

At Russia-Ukraine border

NO U.S.-NATO WAR!

An ad-hoc coalition of anti-imperialist organizations located in the United States has published the following call for protests in the following week of U.S. and NATO's aggressive actions directed at Russia, building up to demonstrations and a webinar on Feb. 5:

We must act now to stop the war with Russia over Ukraine, a war that would risk becoming a dangerous conflict between nuclear states. As people residing in the United States, we have a special responsibility to call upon the U.S. government to:

- Stop the war with Russia
- Stop the NATO expansion
- Stop sending weapons to Ukraine and the European Union
- Obey international laws and the U.N. Charter
- Resolve the current conflict within the United Nations Security Council
- De-escalate the threat of a nuclear war

Once again, our world is facing an imminent threat of war between two major

nuclear powers. As in the past, the United States is using the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as the vehicle to wage war in clear violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

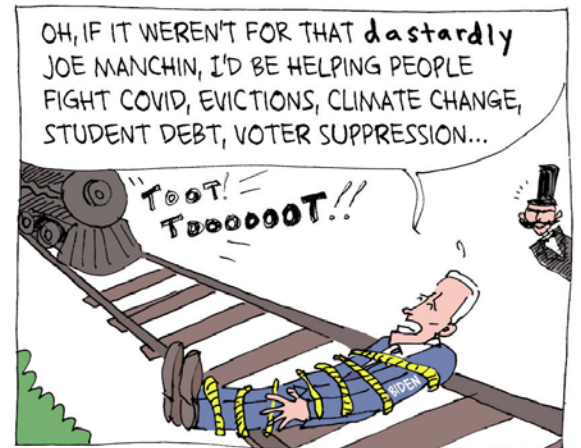
The Biden administration is currently flying \$200 million worth of weapons and other "lethal aid" to Ukraine and has 8,500 U.S. troops on standby to enter that country. 'Nonessential' U.S. diplomatic personnel and their families are being withdrawn from the country. The corporate media is lock-step in its portrayal of Russia as the enemy who is about to invade Ukraine. These actions constitute a de facto declaration of war, while the corporate media fan the flame of war.

This current escalation of aggression against Russia through expansion of NATO's presence into Ukraine is a serious threat to world peace and requires a unified and rapid response by antiwar organizations to stop a major war.

To that end, we, the undersigned groups, have agreed to support a day of action on Feb. 5, 2022, with our mentioned demands on the United States government.

In the week of Jan. 30 to Feb. 5, we will hold visibility actions by holding signs and banners in well-trafficked areas such as major intersections or highway overpasses that raise awareness of this urgent crisis and urge the President to stop

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WAIT... MY imperialist SENSE IS tingling... I'M PICKING UP SOMETHING... ABOUT RUSSIA... UKRAINE... NATO... NORD STREAM 2...



What's at stake with SCOTUS nomination

On the eve of Black History Month — February — President Joe Biden announced his intentions of nominating an African American woman to replace the soon-to-be-retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer. Sitting on the court now are six men and three women. All justices have life tenure, until either retirement or death. Three members are generally considered "liberal" and the rest "conservative" in their views.

If a Black woman wins the nomination with Senate approval, she will only be the third Black judge to even sit on the bench since the court's founding in 1789 — the other two are the late Thurgood Marshall and Clarence Thomas. She would join three other women as justices — Sonia Sotomayor, who is Latinx, Elena Kagan and Amy Coney Barrett. Out of a total 115 Supreme Court justices, 108 have been

white men; two have been Black men; and five have been women.

Civil rights and women's organizations are understandably excited by the prospects of this nomination, considering the fact that this will be the first Black woman to hold such a position. Both nationality and gender are social and historical considerations.

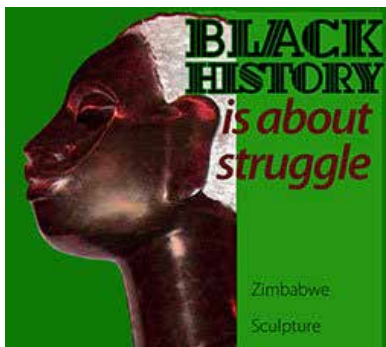
Such a nomination would be groundbreaking. The right to political representation grew out of the radical Reconstruction period following the U.S. Civil War, when formerly enslaved people of African

descent fought for bourgeois democratic rights — the right to vote, education, 40 acres and a mule, and other rights that white men generally enjoyed.

These rights were either short-lived or never came to fruition, due to the violent counterrevolution led by the remnants of the Confederacy, coupled with the betrayal by the U.S. government.

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Cement workers strike transnational corporations

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

A major strike by concrete mixer drivers and cement plant workers against cement company bosses has shut down much of Seattle’s \$23 billion construction industry. The workers are members of Teamsters Local 174.

They are striking against wages that don’t match up with the high cost of housing in the area and against unfair labor practices by the bosses. The workers are on the seventh week of their strike. The strike started with 34 people on Nov. 19 and spread rapidly. The workers have been without a contract with the stonewalling bosses since July 31.

Better pay is an issue for the cement workers, as with other construction unions striking in Seattle. “We’re building a city we literally can’t afford to live in,” said one striker. Low wages and lack of affordable housing are issues the construction workers share with the anti-gentrification campaigns of the Black community, Black Lives Matter and the working class in general. (The Nation, Jan. 21)

“These giant multinational construction companies are demanding that workers accept a package of wages, health care and retirement that would be a decrease in compensation over three years, when you take inflation into account,” said Rick Hicks, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 174. Amazon and Starbucks are just two of the massive corporations that have physical headquarters in Seattle and are directly impacted by the construction workers withholding their labor from building projects. (Construction Dive, Jan. 11)

The work that cement truck drivers do provides the foundation for every big construction project in the region. The difficult work requires long hours and different start times every day. “We live in those trucks, day in and day out,” one worker said. (The Guardian, Jan. 26)

Since concrete mix workers and drivers provide the foundations for all buildings, nothing gets built without



PHOTO: TEAMSTERS LOCAL 174

Concrete mixer drivers, dump truck drivers and cement plant workers walk off the job in Seattle after bosses “fail to bargain in good faith.”

those workers. In Seattle, hundreds of building projects have been forced to shut down, while the bosses moan about their lost profits. Thousands of construction workers have been laid off, but many have expressed sympathy with the striking Teamsters.

Some workers call it a general strike because of its effect on vital industry! Some suspect the bosses are trying to bust the Seattle construction unions that have had several strikes recently during a construction boom.

The union launched its industrywide strike at six big companies: Gary Merlino Construction, Stoneway Concrete, Cadman, CalPortland, Salmon Bay Sand & Gravel, and Lehigh Cement. When the striking Teamsters extended their picket line to Lehigh Cement Company — a huge plant at the Port of Everett — this action shut down all operations there, with members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union honoring the Teamsters picket line.

The bosses’ arrogance and refusal to negotiate has been met with the strikers’ escalation. (teamsters174.org)

The writer is a member of Teamsters Local 174, retired.

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. □

If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact: 212.627.2994

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Amazon worker organizing accelerates with union voting

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Headlines screamed alarm Jan. 26 in capitalist business media like the Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg: ‘Amazon Union Has Sufficient Signatures for New York Election!’

Yes, Amazon workers are accelerating the fight to be represented by a union and gain safety on the job, living wages, adequate health care, pandemic protection and more. The workers are going head-to-head against one of the biggest corporations in the world and its centibillionaire boss, Jeff Bezos.

In Staten Island, New York, and Bessemer, Alabama, workers at Amazon distribution centers are gearing up for union election votes authorized by the National Labor Relations Board.

In Staten Island, the independent Amazon Labor Union has demonstrated through card signing that there is now sufficient interest for an NLRB election, after having withdrawn their petition late

in 2021 to build greater numbers. Besides giving a go-ahead for the election, the NLRB found that management at the Amazon warehouse has been illegally surveilling and threatening workers.

Union founder and leader Chris Smalls said in a widely quoted statement, “I think this one will definitely be the one to get over the hump and be the first union for Amazon.”

Meanwhile in Bessemer, a union re-vote is fast approaching for representation by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU). Ballots go out Feb. 4, and the re-vote tally is expected to begin March 28.

Nearly half of the 6,100 eligible voters are new to the Alabama warehouse since the last vote reported in April 2021, due to Amazon’s very high turnover. The NLRB ordered the re-vote after finding that Amazon improperly influenced the original vote. That’s bureaucratic language for the use of vicious, sneaky and intimidating union-busting tactics.

The Birmingham, Alabama, area, which Bessemer is part of, has a history of strong and often radical multinational unions dating back to the early 20th century. The North Alabama Labor Council is putting together door-to-door “house calls” with RWDSU members to convince Amazon workers to vote for the union.

