each time there has been a virus outbreak or appearance of a new variant.

But rather than investigate how China was able to internally control the virus and provide global assistance, the U.S. has embraced virulent anti-China propaganda.

Racist scapegoating of South Africa
On Nov. 24, South Africa announced it had identified an extremely contagious new variant, dubbed “omicron.”

Rather than put in place a rapid genomic testing system, President Joe Biden blocked all travel from South Africa. Yet the omicron variant was quickly circulating in Europe and in countries bordering the U.S.

 Globally scientists are testing millions of samples of the coronavirus to spot new mutations. Follow how the virus is evolving and how rapidly it is spreading. Instead of this scientific approach, races for vaccines have put profits before people.

China’s approach is only possible in a country that is highly organized to prioritize human needs — to value people over profits.

In the Western media, China’s approach is portrayed as top-down, oppressive rule by the state. In reality China’s systematic plan to control the pandemic was a collaboration between the state and hundreds of thousands of citizen volunteers.

“Capitalism on a Ventilator” is indispensable to understand how capitalism as an economic system is driven to put profits first and let people, including the most vulnerable, die — while socialist planning can meet the needs and save the lives of a country’s people, especially in the middle of a global pandemic.

The only strategy of the corporate media, competing politicians and uncoordinated national, state and city bureaucracies is to convince a very alienated and suspicious population that vaccines will end the deadly scourge. Reliance on public service announcements and mandates won’t solve the lack of a coordinated health care infrastructure in the U.S.

For-profit health care is a killer
The only strategy of the corporate media, competing politicians and uncoordinated national, state and city bureaucracies is to convince a very alienated and suspicious population that vaccines will end the deadly scourge. Reliance on public service announcements and mandates won’t solve the lack of a coordinated health care infrastructure in the U.S., which ranks last in the percentage of people vaccinated. According to the CDC, as of Dec. 2 about 197.8 million people, or 36.6% of the total U.S. population, have been fully vaccinated.

“More damning is that the U.S. ranks 44th in the list of countries in the percentage of people vaccinated. According to the CDC, as of Dec. 2 only about 197.8 million people, or 36.6% of the total U.S. population, have been fully vaccinated.”

Deaths were preventable
Extreme inequalities in U.S. health insurance coverage are linked to the virus spread and its deadly impact. Racial health disparities, including access to care, led to disproportionate deaths in communities of color. Shortfalls of needed medical supplies and treatment still exist — the U.S. has only half the hospital beds per capita of other developed economies.

The New York Times/CBS News/Capital Citizen report, March 16, 2021, detailed how “Medicare for All” could have prevented hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of infections. The report found that one-third of COVID-19 deaths and 40% of infections were tied to a lack of insurance.

Of the 23 wealthiest countries, the U.S. alone failed to provide universal health care. Even before the pandemic, tens of thousands of lives were lost annually due to for-profit health care. Significantly more people — especially people of color — die of chronic respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, diabetes or cancer in the countries that are successfully managing and controlling the spread of the COVID-19 virus — countries like China, Cuba and Vietnam.

COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. were a superspreader. Despite warnings of the wildfire spread of the new omicron variant, no new national shutdowns or emergency restrictions in the U.S. were announced. Holiday travel continues unabated. Deaths in the U.S. remain a shocking 1,300 per day and are projected to escalate sharply.

The glowing COVAX promises of 2 billion vaccine doses simply never arrived. U.S. coronavirus cases and hospitalizations were tied to a lack of vaccines; 98% of people in low-income countries remain unvaccinated. COVAX has contributed less than 5% of all vaccines administered globally.

China alone directly provided over 2 billion vaccines to the Global South. Of far greater significance is the fact that China is providing the information, raw material and technology so that countries can begin to manufacture their own vaccines. Cuba, which developed its own vaccines, is also distributing hundreds of thousands of doses to lower-income countries, particularly those targeted by U.S. sanctions, like Venezuela and Iran.

Predictions and warnings ignored
These unsovable U.S. surges were explained in a book published a year ago. It’s time to revisit its conclusions.

“Capitalism on a Ventilator — The Impact of COVID-19 in China and the U.S.,” a unique anthology by 50 progressive commentators, written even before vaccines were rolled out — explained why vaccines alone could not solve the soaring COVID-19 death rate in the U.S.

The information in “Capitalism on a Ventilator,” which documented the impact of COVID-19 in China and the U.S., was suppressed in the U.S. within capitalist distribution channels and media networks.

