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Coup attempt: Is the danger over?

Jail Trump, his fascist mob, and killer cops

By Sharon Black

The storming of the U.S. Capitol by white supremacists incited by President Trump, which temporarily halted the certification vote, had to have the collusion of the federal and local police agencies. It is implausible that there was no preparation when these very events had been telegraphed for months by Trump himself. “Civil War January 6, 2021” was printed on the MAGA sweatshirts; this was no secret. The only way that the racist mob could freely occupy the Capitol is if the police made a deliberate decision to let them.

The world watched while armed fascists carrying Confederate flags and metal battering rams breached metal detectors, held Congress hostage, took over offices, smashed windows, openly carried ladders to scale the Capitol, posed for selfies with police and were eventually escorted out of the building without initial arrests.

Two pipe bombs were confiscated, along with weapons and ammunition, and five people are reported dead. A KKK-inspired noose was erected on the west end of the Capitol.

This was reminiscent of how the Alabama authorities allowed the Klan to attack the freedom riders in Anniston, Ala., on May 14, 1961, nearly killing several people. Local police did nothing for at least 15 minutes.

The storming of the Capitol was consciously in the tradition of the previous overthrow of the democratically elected, majority-rule Reconstruction governments in South Carolina, Mississippi, Louisiana and the rest, which culminated in the coup and massacre in Wilmington, N.C., in 1898.

Contrast this with Kenosha, Wis. In anticipation of community anger at the refusal to indict police in the shooting of Jacob Blake, streets were shut down and the National Guard was mobilized in advance of the acquittal.

What happens next, is the danger over?

Biden’s extremely weak response is deeply problematic in terms of pushing back the fascists and what it means for the future. Rather than making a call for disbanding the fascist thugs, the racist mob or arresting Trump, Biden called for unity.

The world watched while armed fascists carrying Confederate flags and metal battering rams breached metal detectors, smashed windows and were escorted out of the building without initial arrests

Unity with who and for what?

Here was an opportunity for Biden and the Democrats to strike a definitive blow against Trump and the movement he has spawned. He could have called for Trump’s arrest or made an appeal for people to mobilize against the racist and reactionary threat. He didn’t.

In many respects it was a betrayal of the Black voters, especially in Georgia, who courageously resisted racist threats to vote against racism and reaction.

The timidity of Biden and the Democrats is not surprising.

What underlies these developments and the fascist reaction is the contraction of the capitalist economy and the deep decay and crisis of the system. While seemingly hidden, it supersedes the will of capitalist politicians who attempt to represent one section or another of the ruling class.

It is an important lesson. The capitalist class, regardless of its divisions, has no will to put these racist scum in the dustbin of history. Like the bankers and businesses that were financing Hitler up to the last bullet, they are hedging their bets. They are reluctant to crush them.

Danger of imperialist war in the next 14 days

We would be seriously amiss to not state the obvious threat of imperialist war most immediately aimed at Iran, but ultimately — regardless of which administration is in office — directed at any country that seeks to chart an independent course from imperialism — whether it is Venezuela, China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Cuba or Zimbabwe. See the call for emergency response actions below.

There is still over a weekdays before the Jan. 20 inauguration. Just as we demand the jailing of killer cops, we must mobilize the movement to call for the immediate arrest of Trump and stop the white supremacist mobs.

Trump should not only be arrested but also extradited for war crimes. Trump is now wanted by Iraq for ordering the assassination of Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani and Iraqi Commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis; Iran has also issued an arrest warrant through Interpol (International Criminal Police Organization) for the same crime.

The antidote to fascism is workers’ solidarity and socialism

While billionaires are raking in unprecedented profits, cashing in while the deaths of COVID victims pile up, the vast majority of the people are finding themselves living in deeper misery. Capitalist governments have not been able to stop the COVID pandemic and have failed miserably at providing health care for the vast majority. Widespread unemployment threatens not only low wage workers but also the middle class. Millions are facing evictions, foreclosures and utility shutoffs.

Traditionally it is the middle class, the small business owners, and others like them who are isolated and in despair, who are duped by fascist ideology. It is only a strong, united anti-capitalist and anti-racist working-class movement that can pull them away from such a destructive dead end.

“Such a situation can only exist in periods of extraordinarily acute social crisis when the capitalist state is so torn by accumulating inner contradictions and weakened by its inability to overcome its social crisis that it inevitably gives way to extra-parliamentary, extra-legal forms of rule,” Sam Marcy said of the struggle against fascism.

It will take the organization of the broad working class and the leadership of its most oppressed, Black, Brown, Latinx, Indigenous, Arab, Asian, women and LGBTQ2S people, to both develop a defense of its own class interests and place socialism on the agenda. 📌



Trump’s Wisconsin coup attempt 2

Fascist violence 2

Wall St’s party 3

No \$2,000

The Housing War 4

Cuba and COVID 5



END Cuba Blockade

Duryea Green 6

COVID and prison

Biden’s picks 7

Trump’s Executions

Blood & Oil 8

Spies spy 11

Trump big loser 12

Iran, Iraq 13

Stop U.S. attacks on Iran. No war! End sanctions!

We call on the anti-war and anti-imperialist movement, workers’ and community organizations to be on alert for the possibility of a U.S. military attack on Iran. We urge the movement to join us in calling for emergency day-after protests in cities around the country to demand “Hands Off Iran” in the event of a strike by the Pentagon or its proxies. The U.S. may use Israel to initiate an attack.