A recent RWDSU video features Bessemer workers with handwritten signs about why they support the union. One wears a United Mine Workers “We Are One” class-war camouflage shirt. This coal miner’s sign says, “I am voting union because — I have seen the strength of solidarity.” (Full video here: tinyurl.com/2p8cxaht)

He is one of over 1,000 steadfast union coal miners in nearby Brookwood, Alabama, who are entering their eleventh



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Worker organizing at Amazon received international coverage when the Associated Press used a photo of this Workers Assembly Against Racism rally for the Amazon Labor Union, on Oct. 25, 2021, to announce upcoming union elections in February.

month on strike against Warrior Met Coal and BlackRock venture capital. For these workers, like the striker in the video, a job at Amazon can be a way to make ends meet and to strengthen cross-union solidarity.

Union supporters in New York and Alabama are hoping to win the vote for union representation. But like the miners, Amazon workers may still have to withhold their labor power to get their rights.

Search Workers World to find extensive reporting on these struggles. □

WW COMMENTARY

Starbucks union drive reflects growing class consciousness

By Arjae Red

This is based on a talk given to a Workers World Party plenum Jan. 28 by the author, a worker organizer with Starbucks Workers United in Buffalo, New York.

Update Jan. 31: According to SB Workers United and More Perfect Union on twitter, 60 stores across 19 states have filed for a union election. In Buffalo, where the Starbucks surge started with a union-yes vote Dec. 28, contract bargaining began for the Elmwood and Genesee stores, with ballots going out to three additional stores in the area.

good benefits; why would they want a union?" This is a gross overstatement and gives Starbucks far too much credit. In fact, there are many ways in which

What we are seeing here is the working class beginning to become aware of itself as a class with common interests and common oppressors.

is the worst possible company to work for. While there are plenty of legitimate grievances with Starbucks that workers have, many of which are common across the board — from a lack of adequate COVID-19 safety protocols, to understaffing, to inconsistent scheduling — these problems alone have not been the primary motivation for workers to form a union.

What is motivating many Starbucks workers to unionize is a fundamental belief that they should have a say in their workplace and the idea that a company doesn't have to be as bad as Amazon or Walmart for the workers to deserve a union. Many stores

that have filed for union representation have explicitly stated this in their letters to Starbucks CEO Kevin Johnson — that the decision to unionize is based on principle and not a specific list of hardships and grievances.

Shift in class consciousness

This to me, is evidence of a shifting in the collective class consciousness of many workers. This is a major development for the working class, something that is vitally important for building a militant movement towards socialism. What we are seeing here is the working class beginning to become aware of itself as a class with common interests and common oppressors.

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Grocery workers win big in King Soopers strike

By Viviana Weinstein
Denver

Pickets were called off at 6 a.m. Jan. 20, as United Food and Commercial Workers Local 7 reached a tentative three-year contract agreement with King Soopers grocery chain after a 10-day strike.

The new contract benefits 8,000 workers in 78 stores in Colorado. King Soopers is a subsidiary of the enormous Kroger food corporation.

Union members voted to approve the contract Jan. 24, celebrating it as a substantial win. The contract addressed major concerns workers had about wages, including the two-tier wage system, overtime pay, part-time work and the inability to gain full-time employment, health care, safety, hazard pay and third-party nonunion workers.

According to the settlement, most workers will receive a wage increase of at least \$2 an hour, with some positions increasing more than \$5 an hour. Ramped-up safety measures will be put in place to protect the workers from violence by customers, as well from dangers of COVID-19 infection.

King Soopers has agreed to add 500 new

full-time workers within the first 90 days of the contract and create a faster path for part-time workers to move to full-time. This will address the key issue of job outsourcing. The company will pay a larger share of worker health care costs as well.

The company paid workers \$2 an hour in pandemic hazard pay for only 2 months, while making \$4 billion in profits in 2021.

The huge gap between company riches and underpaid labor was not lost on essential workers trying to survive on low wages and part-time hours. Many are food insecure, and 14% have been homeless during 2021, according to a study of 10,000 Kroger workers in Colorado, California and Washington. (In These Times, Jan. 11)

Chances for a successful strike increased every day, as community members brought food and money and joined the picket line in the freezing snow. To show love and support for the workers, the community did not cross the picket line and did not shop in the King Sooper, where stores were empty of people!

Outrage grew when the corporation placed hundreds of TV ads using company management as “actors” praising the corporation. With workers walking the picket



WW PHOTO: VIVIANA WEINSTEIN

Members of striking United Food and Commercial Workers Local 7 in Denver, Jan. 20.

line in extreme cold, people were repulsed by the ads.

King Soopers went to court Jan. 19 and received a restraining order to limit the number of picketers to 10 at any store, restricting the right to speech of picketers. Yet neighbors kept joining the line! At this writer’s local store, there were at least 30 strikers on the line, with police looking on but not stopping their march.

“Strikes absolutely work,” said UFCW Local 7 leader Kim Cordova. “It shows the company they can’t run without the workers. The real power is with the people. We hope we set the bar so other workers follow suit; and so that when enough is enough, they take a stand.” (Denver Post, Jan. 25) □

Mumia Abu-Jamal

‘A new Freedom Now Movement’

Mumia Abu-Jamal’s commentaries are recorded by prisonradio.org/.

The great Caribbean revolutionary Franz Fanon wrote in his now-classic work, “The Wretched of the Earth,” the following call to action: “Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it, in relative opacity. That mission is now before us.”

What mission? To free prisoners of the empire, not just myself but others, some of whom we all know, some of whom we know not, people like Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, Mundo “Ed Poindexter” Langa, Sundiata Acoli,



Leonard Peltier, Dr. Mutulu Shakur, Julian Assange, Reverend Joy Powell and Daniel Hale. They were anti-racist and anti-imperialist prisoners of the empire.

Each and all of us would embrace that now-famous first point of the Black Panther Party’s 10 Point Program written by two young college students, October 1966.

Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale wrote: “We want freedom. We want freedom.” When they wrote those words, they echo the hearts of millions. Today, over 50 years after these words were written, they still possess power and resonance. “We want freedom.”

Let these words energize new movements today and enrich our living histories by reconnecting with the freedom struggles of our youth. Many of us are elders; yet we rejoice in the freedom movement emerging anew today as a result of the torture and murder of George Floyd, for true struggles from generation to generation.

This call comes as mass incarceration has metastasized into a system that has bled state budgets dry and has resulted in the caging of the elderly and, up till recently, the juvenile population. It has also resulted in unbridled cruelty like women giving birth in shackles and chains, people being held in solitary confinement for decades.

Surprisingly, prisons have become worse over time, not better — and bigger

than we could even have imagined. We therefore need more prison support movements, not less — and prison abolition has to now be on the table. We want freedom. We want freedom. We. Want. Freedom. So say we all.

Thank you, Munsa. Thank you, Black Panther Party Commemoration Committee. Thank you, Labor Action Committee. Thank you all.

In love and not fear, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The Black Panther Commemoration Committee New York was formed on the 37th anniversary of the founding of the Black Panther Party in 1966. The committee promulgates the goals of the Black Panther Party, its Ten Point Platform and Program. □

From inside prison

Leonard Peltier speaks on COVID-19

By Judy Greenspan

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic currently raging through the jail, prison and detention centers of this country, Leonard Peltier (Turtle Mountain Band, Chippewa Nation), an Indigenous leader and political prisoner, has issued a cry for help.

Peltier, 77 years old, who has been imprisoned for 45 years, was reported as having tested positive for COVID-19 on Jan. 28. The prison had previously refused to give him the booster shot. (Huffington Post, January 28).

Peltier is currently incarcerated in a high-security federal penitentiary in Florida, USP Coleman I, along with 1,334 other people. The prison is in lockdown because of the pandemic, which means no contact with other people within the facility and no visitation from anyone externally.

In an online statement in the Jan. 23 HuffPost, Peltier urges the prison abolition movement and human rights activists to expose the brutality and inhumanity of the current lockdown of incarcerated people during COVID-19. His plea echoes the voices of many people behind the walls:

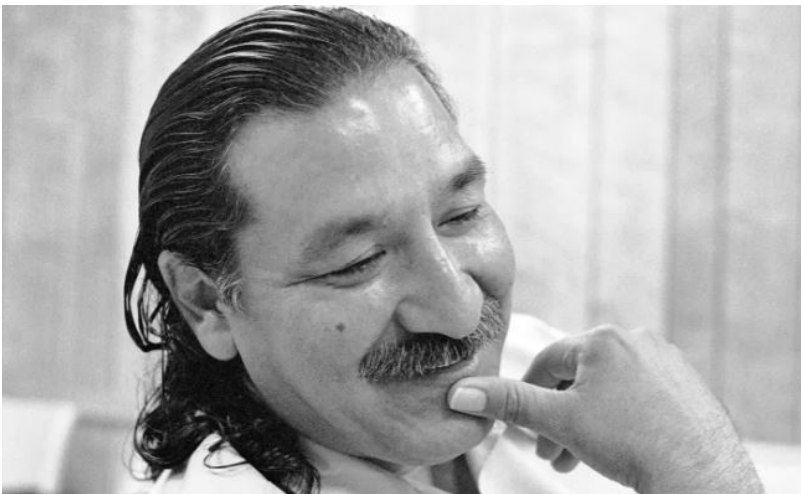
COVID has turned Coleman Prison back to the Dark Ages. I remember a

time at Marion USP when I was put in solitary for so long — when 72 hours could make you start to forget who you were — I once wrote down who I was on the concrete floor under my bed, so if I forgot, I could read it back to myself. I traded my last cigarette for a pencil. I’d rush to the door when a guard left the meager plate of food, just to see a glimpse of another human being — Even if it was one that hated me, it was another human and good for my mind for a minute.