The anthology was gathered to expose how the pandemic health crisis resulted from a for-profit system that will never deliver health to working and oppressed people. This collection graphically described the chaos of schools and offices shutting down overnight. Hospital intensive care units were overflowing, and refrigerated trailers became makeshift morgues, and states were fighting over protective equipment and high-tech ventilators.

Two social systems, two different COVID-19 outcomes
A different social system than that of the U.S. exists in the 150 countries that are successfully managing and controlling the spread of the COVID-19 virus — countries like China, Cuba and Vietnam.

“Capitalism on a Ventilator” evaluates these two social systems, both confronting the medical crisis. In China, under which everything is dictated by the needs of finance capital; and socialism, which organizes society by prioritizing people’s needs.

China’s approach is only possible in a country that is highly organized to prioritize human needs — to value people over profits.
capitalism. “The Dec. 10 tornadoes were such a disaster that shred with tornado-like force any pretense of “caring calculations and the right to organize.

Today, 150+ years of class struggle have mitigated the effects of capitalists’ lust for profit. Workers have protections in union contracts and in legislation, such as minimum wage, child labor laws, workplace safety reg. and the right to organize. But periodically in the course of events, disasters occur that shred with tornado-like force any pretense of “caring capitalism.” The Dec. 10 tornadoes were such a disaster.

A greater problem than the immediate victims of Mayfield is the management that ordered the workers back during their probationary period. Workers have been fired for having epilepsy, being overweight or pregnant. Mayfield was previously fined for workplace safety violations. The 245 workers make around $8 to 10 an hour.

No crime too great in pursuit of profit

Dunning’s critique of capitalism was directed at companies similar in size to Mayfield. But the “illegitimate difference” to workers is not confined to small “cockroach companies.” The six deaths in the Amazon warehouse in Edwardsville, Illinois — owned by centibillionaire Jeff Bezos— confirm the point emphasized in Marx’s footnote: that capitalists will stop at nothing to raise their bottom line. This is, in fact, the root cause of the climate catastrophe that has led to an increase in the number and severity of tornadoes, hurricanes, floods and other disasters that threaten workers.

It is past time for humanity — through revolutionary struggle — to rid itself of the murderous, exploitative, profit-driven system called capitalism.

U.S. maneuvers amid more disasters for the Haitian people

By G. Dunkel

Washington extended Temporary Protective Status for Haitians for another 18 months, because conditions in Haiti are not yet conducive to their reception. The U.S. government is still actively deporting Haitians back to Haiti, flying them into either the airport at Cap-Haitien or Port-au-Prince. According to a tweet from an anti-deportation activist @thcartwright, there have been 137 flights to Haiti involving around 13,700 people from Laredo, Texas.

Why is Haiti so poor?

As a major media outlet of the U.S. capitalist class, the New York Times analysis proclaimed Dec. 19 that it is vital to understand “why it [Haiti] remains the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, even after an infusion of more than $5 billion in U.S. aid in the past decade alone.”

The Times article fails to point out that following Haiti’s liberation from France and slavery in 1804, France applied economic sanctions against Haiti “to keep Haiti poor” with blood. The Haitians were forced to keep paying until the 20th century. The article does mention that “CitiBank—then the National City Bank of New York—conspired to strip Haiti of its gold reserves” with “the help of U.S. Marines,” who invaded in 1915.

Alleged U.S. assistance to food aid projects is really assistance to the U.S. agribusiness. The U.S. government bought rice from U.S. farmers or on the world markets for food stockpiles in Haiti. This keeps U.S. farmers’ prices stable.

The supposed well-intending good going to Haiti is redirected to USAID’s Food for Peace program, which provides direct cash subsidies to Haitian consumers. This allows the many food-insecure to afford to pay for imported food. As a result, Haitian peasant farmers can’t compete with this heavily subsidized rice and must stop producing rice.

Another major feature of U.S. aid is for shelter, especially after earthquakes and hurricanes. The supplies to build these needed shelters come from the U.S. or the world capitalist market. As a result, the capital involved again gets recycled out of Haiti.

A lot of the $3 billion, which the U.S. reports as aid to Haiti, was aid to U.S. industries. Haiti is poor because it has been so intensely exploited, not because it lacks resources.

U.S. holds meeting to decide Haiti’s future

On Dec. 16 a plane flew the remaining 12 kidnapped Haitian missionaries from the Christian Aid Ministries out of Haiti — five had been previously released.