I’m in hell, and there is no way to deal with it but to take it as long as you can. I cling to the belief that people are out there doing what they can to change our circumstances in here. The fear and stress are taking a toll on everyone, including the staff. You can see it in their faces and hear it in their voices. The whole institution is on total LOCKDOWN.

In and out of lockdown last year at least meant a shower every third day, a meal beyond a sandwich wet with a little peanut butter — but now with COVID

for an excuse, nothing. No phone, no window, no fresh air — no humans to gather — no loved ones’ voices. No relief. Left alone and without attention is like a torture chamber for the sick and old.



Leonard Peltier

Where are our human rights activists? You are hearing from me, and with me, many desperate men and women! They are turning an already harsh environment into an asylum, and for many who did not receive a death penalty, we are now staring down the face of one! Help me, my brothers and sisters, help me, my good friends. (tinyurl.com/2p996aa2)

Peltier, a leader of the American Indian Movement, participated in the 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota in 1973. In 1975, he was framed for the shoot-

ing death of two FBI agents. The agents and one Native American lay dead after an armed attack on the reservation by more than 150 federal agents, vigilantes and local police.

Peltier was convicted for the deaths of the two agents but had no physical evidence against him. He has steadfastly maintained his innocence. Leonard Peltier must be freed now!

There is a new international petition campaign to win Peltier’s freedom due to his COVID-19 infection.

There is also a campaign to demand immediate clemency from President Joe Biden.

Reach the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee here: whoisleonardpeltier.info

To sign the petition: tinyurl.com/2p9xpfzz □

On the picket line

By Marie Kelly

In Mississippi, rural school bus drivers strike — and win!

The pandemic has created a health crisis for workers who do not have the luxury of shifting to other jobs or taking a furlough with pay until the worst is over. Workers still engaging with the general public are at high risk of exposure to COVID-19.

In fact many such workers have fallen ill and are unable to return to work or have left their positions to seek a safer employment situation. The labor shortages now spanning industries like health care, education,

manufacturing, hospital-ity and transportation have exposed the poor working conditions of these essential workers.

Fed up with their treatment by the bosses, many of these workers have been protesting poor safety measures, low wages and irregular hours. They have seen they can win concessions when they organize and withhold their labor power.

A stunning example of such a win came Jan. 21 from school bus drivers in a rural county in Mississippi, who serve a mostly African American student population.

The Jefferson Davis County School Board tried to solve their bus driver shortage by hiring temporary drivers and paying them \$25 an hour — when the average salary for school bus drivers in the county is \$12 to \$15 an hour.

The next day, regular drivers went on strike — for only



one hour — to protest this unfair development. The short strike was a warning — with drivers getting all students to school that day.

The same evening, the school board held an emergency meeting and voted unanimously to increase the regular drivers’ wage to \$20 an hour.

To win a raise of \$5 to \$7 an hour with a one-hour strike — quite a victory! □

Hunger, violence and earthquakes—Haiti’s problems intensify

By G. Dunkel

The last week of January, two moderately severe earthquakes shook southwest Haiti in the department of Nippes. An official said 191 homes were destroyed, and 591 were damaged. At least two people were killed. Dozens of people were injured and had to go to the hospital, including a number of students in school at the time.

The AP reported Jan. 25, “People are scared to go back into their homes.” These earthquakes were aftershocks from a far more intense earthquake that hit the same area Aug. 14, killing more than 2,200 people and damaging or destroying some 137,500 homes.

Nippes is still recovering from the August earthquake. The U.N. estimates that 800,000 people lost either their home or what they needed to make a living. Farmers lost their fields, and fishers lost their docks, boats and drying racks.

The assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in July 2021 added to the political instability in Haiti, further aggravated by social violence coming from heavily armed individuals concentrated in the drug trade. The political situation has brought famine and fear, with 43% of the Haitian people, according to the U.N.’s Food and Agricultural Organization, suffering from food insecurity — they regularly don’t get enough calories. (tinyurl.com/yc587sf5)

While there are no official statistics on hungry Haitians fleeing to other Caribbean

countries, there are anecdotal reports of 1,000 being rounded up in the Bahamas, camps being closed in Jamaica and many Haitians being arrested in the Dominican Republic. The U.S. Coast Guard has made two intercepts this year, one of 88 people and the other of 179 people, and two groups of Haitians managed to make landings in the Florida Keys in December 2021.

Political maneuvering

President Moïse didn’t hold elections when they were legally required, which meant the terms for most of the members of the Haitian parliament — as well as most local officials like mayors and city councilors — expired. This let him run Haiti by decree from January 2020 onward. His opponents said his term ended Feb. 7, 2021, but he claimed it went until Feb. 7, 2022.

Moïse named the current prime minister, Ariel Henry, two days before his assassination. Since Henry was appointed by Moïse, many Haitian lawyers say his term should end when Moïse’s would have ended — Feb. 7, 2022.

The most probable solution to solving the problem of having no elected leaders, for the bourgeoisie, is to hold elections. (For Haiti’s workers and peasants, socialism would be a desirable solution, but that is not a legal option under the current pro-imperialist regime.)

The faction of the bourgeoisie around Henry has an election proposal called

the “September 11th accord.” The opposition to Henry has put together a competing accord, named the “Montana Accord” after the hotel where the meeting founding this accord was held.

The Montana Accord has a very broad membership, which ranges from very progressive parties like Fanmi Lavalas and Dessalines Children (Piti Desalin) to the Haitian Party of Tèt Kale, to which the current prime minister belongs.

Both accords are competing to win the support of U.S. imperialism and its allies and have different conceptions of how to choose the council that will direct the country before the vote.

Deportation of Moïse Jean-Charles

Moïse Jean-Charles is a former Haitian senator and was the presidential candidate of Dessalines Children in 2015, running against Jovenel Moïse and Jude Célestin. He came in third with over 14% of the vote. He calls himself a “restorative socialist” and says he regards Fidel Castro as a role model.

When he was passing through the Miami airport on his way back to Haiti Jan. 24 from a trip to Nigeria, Jean-Charles was pulled out of line, interrogated for eight hours, mostly in Spanish, about a trip he took to Venezuela a few



Thousands of Haitian migrants, fleeing hunger, natural disaster and instability in their country, have been deported or expelled by the U.S., here by the Border Patrol in Del Rio, Texas, September 2021.

years ago. He was then arrested, jailed and deported back to Haiti. He is barred from the U.S. for five years.

When Haïti-Liberté asked him about why he was deported, and did he think it was related to what he was saying in Haiti, he replied “That may have contributed to what happened. Why? Because what’s happening in Haiti, it’s the Americans who are doing it. But they don’t want people to denounce them. I don’t understand that! It’s the Americans who are trying to put together people who fought in 2004 [during the violent coup against Jean-Bertrand Aristide]. The pro-coup sector (Grenn nan bounda), the Americans are making them sit together with the Lavalas. It’s the Americans who are doing things in Parliament with Youri Latortue, Joseph Lambert and Michel Martelly. It’s the Americans who are making Ariel do stupid things.” (tinyurl.com/ph72dbdr) □

First-hand report: The truth about Nicaragua’s revolution

By Arjae Red

Based on a talk by the author at a Jan. 30 webinar, hosted by the Alliance for Global Justice, entitled “Nicaragua: What We Saw; What’s Next.” The author, a Workers World Party member, traveled with a delegation from the U.S. to attend the Jan. 10 inauguration of Nicaragua’s elected leaders.

I have to be honest. Before I came to Nicaragua for the first time on this delegation, I knew very little about the country and had just basic information about its history. It’s one thing to be able to read about a revolution and another to be able to see it unfolding with your own eyes.

I could see the progress which has been made in Nicaragua since the revolution: the improvement of education and health care; expansion of roads and water infrastructure; and the achievement of near total food self-sufficiency. These are great achievements that can’t be understated, not only compared to prerevolutionary Nicaragua but when compared to the U.S.

But Nicaragua hasn’t built up its infrastructure with wealth and resources plundered from around the world like the U.S. has done. The people have done it through cooperation. The country has been largely self-sufficient. The Nicaraguans have done this, despite the crushing pressure of U.S. sanctions. Nicaragua’s Sandinista revolution is evidence that another way forward is possible.

Popular support for Sandinista leaders

The biggest shock of my trip to Nicaragua was seeing a country where the government has the enthusiastic support of the people. This is unheard of in the U.S. The Sandinista government keeps the best interests of the people at the forefront of

everything that happens.

We saw people who were excited about electing a president that they actually have faith in and believe in. Nicaraguans elect their leaders through a process that’s far more democratic and transparent by leaps and bounds than any U.S. election. When presidential elections happen in the U.S., it’s the opposite. People vote against a candidate they hate, more than they vote for one they actually like.

It was so refreshing to see a country where the revolutionary government and the unions and other worker organizations work hand in hand, rather than against each other.

I am a Starbucks worker in Buffalo, New York, and my store just recently became the second unionized store in the U.S. This was something we had to fight for tooth and nail, and we definitely didn’t have any help from our government. Workers in the U.S. never do. The best we get on a good day is the National Labor Relations Board dragging its feet every step of the way. Most of the time the NLRB is oppositional to our organizing.

Gains for women, workers and Indigenous people

In Nicaragua, I got to see how the unions and labor organizations like the ATC (Rural Workers Association) are taking an active role in organizing workers and training the next generation of leaders. I learned how women’s liberation is a focus of the revolution and the labor movement.

We were able to visit a collective farm run entirely by women. We learned about how they struggled against both the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship and internally in their communities. Now they have made much progress towards eliminating



Delegation from U.S. in Nicaragua to attend inauguration.

misogyny and have shown their communities that women are leaders.

I learned how Nicaragua has made a point of bridging the gap with different areas, like the Caribbean coast, that have been less developed and cut off from the rest of the country. The government is building highways and other infrastructure, as well as providing teachers and food for students.

And the government is giving about 30% of Nicaragua’s land back to Indigenous people. This sets a fantastic example that people in settler-colonial countries like the U.S. should pay close attention to.

I also learned how excited Nicaraguans are to have a renewed relationship with the People’s Republic of China. Nicaraguans view this as an opportunity to finally be able to play a larger part in a multipolar world. They can forge their own path and are not being forced to submit to U.S. imperialism and its affiliated global financial institutions. Nicaragua is looking to cooperate with other countries on the basis of mutual benefit, unlike the U.S., and resistance to imperialism.

Defend sanctioned countries!

I can’t stress enough how important delegations like this are, especially for those who haven’t been to Nicaragua. If

you don’t know what’s happening there or the country’s history, you need to read about it, and, most importantly, fight against U.S. imperialism as hard as you can. We need to defend countries that the U.S. targets, whether it’s Nicaragua, China, Cuba, Venezuela, Iran or Russia.

We need to understand that the working class is worldwide. We might be separated by borders and distance, but working-class

and oppressed people in Nicaragua have achieved victories that need to be defended by workers from around the world, especially those in the U.S.

We need to take all this knowledge and bring it back to our communities and share the truth. Tell your friends, family and co-workers about the sanctions. Tell them about the U.S./CIA-funded Contras.

Tell them about Ben Linder. (The 27-year-old engineer from Portland, Oregon, was murdered by Contras, along with Nicaraguans Sergio Hernandez and Pablo Rosales, while helping to build a hydroelectric dam in northern Nicaragua in 1987.)

Nicaragua is building something beautiful. The U.S. imperialist media will never show us that. So it’s up to us to tell the real story.

U.S.-imposed sanctions are a weapon of war, and are used to undermine democracy and make people suffer. Nicaragua’s President Daniel Ortega is not a tyrant. These elections are not fake. The FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front) is a popular government that the people believe in. They will fight for self-determination against imperialism and defend their progress in building socialism. We here must do the same. □

U.S.-EU vs. Russia-China

Which side are you on?

By Manuel Raposo

Raposo, editor of jornalnudardev-ida.net, in which this article was published Jan. 26, refutes the conclusions of another article titled, “Putin and Xi Jinping, imperialism’s favorites,” arguing they are enemies who serve the goals of imperialism by giving the imperialists a pretext for attack. Raposo’s response serves to answer anyone on the left who tries to put an equal sign between Russia and China on one side and the U.S., European Union and Japan on the other. Translation: John Catalinotto.

The world is being drawn into a new cold war. The escalating conflicts over Taiwan and Ukraine are evidence of this. The major powers are aligning forces, forging alliances and preparing for confrontations that go beyond mere economic competition and may spill over into military confrontation.

What attitude should the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist left have toward this issue? Is it possible to maintain a position of neutrality and equi-distance without trying to understand who attacks and who is attacked, who provokes conflicts and who defends themselves?

I would like to add a few notes — some objections to what you say and some other considerations — related to your article “Putin and Xi Jinping, the favorites of imperialism.”

The favorites

Not even ironically, I think, can it be said that [Vladimir] Putin and Xi Jinping are the favorites of imperialism.

Imperialism’s favorites are characters like Boris Yeltsin [Russia’s president in the 1990s], who practically destroyed Russia and sold it piece by piece; or the Chinese tycoon Jack Ma, who nurtures the ambition of opening the Chinese economy to stock market speculation, breaking state control over the Chinese financial sector, with the obvious consequence of handing it over to rapacious international finance.

In one case as well as the other, these characters’ goals have failed. In this, the imperialist West has lost a battle and must for now be content to support [Alexei] Navalny-type garbage from Russia or a defector like Ai Weiwei from China.

Russia has been getting back on its feet, after all, and rebuilding its national sovereignty. China keeps the most extreme gluttony of the big foreign and domestic capitalists in check for the time being. And both extend help to the dependent countries. These are the facts that panic the U.S.-EU-Japan imperialist troika (the Triad, as Samir Amin called it) for a well-known reason: They threaten the Triad’s hegemony over the world.

Aggressors and defenders

To condemn some (the U.S.) for pursuing imperialist plans and being hypocrites and, at the same time, condemn others (Russia and China) for being dictators and violators of human rights is a Solomonic attitude that does not address the problem that the world faces today and, in the face of which, the revolutionary left must take sides.

The U.S. and its allies are (always) on the offensive to constrain, undermine and, if possible, break up (politically and territorially) Russia and China. And the latter respond as they can to defend themselves from this siege. The former attack; the

latter defend themselves from aggression.

Without making this distinction, nothing becomes clear; and the revolutionary left is unable to play a role in events, bypassing reality.

Ukraine and NATO

The Ukrainian issue began in 2014 with a coup promoted by the U.S. and the EU, based on Ukrainian fascist forces, which overthrew a formally legitimate president and put in power a Western agent. This was followed by the “request” of the new Ukrainian authorities for EU and NATO membership. The Russian reaction, whether in reclaiming Crimea, supporting the rebel republics of Donetsk and Lugansk or in applying military pressure now, is a response to this squeeze.

Moreover, the squeeze extends to Belarus and the recent “wishes” of Georgia, and even Finland and Sweden (see the coincidence?), to join NATO. Since 1990, despite the assurances given by Ronald Reagan and George H. Bush to the naïve [Mikhail] Gorbachev, 14 Eastern European countries have joined NATO. With Gorbachev we had another true favorite of imperialism.

Human rights

After President Jimmy Carter, in the late 1970s, pulled the “defense of human rights” out of the hat, imperialism started to practice the same acts of aggression as always, but under a new guise. And it has succeeded, it must be acknowledged, in neutralizing a large part of world public opinion, which has been stunned by crimes disguised as good “humanitarian” actions aimed at overthrowing “dictators” who mistreat “their own people.”

Do social problems in Belarus or Kazakhstan or elsewhere trigger popular protests? Certainly, and rightly so. But it would be very naïve not to see the interest (and intervention, overt or covert) of the imperialist West in these events. Obviously, the social problems within these countries cannot legitimize the political pressures, economic sanctions or military actions of imperialism.

Now, it has been under the guise of human rights, humanitarian aid, etc., that the Triad has invoked the right to intervene wherever it wishes, obviously doing so in a selective manner: seeking, whenever it can, to “change the regime” in countries that escape its obedience; and preserving the regimes of those within its sphere.

Using this criterion, Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, Iran, North Korea, Venezuela, Bolivia ... are put under fire. And Israel, Saudi Arabia, the Brazil of Bolsonaro, Poland of the Kaczynski brothers ... are kept under its wing.

To accuse the U.S. and its cronies of practicing “empty rhetoric” or holding protests “without practical significance”



Montenegrins protest regime’s decision to join NATO, 2017.

in the face of “trampled human rights” implies an inconsequence that these actions don’t actually have. And, if taken literally, such an accusation would force us to demand a consequence from them, that is, a greater and harsher intervention than they already carry out.

That would make sense if we take the humanitarian concerns of imperialism seriously. But it makes no sense at all if we understand the human-rights banner to be a mere tool to make moral gains with public opinion and thus get cover for interventions of force, from sanctions to military action.

Uighurs

I have no inside information about what is going on in the Chinese province of Xinjiang with the Uighur population. What you hear and read around here [Portugal] comes almost exclusively from Western governments and news agencies.

Just a few days ago, Human Rights Watch — created and based in the U.S., financed by rich donors — came out in support of the U.S. campaign to boycott the Winter Olympics in China, even pressuring the U.N. Secretary-General to go along with the campaign. And here came the charges against the Chinese government about the “atrocities” allegedly committed against the Uighurs.