A day later the U.S. government hosted a virtual meeting of 14 international aid organizations and foreign governments, which had contributed resources to police and in security in Haiti. Haiti was represented at this meeting by the Haitian Chancellor Jean Victor Gènus and the Ambassador of Haiti in Washington, Edmond Bocchit.

None of the kidnapped missionaries were named, and whether or not money was paid for their release wasn’t confirmed. Since there was a large team of FBI, CIA and State Department agents working with the Haitian National Police (PNH) on resolving this issue, the U.S. government had to have known the date of this release.

According to Miami Herald, the U.S. has engaged in a vigorous diplomatic effort to get Canada and France, two imperialist countries with major stakes in the Caribbean, to agree with its plan to upgrade the quality of the PNH and give it the kind of heavy weapons it would need to confront armed groups like 400 Mawoss, the group that kidnapped the 17 missionaries. The PNH has reported that there have been over 800 kidnappings this year, often of groups.

When Vice President Kamala Harris met with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris in November, she signed the issue of an international coalition to support Haiti. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Brian Nichols chaired the virtual meeting. He summed it up as: “The reality is what investments we provide for the Haitian national police need to be accompanied by gains in governance, transparency and anti-corruption efforts.”

In all this discussion of security improvements, the underlying problem of how to conduct the elections needed to give the Haitian government democratic legitimacy wasn’t raised.

Catastrophe in Cap-Haïtien

The current government of Haiti has not been elected, because the previous government of Jovenel Moïse, finding it easier to govern by decree, postponed holding elections. The U.S. pretended to objection, but as long as Moïse was satisfied and the political situation was reasonably stable, no one talked of force to force an election on Haiti.

Elections are not the only issue where the Haitian government has dropped the ball. It is responsible for the crisis of health running, because its dialloped electric grid doesn’t provide reliable service. So banks, hospitals, schools, the tap-taps that provide transportation and public services all sorts depend on generators, which depend on gasoline/diesel.

The government put in a sharp increase in the price of gas Dec. 10. When a tanker truck overturned on the approach to a bridge in Cap-Haïtien on the night of Dec. 13, it started spilling fuel. People in the neighborhood rushed out with buckets to gather the liquid, which is precious to them.

A sudden explosion killed the people gathering the liquid, and it set some 30 houses in the neighborhood on fire so rapidly many sleepers were unable to flee. Cap-Haïtien’s hospitals quickly filled with the injured. As of Dec. 20, at least 70 people had died.

Acting interim Prime Minister Ariel Henry was quick to express his condolences, declare three days of national mourning and said the government would pay for the funerals.

A Haitian political commentator put the popular reaction this way: “This government reaction is just an excuse to hide its responsibility for not having put in place adequate means to guarantee the well-being of the people, leaving them adrift and at the mercy of circumstances.”

Native Americans asking those crooks from England, “May I see your visa, your passport?” Suppose they had welcomed the Pilgrims like they did the Haitians in Del Rio, Texas.

The following remarks were made by Ustadji Kadiri, a member of the Haitian Action Committee, Dec. 10, at a rally at the San Francisco Federal Building.

Dec. 10, 2021, is International Human Rights Day around the world. But somehow the United States did not get the memo. Why would I say that? Because the U.S. is the number one arms dealer in the world. That means you’re killing people and not feeding people. This country was built on exploitation. So for them to discuss or hold any country accountable for human rights is a joke!

It is not possible to be in favor of equal rights for some people and not in favor of all people. It’s just not possible. The U.S. has 1,000 military bases around the world. I ask you, is that the way you spread love and unity? Between Sept. 19 and Sept. 27, 2021—in just nine days—the United States deported over 4,000 Haitians, including hundreds of families with children, without allowing them to seek asylum. Forget about the hurricanes and earthquakes. Biden used Title 42 as an excuse to deport people—the same one that Trump did. So, no matter where you come from, if you’re a person of color, you’re not welcome in “the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave.” Let’s go back to the founding fathers “landing on Plymouth Rock,” and imagine the
La solidaridad forma parte de su ADN. La cooperación, la ayuda síntoma del mal al vecino. En la gente se entiende más que las palabras. Eso es lo que hace la gente cubana. La gente cubana sabe que sus problemas son los problemas de su país. Esa no es la forma de crear apoyo en la comunidad. En Bélgica se tienen que poner de acuerdo con sus vecinos en las fases iniciales. El pico de infección en la ciudad de Bruselas fue de 1.692 casos por millón. El pico de infección en la ciudad de Barcelona fue de 1.298 casos por millón. Los ciudadanos también fuimos los que pagamos el pato. Los bancos que habían especulado con nuestro dinero se salieron con la suya sin complicarse. Y la gente común pagamos la factura. Es obvio que existe desconfianza en la gestión de una crisis por parte del gobierno.