In this, as in other matters, I don’t disregard what the Chinese authorities say. Why should I believe Western agencies, who “saw” the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, rather than believe what the Chinese say, even though they are a concerned party?

And what they say, to me, makes some sense. The Turkmen- and Muslim-populated province of Xinjiang — on the border with the Central Asian countries and with Afghanistan and Pakistan — has been the target of terrorist attacks, with separatist goals, that killed hundreds of people between late 1990 and 2014. The terrorist operatives were trained by Al-Qaeda, particularly in Afghanistan.

Part of the attacks were carried out by the Turkestan Islamic Party, an organization classified by the U.N. as terrorist.

The reaction of the Chinese authorities was to eliminate the terrorist groups, repress those suspected of collaborating with the separatists and promote actions to isolate those groups and suspects from the bulk of the population — namely by creating isolation camps, that the Chinese call “social reeducation centers” or “vocational training centers,” and that Westerners, for obvious reasons, call “concentration camps.”

Development

This is the repressive side of the answer. But the Chinese authorities did not stop there: They reinforced the region’s economic and cultural development plans to remove the basis for the protests and separatist vehemence.

Some figures: Xinjiang’s per capita income is \$7,868, while in the Indian region of Kashmir — also Muslim and also with a history of terrorism and separatism — it is \$1,342. From 2014 to 2019, Xinjiang’s GDP grew at an average annual rate of 7.2%. School attendance is 99.91%, and medical coverage is 99.7% (Maitreya Bhakal, RT, July 2021) Recently, China has declared extreme poverty eliminated in Xinjiang, as in Tibet.

Will this policy of repression-integration lead to the dilution of Uighur identity in China as a whole, as the well-meaning Western consciences lament? Perhaps it will. But this is an inevitable path for any country that cherishes its independence.

China’s national integrity (political and territorial) is a key factor for its independent development, that is, development without imperialist tutelage.

To claim that a “genocide” is taking place in Xinjiang (the term was coined by Mike Pompeo, Donald Trump’s Secretary of State) not only has no support in proven facts but has all the traits of another piece of the U.S.-led campaign to demonize China. If the opinion of the so-called international community counts for anything, the number of U.N. countries that have supported this China policy far outnumbers those that condemn it at the behest of the U.S. and the Europeans.

Hong Kong

The protests in Hong Kong have been given the status of a “people’s struggle for democracy.” It remains to be asked what this “democracy” is all about. The social sectors that have engaged in the protests constitute a middle (and not so middle) class, clinging to the privileges afforded to it by Hong Kong’s special status as

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Capitalist Russia: a target, not a superpower

By Sara Flounders

This article, originally published July 12, 2017, by Workers World, remains timely in February 2022 as the U.S. threatens war at the Russian border with Ukraine and ramps up China-baiting in an attempt to break up agreements being forged between nations seeking to remain independent of U.S. imperialism. See also “Russia’s demands challenge NATO’s threats,” Workers World, Jan. 5.

The corporate media’s constant use of Cold War terminology to describe the meeting of the U.S. and Russian presidents as a meeting of the “two superpowers” masks the present relationship of forces.

U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir V. Putin met at the Group of 20 Summit on July 7, 2017, in Hamburg, Germany.

Old preconceptions and terms must be challenged in order to have an accurate view of the present international situation. Russia today, as a capitalist country, is not even a fifth-rate economic power.

The Russian economy is smaller than the economies of Brazil, South Korea or Canada. According to World Bank and International Monetary Fund measurements, Russia now ranks 12th globally in its gross domestic product. This measurement is the market value of goods and services.

Today’s Russian Federation is a vastly different state — socially, politically, economically and militarily — from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of even 27 years ago.

It is important to understand what Russia is today in order to understand the real intent of the constant Russia-baiting in the media.

In stockpiled nuclear weapons from the Cold War, the U.S. and the Russian Federation may have somewhat even nuclear firepower — more than enough to incinerate the world in one launch.

But U.S. military expenditures are estimated at 36% to almost 50% of total global military expenditures. Russia’s expenditures are 4% to 5% of the global total.

The Pentagon maintains more than 800 military bases around the world and 300,000 troops stationed outside the U.S. Russia has a naval base in Syria and a few communication centers in former Soviet Republics.

The U.S. Navy has 19 aircraft carriers, each of which includes jet aircraft, helicopters, destroyers and nuclear subs. Russia has one 27-year-old carrier propelled with oil-fired boilers rather than a nuclear reactor.

Russia’s resources a target

Russia is a target of U.S. imperialism because of its vast resources. Eighty percent of Russian exports abroad are now in raw materials, primarily gas and oil. The petroleum industry in Russia is one of the largest in the world. It is the largest exporter of natural gas. Coal, iron, aluminum, precious metals, lumber and cereals are other major exports.

This makes Russia’s economy especially vulnerable to global commodity swings and drastic downturns.

There is an insatiable drive to control Russia’s great wealth by the largest banks and corporations. All currents of the U.S. and Western imperialist ruling class are desperate to have unlimited access to this great stream of profits, which they had finally laid their hands on just a few years ago. Remember: Imperialism’s very survival depends on expansion and profit.

Nato's expansion since 1997



Photo ops, handshakes and reports of cooperation at the G20 meeting do not change or lessen U.S. imperialism’s desperation to hammer down any form of resistance to its global domination. Any country attempting independent development is immediately targeted.

There is an irresolvable contradiction between the need of the majority of countries in the world to develop their productive forces and the need of Wall Street to maintain its place at the center of the world economy. However, Washington’s position is clearly slipping, despite daily military threats that assert its global dominance.

New Russian capitalists

Privatization campaigns of the 1990s facilitated the transfer of significant Soviet-era wealth to a relatively small group of Russian business oligarchs. These pirates were willing to make the most corrupt deals with the West to maintain their stolen wealth.

The Pentagon maintains more than 800 military bases around the world and 300,000 troops stationed outside the U.S. Russia has a naval base in Syria and a few communication centers in former Soviet Republics.

As long as Russian politicians and privateers were totally compliant with the devastating looting of the country, they were showered with glowing media coverage. The Group of 7, the largest imperialist countries, invited Russia to join.

The problem for the new capitalist oligarchs is that when the Soviet state was overthrown, there was no room for a new capitalist power in the global economy. All the banks and multinational corporations aggressively moved in to take advantage of the chaos.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union,

U.S. imperialism and the Western imperialist powers expected to have totally free rein to loot Russia at will. For almost 15 years they did have a free hand. The results in Russia were devastating.

Cost of capitalist restoration

Seumas Milne, a British journalist with the Guardian News, summarized Stephen F. Cohen’s book, “The Failed Crusade,” on this transition to a capitalist economy. Cohen is professor emeritus of Russian studies at New York University and Princeton University.

“In the most cataclysmic peacetime economic collapse of an industrial country in history ... [u]nder the banner of reform and the guidance of American-prescribed shock therapy, perestroika became catastroika.

“Capitalist restoration brought in its wake mass pauperization and unemployment, wild extremes of inequality, rampant crime, virulent anti-Semitism and ethnic violence, combined with legalized

gangsterism on a heroic scale and precipitous looting of public assets. ...

“By the late 1990s, national income had fallen by more than 50%. ... The market experiment has produced more orphans than Russia’s [20 million-plus WWII] wartime casualties, while epidemics of cholera and typhus have re-emerged, millions of children suffer from malnutrition, and adult life expectancy has plunged.”

The 1990s was a downhill slide from “a centralized, publicly owned economy to ... robber-baron capitalism. ...

“For developing countries in particular,

the destruction of the second superpower — which had championed the anti-colonial movement and later the third-world cause — largely closed off the scope for different alliances and sources of aid and sharply increased their dependence on the West.”

NGOs as Western missionaries

Into the economic chaos and social dislocation came not only Western bankers, stockbrokers, real estate schemers and speculators. Every major corporation, including Rockefeller, Ford and the Soros foundations, religious groups and the U.S. Agency for International Development lavishly funded nongovernmental organizations.

These NGOs set up staffs and funded schools, religious organizations and publications to promote capitalist values, Western “democracy” and civil society and to glorify competition and private property. They wrote property laws and textbooks and were thoroughly enamored with Western capitalism.

The Yale Center for the Study of Globalization reported: “There are at least 600,000 registered nongovernmental, noncommercial organizations operating in Russia” in 2005.

Forces in the Russian Duma, the elected assembly, began a nationwide government campaign against foreign-funded NGOs. In 2012 USAID was kicked out of Russia. The “foreign agent” law put 33% of Russia’s NGOs out of business in 2013.

NATO expansion

The bankers’ policy was about subjugating and recolonizing not only Russia but all the countries of the former socialist bloc, including the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Republics.

In order to lock this violent and chaotic transformation in place, the U.S.-commanded military alliance, NATO, was expanded to include every East European country and former Soviet Republic, right up to the borders of Russia. In 2013-14 this untenable absorption came to a crisis over U.S. and German attempts to totally seize Ukraine.