¿Y en Cuba?

Ya en enero de 2020, casi dos meses antes de que los políticos en Europa entraran en acción, el gobierno cubano había tomado medidas para combatir el coronavirus. Se lanzaron campañas masivas de información en los medios, se detuvo inmediatamente la televisión. Ni los gobiernos contradictorios ni ajenos ministros de sanidad que se tenían que poner de acuerdo ni discusiones sobre mascarillas gratuitas. El gobierno actuó con decisión e hizo todo lo posible para controlar el virus de raíz. Nada de promesas facilitando que se atendiera a la ‘reina de la libertad’ gracias a las vacunas, nada de soltar la riendas demasiado rápido, debido a motivos electorales o a la falta de coraje político, sino medidas firmes.

Algunos ejemplos. Un turismo, principal fuente de ingresos pero también de contacto con virus, se detuvo de inmediato. Los niños a partir de seis años están obligados a llevar mascarilla. Cuando quedó claro que las escuelas también eran importantes focos de contagio, se pasó a la educación en casa, con muy buen apoyo de la televisión escolar, entre otras cosas. La labor de los médicos también se centró principalmente en la prevención y está muy descentralizada. Cada barrio tiene su policíaca y existe un fuerte vínculo de confianza entre la población local y el personal sanitario. Desde marzo de 2020 casi 30.000 ‘rastreadores de contactos’ han ido de puerta en puerta, hasta los rincones más alejados de la isla, para comprobar en cada familia si uno de sus miembros estaba infectado. En Bélgica la detección la realizaron personas anónimas en centros de llamadas, lo que no inspira precisamente confianza.

Mientras tanto, todo se centró en el desarrollo de vacunas contra el coronavirus. En marzo de 2021 tres vacunas estaban ya en fase de prueba. En la actualidad Cuba cuenta con cinco vacunas propias, una de ellas para niños de tan solo dos años. Las diferencias en las políticas COVID entre Cuba y Bélgica se reflejan también en cifras. En Cuba hubo 146 muertes por COVID-19 a finales de 2020. En Bélgica, con el mismo número de habitan tes, la cifra era de casi 20.000. Eso fue antes de la variante Delta. Cuba no llegó a tiempo. Las vacunas propias recién se terminaron tres meses después de que la variante Delta empezó a proliferar. La rápida vacunación en Bélgica, a partir de finales de 2020, ha permitido reducir significativamente el número de muertes causado por la variante Delta, a menos de las facias iniciales. En Cuba la variante Delta en realidad llegó demasiado pronto; no había vacunación en ese momento. El pico de infección se produjo en el mes de julio. Esto causó muchas muertes y sacudió el sistema sanitario. Esta precaria situación sanitaria se sumó a los graves problemas económicos derivados del bloqueo económico de Estados Unidos, la política de turismo y el aumento del precio de los alimentos. Como resultado, hubo mucho descon tiento entre la gente. A través de las redes sociales se ha intentado desde Estados Unidos agitar ese descontento y canalizarlo en protestas, lo que ha traído consigo un aumento acelerado de la violencia.

Una vez iniciada la campaña de vacu nación en Cuba los resultados fueron espectaculares. El 20 de septiembre, al inicio de la campaña, todavía daba riamente más de 40.000 nuevas infecciones y 66 muertes. El 13 de diciembre hay 80 nuevas infecciones y una muerte al día. En Cuba también se vacuna a los niños a partir de dos años. El 2 de diciembre el 75% de los cubanos había recibido su primera dosis. El 16 de diciembre el 90% de los cubanos había recibido su segunda dosis. Es el segundo porcentaje más alto del mundo, después de los Emiratos Árabes Unidos, y el más alto de América Latina. En Bélgica estamos al 75%.