During the years of violent transition to a capitalist economy, Ukraine had still maintained deep economic ties and extensive trade with Russia, but it also had increasing ties to the European Union. The EU, however, would not settle for sharing Ukraine with Russia. A total break was demanded by the bankers.

U.S. and EU seizure of Ukraine

When Ukraine President Viktor Yanukovich was negotiating about Ukraine’s entrance into the EU, the EU refused to allow Ukraine to continue trading with Russia. It demanded that Ukraine join NATO. This meant that the Crimea, the home of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet and only warm-water port, would be handed over to NATO.

To carry out a coup against the elected Ukrainian government, the Euromaidan movement, led by neoliberals and fascists, received enormous Western support and funding. The reactionary movement seized the center of the capital, Kiev, and held it for three months. U.S. and West European media and politicians poured into the encampment with unanimous support.

Despite Russian and Ukrainian government efforts to negotiate and a Russian pledge of debt cancellation and new funds, the elected Ukraine government was labeled “corrupt” and overthrown by a fascist gang, which seized government

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What’s at stake with SCOTUS nomination

Continued from page 1

Consider that the right to vote today is slowly but surely being weakened by the ultraright.

A sordid history of racist reaction

From a class point of view, even if a Black woman were to become a chief justice, it would not change the balance of power between the so-called liberal and so-called conservative positions. Even with this reality racist senators, like Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell from Kentucky, have already threatened to lead an opposition vote in the Senate of the nominee, accusing Biden of accommodating the “radical left.”

Whoever sits on this court, like with lower courts,

will not change the class character of this body. Just like the presidency, along with Democrats and Republicans in Congress, SCOTUS exists to legally uphold the private property rights of the billionaire ruling class and most importantly its laws that undermine the rights of untold millions of working and oppressed peoples.

If SCOTUS makes any progressive decisions, like the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision to desegregate schools or the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision — where an all-male, majority Republican court granted the right to abortion — a mass movement forced them to do so. It was SCOTUS which upheld the notorious Dred Scott decision in 1857 that denied full citizenship to Black people held in bondage. This court legalized segregation throughout the U.S. in Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896.

Solidarity with the most oppressed

Fighting white supremacy is decisive to building class solidarity. This can never be taken for granted by progressive and revolutionary forces. The individual right to political representation of the most oppressed, even in a bourgeois institution like SCOTUS, must be defended against the most racist elements like the



PHOTO: MARTHA VINEYARD'S MUSEUM

National Council of Negro Women members in 1956 promoting their campaign entitled “A Voiceless People is a Hopeless People.” This protest occurred 36 years after passage of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing the right of mainly white women to vote.

Stop the U.S. war against Russia!

Continued from page 1

the war with Russia.

On the afternoon of Feb. 5, we will gather online for a national rally to demonstrate the breadth of opposition to war. During the rally, photos of the morning visibility actions will be shared.

Signatories (in alphabetical order):

- Answer Coalition
- Black Alliance for Peace
- CODE Pink
- Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space
- International Action Center
- Massachusetts Peace Action
- Popular Resistance
- Task Force on the Americas
- United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC)
- U.S. Peace Council
- Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom – US
- World BEYOND War

To endorse the call and sign the petition to President Biden and U.N. Secretary General António Guterres, PLEASE VISIT: popularresistance.org/nowarwithrussia

TO REGISTER FOR THE FEBRUARY 5 NATIONAL RALLY PLEASE VISIT: bit.ly/StopWarWithRussia

Starbucks union drive reflects growing class consciousness

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As I wrote in my January 4 article in Workers World: “From a socialist perspective, this development in the consciousness of the working class cannot be overstated. We are seeing workers become more collectively aware of our world-historic role as agents of change in society, the only force that can bring about a revolutionary break from capitalist exploitation.

“Workers across the board are no longer content with acting as passive observers to their own exploitation. If this kind of awareness can continue to reach outside of these pockets of struggle and into other workplaces, apartment buildings and the broader community, a classwide perspective will be reached that can arm working-class and oppressed people with the ideological tools needed to achieve liberation, beyond mere pay raises and contractual benefits.” (workers.org/2022/01/60928)

It is our job as revolutionaries to make sure the working class realizes the world historic role we collectively play. As union drives spread across the country and across different companies, we will see workers eager to organize in places where it might not have been possible a year or two ago.

Our job is not only to ensure the organizing efforts spread but to provide political training to the young organizers at the head of this movement. □

U.S. puts Europe in the trenches against the invented enemy

By Manlio Dinucci

Published Jan. 25 in *Il Manifesto*, in the author’s “Art of War” column.

“As a precautionary measure against a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine,” the U.S. State Department ordered the evacuation of family members and part of the staff from the U.S. Embassy in Kiev, which with 900 officials is among the largest in Europe, and raised the warning to U.S. citizens not to go to Ukraine to level 4 risk, the maximum. Immediately afterwards the British Foreign Office announced, with the same motivation, the withdrawal of staff from the British Embassy in Kiev.

These operations of psychological warfare, aimed at creating alarm about an imminent Russian invasion of Ukraine and the three Baltic republics, set the scene for a further and even more dangerous U.S.-NATO escalation against Russia.

The White House announced that President [Joe] Biden is considering “deploying several thousand U.S. troops, warships and aircraft to NATO countries in the Baltics and Eastern Europe.” Initially, 5,500 U.S. troops are expected to arrive, joining the 4,000 already in Poland and followed by thousands more, extending their permanent deployment to the Baltic, as Latvia has requested.

Special rail convoys are already transporting U.S. tanks from Poland to Ukraine, whose armed forces have been trained for years and are, in fact, commanded by hundreds of U.S. military advisers and instructors, flanked by others from NATO. Washington, which last year provided Kiev with weapons for the official amount of \$650 million, has authorized Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to transfer U.S. weapons in their possession to Ukraine, in particular Javelin missiles. Other



NATO partners, including the U.S., kick off the 12-day maritime exercise “Neptune Strike ’22” in the Mediterranean Sea, Jan. 24.

armaments are provided by Great Britain and the Czech Republic.

NATO reported that the European countries of the Alliance are putting their armed forces in a state of operational readiness and deploying other warships and fighter planes to Eastern Europe. Italy, with Eurofighter fighter-bombers, has taken command of NATO’s “enhanced air policing” mission in Romania. France is ready to send troops to Romania under NATO command. Spain is sending warships in NATO naval forces and fighter-bombers to Bulgaria. The Netherlands is preparing to send F-35 fighters to Bulgaria. Denmark is sending F-16 fighters to Lithuania.

Yesterday, in the Mediterranean Sea, the great NATO naval exercise Neptune Strike ’22 began, under the command of Vice Admiral Eugene Black, commander of the Sixth Fleet with headquarters in Naples Capodichino and base in Gaeta. The exercise, which lasts 12 days, involves the U.S. nuclear aircraft carrier Harry Truman with its battle group, including five missile launchers ready for nuclear attack to “reassure the European Allies especially those threatened by Russia on the eastern front.”

Immediately after the NATO Neptune Strike ’22, the exercise

Mission Clemenceau ’22 will take place in February. It will involve, in an “operation of three aircraft carriers,” the French nuclear-powered Charles de Gaulle with its battle group, including a nuclear attack submarine, which will enter the Adriatic; the Harry Truman with its battle group; and the Italian aircraft carrier Cavour with the F-35 on board. This exercise, of course, is also directed against Russia.

While NATO demands that Russia “de-escalate,” warning that “any further aggression will involve a high cost for Moscow,” the foreign ministers of the European Union — meeting in Brussels and connected by teleconference with U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken — have decreed yesterday other measures against Russia.

The European Union of 27, of which 21 belong to NATO under U.S. command, echoed NATO’s warning to Russia, declaring that “any further military aggression against Ukraine would have very serious consequences for Russia.” In this way the EU participates in the strategy of tension, through which the U.S. creates splits among European countries to keep the EU under U.S. influence. □

U.S.-EU vs. Russia-China: Which side are you on?

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essentially a territory of speculative capitalism, a banking center and world trade platform.

Hong Kong’s service sector accounts for 86.5% of the territory’s GDP and industry only 4%, which accounts for the social disposition of the nearly 8 million inhabitants. It is one of the richest areas in Asia and the world with a per capita GDP of \$37,191, compared to China’s average of \$8,840 (2021).

Not surprising is the nostalgia for British colonization or the repeated call for U.S. intervention, which the protesters never hid. The movement was essentially a reaction against full integration of Hong Kong into China.

But beyond this internal origin, with its own motivations, there is something more. The extremes the protests reached would have been impossible without the encouragement given to the movement from outside, as was apparent. Still, the case was handled with restraint by the Chinese authorities, not least because they evidently did not want to turn the protesters into “pro-democracy” martyrs.

A figure above suspicion [of sympathizing with China], Portuguese General García Leandro, former governor of Macau, said in 2019 (Portuguese News Agency Lusa), “Beijing has maintained a great deal of restraint.” He added: “You get the feeling that there is a little hand from outside pushing there.” Suspects? “I don’t want to get into speculation, but it’s clear that there may be Taiwan there; there may be the United States there.”

Once again, to not see, or to devalue, the hand of the West in the matter — and to consider everything that happened as entirely genuine, spontaneous and “popular” — would be not only to ignore the facts, but also to ignore that practically all social movements, practically everywhere in the world, are inevitably overshadowed by the interests and hegemony of the Triad.

As comparisons also speak, the “heavy sentences” for the Hong Kong activists’ crimes of opinion are a far cry from the punishment of persecution, character destruction and possible life imprisonment meted out by the U.S. and its acolytes to Julian Assange — met with silence from almost the entire journalistic community and from the self-appointed defenders of human rights.

Smoke screens

I have no doubt that the revival of a revolutionary and internationalist workers’ movement would be the last thing the Western imperialist powers wish for. But is it this fear that leads them to make Putin and Xi Jinping their favorites? As much as the revolutionary left may wish for this revival, that is not the reality we are faced with.

The possibility that in the short term the international proletariat will have a say in world events is practically nil. Precisely because of this, imperialism can make Russia, China, Iran, Venezuela, Cuba, etc., the permanent targets of its attacks without fearing a massive, organized, international response from the peoples and workers. In the face of this weakness of the revolutionary forces, the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist left cannot invent pleasant future scenarios and evade taking a position in the face of present events.

What is at stake today is the imperialist offensive against the assertion of Russia and China for independence. This is vital not only because of these two countries

in themselves, but because this opens up prospects of new directions for many of the dependent countries that until now saw no way of escaping imperialist tutelage.

The support of Russia for Syria, or China for African and South American countries (even with obvious economic interest on China’s part), or both for Iran and Venezuela, are examples of this. It is this joint movement that threatens to reverse the world balance of power that has prevailed since World War II.

It is in the face of this conflict (and not another future, imaginable or desirable one) that the anti-capitalist left has to define itself. I see only one possible definition: Support anything that contributes to the sinking of Triad imperialism, particularly its head, the U.S. And this clearly implies supporting Russia and China

out of the country were a matter of economic survival.

Defense of Syria

The U.S.-led effort to overturn the government in Syria threatens to take another major trading partner away from Russia. Russia’s only naval facility on the Mediterranean is in Syria.

The appeal of the Syrian government to Russia for assistance, after four years of war, tens of thousands of mercenaries and funded extremist forces, and a year of U.S. and 10 other countries bombing Syria, has now led to daily confrontations.

There is a broad agreement that if U.S. plans succeed in overturning the government in Syria, following the overturns that have occurred in Iraq and Libya, then Russia and Iran are undeniably next on the list.

Russia’s assistance to Syria is of a defensive character. Self-defense is a critical link in the global axis of resistance, based not on ideology but necessity. Without Russian help, Syria would have fallen.

But with significant Western funding for development blocked, new avenues have opened. Russia is increasingly relying on China for loans, is now providing 60,000 tons of wheat per month to Venezuela and has canceled Cuba’s \$30 billion Soviet-era debt.

The growing web of trade and economic

buildings on Feb. 22, 2014.

Faced with the loss of its only warm-water port, Russia took control of the small peninsula and the Russian port in Crimea.

Fearing a wave of privatizations and quick industrial shutdowns that have come with every step of capitalist restructuring, the workers’ movement in Eastern Ukraine, the industrial heartland, seized factories and communication centers in self-defense against the fascist coup in Kiev.

The result was that Russia lost a major trading partner. Its sphere of economic relations became much smaller, and it faced an all-out effort at economic strangulation.

Banks and sanctions

Economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. and EU at this time were specifically designed to hit Russia in its energy sector, where the country is most vulnerable.

Suddenly no U.S. oil company could do business with Russia, nor could any companies sell drilling technology to access oil and gas reserves. The sanctions restrict access to Western financial markets. U.S. banks cannot issue long-term loans to Russian businesses for energy-focused projects.

Russian state banks are now excluded from raising long-term loans in the EU. The U.S. also put sanctions on Russian banks, banning U.S. companies from receiving or loaning money to them.

All this was intended to force the new capitalists around Putin to break with his policies and to submit to a total takeover to protect their own profits.

Russia is now on the defensive, and since 2014 it’s been clear that the imperialists’ plan is total dismemberment. Strengthening the state sector under Putin and tightening controls on foreign-funded NGOs and on capital flight

(and the other resistant countries) insofar as their politics mean a fight against the hegemony of the Triad.

This definition is all the more obligatory since, I am convinced, it will be in the breaches opened by this confrontation that the anti-capitalist left will find the path to renew and re-energize the international revolutionary movement that the current epoch lacks. □

Capitalist Russia: a target, not a superpower

Continued from page 7

relations among economic formations like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) and the Chinese One Belt One Road proposal are all signs of growing efforts among many targeted countries to fight isolation and resist imperialist dismemberment.


During discussion about global warming at the G20 meeting, it was the U.S. colossus that appeared increasingly isolated.

Sole superpower status has not benefited population

Military expenditures continually drain every needed social program in the U.S. But they are extremely profitable for the largest corporations, such as DynCorp International, Boeing, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon.

According to the World Health Organization, U.S. life expectancy, ranked 31st globally, is one of the lowest in developed countries. It is the same for basic education; at 38th, the United States ranks behind every major industrialized country.

The measures for infant mortality, maternity care, housing and infrastructure reflect the true cost at home of U.S. imperialism’s determination to loot the world. □



WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

“By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity.”

– Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann,
President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009;
Foreign Minister of Nicaragua’s Sandinista government.

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Panamá, 1964: Una revolución popular antiimperialista

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asesinado y tirado su cadáver en el Corredor de Colón. A todo lo cual siguió un juicio para inculpar a sus compañeros del Partido del Pueblo de aquella ciudad.

La insurrección no fueron en vano

El sacrificio de los mártires y la insurrección popular de 1964 no fueron en vano, sino todo lo contrario, una victoria que se fue configurando en el tiempo y que hoy se siente sobre el país: se impuso el criterio, hasta ese momento sólo sostenido por sectores populares de izquierda, de que había que acabar con el estatuto colonial de 1903, derogar el Hay-Bunau Varilla y

negociar un nuevo tratado sobre el Canal de Panamá, que eliminara la “Zona”, las bases militares y traspasara la administración de la vía acuática en un plazo perentorio. El Tratado Torrijos-Carter de 1977 reflejó esas demandas, pese a sus enmiendas y al Pacto de Neutralidad.

La prosperidad económica que hoy campea sobre el país se debe, sin duda alguna, a la Gesta del 9 de Enero, porque está fundamentada en los ingresos que el canal está produciendo y que antes Panamá no recibía. Porque, contrario a lo que sostenía la oligarquía panameña que, hasta 1999, temía el retiro de las bases militares, se ha demostrado que: “la soberanía sí se come”.

Lamentablemente la prosperidad que el canal produce está siendo apropiada en su mayor parte por una clase social, que se ha llamado los nuevos “zonians”, que no es otra que los descendientes de la misma oligarquía que vendió al país en 1903, que durante cien años actuó como aliada interna del colonialismo norteamericano y que acusó de “comunistas” a los líderes populares del 64 y de “saqueadores y ladrones” a los Mártires.

Esa apropiación de los beneficios del canal, que es lo contrario de lo sostenido por Omar Torrijos cuando afirmó que se le debía dar el “uso más colectivo posible”, se debe al otro acontecimiento: la invasión norteamericana del 20 de Diciembre de 1989. □



Santiago de Cuba FOTO: ARCHIVO/CUBADEBATE

Cuba La próxima no será colonizada

Por Pedro Jorge Velázquez.
Resumen Latinoamericano, 18 de enero

Hay fracasos a los que se le coge el gusto, digo yo; ¿o cómo puede ser posible que los derrotados se regeneren en formas nuevas de fracaso? ¿Será como esa sensación de que algún día resultará, después de tanto intentarlo?

Así ha nacido Cuba Próxima, heredera del fracaso de Cuba Posible, un proyecto que Roberto Veiga fundó durante el auge del obamismo para intentar, otra vez, colonizar el proyecto de nación que se construye en Cuba contra toda forma de dominación imperial.

La imagen del fracaso está pintada en la cara de esta nueva organización pagada por el gobierno de Estados Unidos, que se viste con el traje de “ONG”, y que esperó tranquilamente a que la era de Biden llegara para mostrar sus dientes a través del posible nuevo acercamiento que no ocurrió, pues el presidente de Estados Unidos solo ha seguido la agenda de su predecesor.

Nacieron apoyando al “heroico” Yuniór García, quien se marchó a Europa no bien tuvo la oportunidad, a beber las “mieles del capitalismo”, al cual venera, después de crear toda una campaña donde figuraba como el “mesías”.