2. Desconfianza en las grandes farmacéuticas

A muchas personas no vacunadas en Europa les pesa sospechar que el gobierno proporciona vacunas gratuitas, y que por tanto no ve muy claro por qué los gobiernos no pagan por otros medicamentos. La vacunación cuesta cada año más a los pacientes y ahora, más también a los médicos. ¿Cómo explicarles que es un poder de la corrupción en el que se juzga si se hace esta vacunación? La gente sabe que las grandes farmacéuticas sólo miran las ganancias y no siempre se toman en serio la seguridad de las personas. Entre 1990 y 1980 el 90% de los futuros médicos tomaron DES (dietilstilbestrol) contra los abortos espontáneos y en los años 60 se les recetó Sofenon (Thalidomide) contra los problemas del embarazo. La mayoría de los médicos estaban embarazados. La vacunación, por supuesto, es importante para el hombre y estará, y lo que significa más importante, para el país. Ayudar a la población a cuidarse y prevenir la enfermedad, debe solidarizarse con personas (mayor) mayores y físicamente débiles. La vacunación es importante para un hombre o una mujer normal, y también para los niños, para reducir la circulación del virus en la comunidad lo antes posible en favor de los más débiles. La mayoría de la gente -también en Europa- considera que eso es una forma de vida en la que debe participar. Esto también se aplica al cumplimiento de las medidas de seguridad. Toda la cultura comercial y neoliberal de Europa pide a la gente a diario su deber de desarrollarse, de hacerlo cada vez mejor en la vida, esténdose, ser más rico, y los ciclos de vacunación se aceleraron para depender de los demás, ni mucho menos del ‘Estado’, pues de lo contrario se es un aprovechado.

¿Y en Cuba?

En Cuba no existe una industria farmacéutica privada. Todas las vacunas contra el COVID-19, que fabrican laboratorios biotecnológicos propiedad gubernamental. El 80% de las vacunas utilizadas en los programas de vacunación del país son de fabricación nacional. Aquí no hay especulación, ni precios escandalosos ni beneficiosusarios. En los últimos meses se ha demostrado que las vacunas también pueden ser eficaces. Por eso no es de extrañar que cual quier persona cubana no solo confíe en sus empresas farmacéuticas nacionales, sino que se las organice en el trabajo, etc., es su forma de vida. La solidaridad forma parte de su ADN. Durante décadas han enviado médicos y profesores al resto del mundo. Un pequeño país de once mil millones de habitantes, con diez veces menos recursos que Bélgica, pero contaba con medios a luchar contra el COVID en lugares tan lejanos como Italia. Esta actitud y forma de vida es la cuarta razón por la que hay pocos o ningún anti vacunas en Cuba. No hay por qué pagar por vacunas de fabricación de países. Ademá,s muchas personas salen de la enseñanza secundaria o superior sin ser capaces de entender las estadísticas o su realidad en los artículos.

Por qué Cuba no tiene un movimiento anti vacunas

Por Marc Vandepitte y Toon Danhieux

Traducido del neerlandés por Sven workers.org    December 23, 2021    Page 11
La siguiente es la tercera parte de una presentación realizada por Johnny Hodgson, Secretario Político del Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional para la Región Autónoma de la Costa Caribe Sur (RACCS) el 6 de octubre en Managua, Nicaragua, a una delegación estadounidense conformada por Coleen Littlejohn, Sara Flounders, Monica Moorehead, Joao Elineswky y Stan Smith. La transcripción está íntegra y, por lo tanto, deleftada. Las les partes primero y segunda se encuentran en tinyurl.com/njg7mfl y tinyurl.com/sxkpmxn, respectivamente.

En 1934, el Dr. Hudson, de la costa del Caribe, pudo representar en el Congreso Nacional. Cuando tuvo la oportunidad de hablar en el Congreso, cuestionó: “¿Por qué es que en el resto del país tienen carreteras; tienen puerto marítimo; tienen energía eléctrica; tienen agua. ¿Por qué en la Costa Caribe no tenemos estas cosas?”. Esto fue como hace 87 años. Podemos decirle que ahora puede descansar en paz, porque esas cosas por las que hablaba, las estamos consiguiendo.

En mi región –la costa caribeña de Managua– tenemos municipios y en 2007 tres de estos municipios tenían carreteras y caminos pavimentados. Y hoy 10 de los municipios tienen carreteras. Nuestras comunidades están pavimentadas, y una no está pavimentada. Así que dos municipios no tienen carreteras. El 29% de la población tenía acceso a la energía eléctrica. Y ahora, en realidad, el 75% de la gente tiene acceso a la energía eléctrica en la costa del Caribe. Pero no nos gusta decir que estamos nuevos, que somos más felices, que tenemos bienes, inteligencia, pero también por lo que te decía de la convivencia comunitaria. La gente aprecia mucho que los sandinistas traten de poner en práctica lo que tanto necesitamos, la unidad y la diversidad, esta interculturalidad, la llevamos dentro. Pero es muy agradable tener un gobierno que promueva eso, que impulse eso, que luche por esa interculturalidad.

Nuestra región es un ejemplo de la interculturalidad y la diversidad; de la convivencia comunitaria. La gente aprecia que impulse eso, que promueva eso. Por ejemplo, la gente aprecia que impulse eso, que promueva eso, que luche por esa interculturalidad.

A continuación, quiero hablar sobre la carretera Bluefields–Nueva Guinea en la costa caribeña de Nicaragua. Inauguración de la carretera Bluefields–Nueva Guinea en la costa caribeña de Nicaragua. La carretera Bluefields–Nueva Guinea fue una gran cosa. Inclusive en medicina interna, en ginecología. Así que estas cosas son parte de un avión. Hace 87 años, ¿por qué es que en el resto del país tenemos carreteras; tienen puerto marítimo; tienen energía eléctrica; tienen agua. ¿Por qué en la Costa Caribe no tenemos estas cosas?”. Esto fue como hace 87 años. Podemos decirle que ahora puede descansar en paz, porque esas cosas por las que hablaba, las estamos consiguiendo.

El desarrollo durante el gobierno sandinista

Al explicar el proceso electoral, el año 2007 cuando hicimos esta estrategia de desarrollo, fue una gran cosa. Esta estrategia electoral formuló una propuesta y fue sometida a consulta con diferentes grupos de personas, diferentes sectores. Pero en la costa caribeña -aunque Daniel Ortega estaba en el gobierno aquí en el Pacifico-, en el país y en la costa caribeña, los neoliberales seguían en el gobierno, y la gente de la costa caribeña votó por el gobierno sandinista en 2014, masivamente. Para que te hagas una idea, tenemos un consejo regional formado por 45 miembros. Eso es nuestro parlamento regional. En la votación de 2014, los sandinistas obtuvieron 30 miembros de los 45 escaños. Luego, después de los problemas [en 2018], tuvimos elecciones a los 30 escaños de los 45 escaños. Asimismo, la gente está dispuesta a apoyar a los sandinistas en estas elecciones. El otro elemento es la comunicación. Una cosa es el hospital, pero para una mujer en algún lugar como el Río Grande que necesitaba llegar a un hospital hace cinco años, 10 años, tendría que tomar un barco durante dos días si es un barco lento, o si es un barco rápido como 10 horas para llegar a un hospital. Así que no se trata sólo del hospital, sino de las carreteras. He oído que de ir de La Cruz al Tortuguero son cuatro horas por carretera. Así que esos son elementos cuando se habla de desarrollo y progreso, etc., son elementos clave para los derechos y el bienestar. La gente pregunta: “¿Por qué luchas tanto por la carretera de la costa?”. Y me gusta contar esta historia. Un señor tuvo un evento cardíaco en la isla de La Coromela a las tres de la tarde. Llevan rápidamente a una clínica y el médico dice: “Tiene que coger un avión”. Para que lo estabilizaron y tuvieron de hablar o de decir, que “Por qué no podemos tener el derecho a disfrutar de la energía eléctrica?” Hoy, más del 75% de las personas que viven en la Costa Caribe tienen energía eléctrica. Y el otro 25%, la mayoría está muy, muy cerca de tenerla. Ven el trabajo que se está haciendo. Y el acceso al agua - quiero decir, el 4% de la gente tiene acceso al agua, y 10 veces esa cantidad de gente tiene acceso al agua hoy. Así que la gente ve estas cosas, y la gente está dispuesta a apoyar a los sandinistas por estas cosas, cosas materiales, pero también por lo que te decía de la convivencia comunitaria. La gente aprecia mucho que los sandinistas traten de poner en práctica lo que tanto necesitamos, la unidad y la diversidad, esta interculturalidad, la llevamos dentro. Pero es muy agradable tener un gobierno que promueva eso, que impulse eso, que luche por esa interculturalidad.

Un sitio en el que se puede encontrar a una persona que está embaucada, y por eso fuimos tan eficaces en la lucha contra el COVID-19. De hecho, se viene a Bluefields. Y la gente pregunta: “¿Por qué es que en el resto del país tienen carreteras; tienen puerto marítimo; tienen energía eléctrica; tienen agua. ¿Por qué en la Costa Caribe no tenemos estas cosas?”. Esto fue como hace 87 años. Podemos decirle que ahora puede descansar en paz, porque esas cosas por las que hablaba, las estamos consiguiendo.

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