Además, como toda organización títere,

se ancló rápidamente a nombres extranjeros: el ciclo sin fin de la contrarrevolución. Vuelven a tratar de esclavizarnos a través de los señores y las señoras que desde sus balcones en el primer mundo pretenden pasar por encima de la voluntad de los pueblos.

Peter Hakim, presidente emérito y miembro principal de Diálogo Interamericano, comité con sede en Washington que aborda asuntos del Hemisferio Occidental, integra actualmente el Consejo Asesor Internacional de Cuba Próxima, junto a otros personajes. ¿Esto les parece conocido? ¿Gobiernos títeres? Cualquier coincidencia no es pura casualidad.

Dicen tener como objetivo primero “la ideación de una República plural y democrática en Cuba, alejada de cualquier tipo de autoritarismo”, aunque por su parte quieran, autoritariamente, implantar esa República neocolonial por encima del voto democrático ejercido en las urnas cubanas, donde se eligió este proyecto de nación que hoy construimos. Así funciona su paripé.

Se declaran, además, amantes de la desestabilización y la violencia, pues anuncian que Cuba Próxima “está marcada por los hitos del 11J y el 15N”, dos intentos de golpe que utilizaron entrada la crisis económica y sanitaria provocada en Cuba, entre

otras cosas, por una pandemia mundial y un bloqueo económico impuesto precisamente por los que financian Cuba Próxima. ¡Qué bien se ve que ninguno vivió en carne propia lo que fue el 11 de julio, ni saben que aquí el 15N no pasó nada de lo que andaban buscando: lo que hubo fue celebración y alegría por la paz!

Cuba Próxima apostará –según declaran– “por la formación de un país próspero, libre, laborioso, generoso, democrático”. O sea, no reconocen que Cuba sea nada de eso, ni siquiera que seamos un pueblo laborioso, porque todo el que trabaje para y con los humildes, para y con la Revolución, no es para ellos un obrador, no es para ellos un fundador. ¿Para fundar, para crear, para ser laborioso, hay acaso que servir al imperio? ¡Qué raro!

Ahora, para rozar aún más el ridículo, han creado un “gobierno en la sombra”. Sí, exactamente, al estilo Juan Guaidó, con la diferencia de que en este caso hay varios autonombramientos incluidos: Roberto Veiga, presidente; Carlos Cabrera, vicepresidente; Alexei Padilla, coordinador de comunicación; Massiel Rubio, de cultura... y una lista larga de investiduras; pero, aunque usted no lo crea, funciona en sus cabezas, porque basados en ella cobran y conspiran contra el socialismo cubano y la igualdad social.

La derecha se declara, muestra su verdadera identidad. Ya no podrán más vestirse de izquierda quienes pasaron mucho tiempo haciendo el cuento de la buena pipa, con sus entelequias sobre la desigualdad que nunca han puesto en práctica, ni han luchado para que se reduzca. Sin embargo, ahora terminan agrupándose con los que siempre han querido derogar nuestras conquistas más preciadas. Ahora se han unido al plan hegemónico del imperio para destruirlas.

“Llevamos quizá demasiado tiempo instalados en la denuncia y el diagnóstico, pero los cubanos necesitan saber cómo gobernaríamos los opositores”, así han presentado este gobierno autoproclamado, donde solo hay algo en común: la ambición de poder, el ego hipnótico que desconoce el sacrificio colectivo que hacemos como pueblo para buscar una profundización del Estado socialista de derecho, para el cual ellos no han aportado ni un comino, y sin embargo, buscan su destrucción definitiva.

Nuevamente la esencia martiana de los que aman y fundan nos hace ver lo que no son, lo que no quieren y por lo que no luchan. Cuba Próxima no es la Cuba que yo quiero. No es la Cuba por la que hemos luchado. La Cuba próxima seguramente será difícil, pero no será colonizada. □

Panamá, 9 de Enero de 1964: Una revolución popular antiimperialista

Por Olmedo Beluche

El 9 de Enero marcó un punto de quiebre de la política norteamericana en Panamá. En esa fecha estallaron 60 años de contradicciones acumuladas, fue una verdadera revolución popular en el pleno sentido de la palabra. Allí se hizo añicos el sueño de riquezas que la oligarquía panameña había pintado en 1903 para imponer un estado “independiente” que en realidad era un “protectorado”, es decir, una colonia norteamericana, así como el oprobioso Tratado Hay Bunau Varilla que entregó el canal a EE.UU. “como si fueran soberanos”.

Hay que recordar que los abuelos de nuestra oligarquía, desde 1903, se sintieron cómodos con la situación colonial, creyéndose yanquis de corazón. A los sectores populares, en cambio, les costó encontrar claridad en la construcción un proyecto político propio, pero desde el principio pusieron el pecho en la defensa de la soberanía, porque comprendieron que la prosperidad del país y la propia dependencia de ella.

En 1964 eclosionó la experiencia acumulada del pueblo panameño, dirigida por sus sectores más combativos, que habían enfrentado la presencia colonial imperialista: en la Huelga Inquilinaria de 1925, en el Movimiento Antibases de 1947, así como las grandes gestas del movimiento estudiantil de los años 50, la Operación Soberanía y la Siembra de Banderas, en un ambiente fermentado por el influjo de la Revolución Cubana.

El 9 de Enero, al conocerse de la agresión sufrida por los estudiantes del

Instituto Nacional, de la bandera mancillada por los “zonians”, de la brutal represión de la soldadesca yanqui, el pueblo panameño reventó de indignación y se hizo presente en masa, espontáneamente, para cruzar la cerca (nuestro “muro de Berlín”) y plantar una bandera.

Allí, en la barricada o simplemente tumados en el piso en torno a lo que hoy es el “Palacio Legislativo”, miles se enfrentaron con valor a la metralla de los tanques, dirigidos por caudillos populares de las organizaciones de izquierda, desde algunas alas juveniles del Partido del Pueblo (Comunista) con Adolfo Ahumada o Víctor Ávila y otros, los de Vanguardia de Acción Nacional (VAN) de Jorge Turner y las huestes de lo que sería después el Movimiento de Unidad Revolucionaria (MUR) de Floyd Britton.

Embriones de doble poder

Un “pueblo” que socialmente era un “proletariado joven, vigoroso y en rápida expansión” (expresión del industrialismo de los 50-60), se organizó en los Comités de Defensa de la Soberanía. Esos comités fueron embriones de doble poder que llenaron el vacío de poder ante la ausencia del gobierno-estado oligárquico el cual se borró de las calles. Estos comités organizaron desde la consecución de armas, hasta la defensa y el ataque, y la organización civil que se expresó en donaciones de sangre y transporte de heridos a los hospitales.

Al respecto, es recomendable leer: “Significado y consecuencias del 9 de Enero”, José Eugenio Stoute, Revista Mujeres Adelante No. 13, enero, febrero



Una insurgencia popular en Panamá contra el imperialismo estadounidense.

y marzo de 1989.

Una columna enorme de gente, entre 40 y 60 mil personas, según Stoute, rodeó la Presidencia de la República exigiendo armas para enfrentar la agresión imperialista.

El gobierno oligárquico de Roberto Chiari, hijo del ex presidente Rodolfo Chiari, que en 1925 pidió la intervención militar de EE.UU. para aplastar la Huelga Inquilinaria, decidió dos medidas contrapuestas: una, encuartelar a la Guardia Nacional, para que sus armas no fueran usadas por el pueblo en defensa de la soberanía; dos, tratando de apaciguar la furia popular, rompe relaciones diplomáticas con Washington, una medida

desesperada que no da cuenta de ninguna vocación nacionalista de la oligarquía, sino del pavor que sentía el gobierno ante la insurrección que amenazaba con entrar a la fuerza en el Palacio de las Garzas.

Tres días duró el pueblo insurrecto en las calles de las ciudades de Panamá y Colón. Tres días en que las acciones no se limitaron a plantar banderas, sino a enfrentar, con las pocas armas de que se disponía, a las tropas imperialistas.

Hubo varios muertos reconocidos por el “gobernador” de la Zona del Canal. Tres días en que todo símbolo o propiedad de empresas norteamericanas fue saqueado y quemado, desde el famoso edificio de la aerolínea Panamerican hasta las sucursales bancarias del Chase Manhattan Bank. Decenas de automóviles con placas de la Zona fueron volteados y quemados a lo largo de las calles de la ciudad.

El gobierno que cobardemente se había escondido empezó a sacar a la Guardia Nacional de los cuarteles hacia el 11 y 12 de Enero. Pero no lo hizo para defender a la nación agredida, sino para detener a los dirigentes populares de la insurrección, una gran cantidad de los cuales fue a parar a la cárcel Modelo.

La labor represiva de los gobiernos liberales de Chiari y Robles seguiría en los años subsiguientes, cebándose contra el líder estudiantil colonense Juan Navas, que había sido herido durante la Gesta de Enero y había viajado a la Unión Soviética para recibir tratamiento médico. A su regreso de la URSS, en 1966, fue arrestado por la policía política del régimen, torturado,

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