Since Election Day, the Trump administration has escalated war threats against Iran. On Nov. 27, Israel assassinated Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakrizadeh Mahabadi. Israel is a proxy state completely dependent on Washington. It could not have carried out such a provocative act without prior approval from the U.S. government.

On Nov. 30, the U.S. aircraft carrier

Nimitz and its strike group of guided-missile cruisers and destroyers entered the Arab/Persian Gulf off the coast of Iran. On Dec. 10, U.S. B-52 bombers based in Louisiana flew another run over the gulf off the coast of Iran. Saudi, Bahraini and Qatari warplanes — made in the USA — flew with them. On Dec. 21, the U.S. nuclear submarine Georgia, ac-

Continued on page 13

On Facebook:
EMERGENCY
Day-After Protests:
U.S. HANDS OFF
IRAN

Before the attack on the U.S. Capitol: Trump's Wisconsin coup attempt

By Stephen Millies

After a fascist mob was allowed to take over the U.S. Capitol, Trump's attempts to overturn the election can't be dismissed as a clown show. It should have been obvious weeks before.

Wisconsin showed how serious it was. Trump lost the state by just 20,682 votes, a little more than six-tenths of a percentage point. It was still a significant victory against racism.

Trump's campaign was nonstop racism. It spent millions on racist Facebook ads attacking the Black Lives Matter movement.

The ads targeted both Minnesota and Wisconsin, where two of the biggest anti-racist rebellions took place. Minneapolis exploded after the police torture murder of George Floyd on May 25.

Demonstrations began in Kenosha, Wis., after Jacob Blake had been shot seven times by policeman Rusten Sheskey on Aug. 23. The unarmed Black father was shot while getting into his own car. Some of Blake's children were in the back seat.

Kenosha County District Attorney Michael Graveley outrageously announced on Jan. 5 that no charges would be brought against Sheskey, who left Jacob Blake paralyzed.

Trump himself came to Kenosha. He didn't visit Blake's family or offer condolences. The White House klansman spewed hate at a racist pep rally instead.

Trump's supporters defended Kyle Rittenhouse, who killed two anti-racist activists in Kenosha. YouTube ads ran claiming "lawless criminals terrorize Kenosha."

Trump lost Wisconsin, but he didn't give up. The Trump campaign spent \$3 million on a recount only to see its margin of defeat increased.

Despite this recount, Wisconsin's state Supreme Court voted on Dec. 14 by just a 4-3 margin to uphold the election results.

Three of the justices wanted to throw out hundreds of thousands of votes in Milwaukee and Dane counties. (Dane County includes the state



Protest in Kenosha, Wis., where Jacob Blake was shot seven times by policeman Rusten Sheskey on Aug. 23.

capital of Madison.)

More than three-quarters of the state's Black population live in these two counties.

The deciding vote was cast by a right-winger, Brian Hagedorn. He's such a bigot that he founded an anti-LGBTQ2S private elementary school, the Augustine Academy in Waukesha.

Hagedorn wasn't seeking redemption. The judge's decision was on behalf of the national ruling class, most of whom think it's politically dangerous to throw out so many votes.

They feared millions of people taking to the streets as over 20 million people did during the Black Lives Matter demonstrations.

That prospect didn't prevent three state Supreme Court justices from wanting to overturn the election results and declare that Black votes don't matter.

Racism and union busting

Behind the three judges who were willing to risk another people's up-

rising were a series of Badger State billionaires.

Among them are Richard Uihlein and Elizabeth Uihlein, who together own the nonunion Uline business supply outfit. They gave nearly \$40 million to racist candidates in the 2018 elections.

Liz Uihlein claimed "the media is overblowing COVID-19" in a March 13 email. Eight months later, both the Uihleins contracted the coronavirus.

Then there's the Kohler family's \$8.3 billion toilet-making fortune. It took over 60 years for Kohler workers to get a union.

An 1897 strike was smashed. So was the 1934 strike in the family's company town of Kohler — just west of Sheboygan — where two workers were killed.

Only after a strike starting in 1954 and lasting more than six years was Kohler forced to sign a union contract with Local 833 of the United Auto Workers. Two members of the Kohler strikebreaking family were Wisconsin governors.

Milwaukee was the last big manufacturing city in the U.S. that the Great Migration of African Americans came to. By 1970, many of Milwaukee's factories were dependent on Black labor.

Among them was A.O. Smith, which manufactured a quarter of the auto frames used by General Motors. The 360-acre facility was known as "the plant" in the local Black community because so many African Americans were employed there.

Capitalism's need for Black workers didn't prevent Milwaukee from being the most segregated city in the United States. Every year, Vel Phillips, the first Black member and first woman member of Milwaukee's City Council, would introduce a fair housing ordinance.

It would be voted down almost unanimously. Father Jim Groppi led nightly "open housing" marches in 1966 and 1967, some of which were violently attacked by racists.

The local fair housing law was only passed after Milwaukee's Black rebellion in 1967, in which four people were killed.

Destroying jobs and filling prisons

The big Allen-Bradley plant on the city's South Side refused for years to hire Black or Latinx workers. That's the reason super racist Lester Maddox came to campaign there when he ran for president in 1976.

Maddox had closed his Atlanta chicken shack so he wouldn't have to serve Black people. The fascist handed out ax handles to his white customers to attack Black people.

The Bradleys sold their electrical controls company to Rockwell International in 1985. Much of the proceeds went to the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, which now has over \$800 million in assets.

All of it is used to promote hate. Among its recipients is Charles Murray, co-author of "The Bell Curve," which claimed there were differences in intelligence between Blacks and whites.

This is Hitler stuff and Murray got a \$250,000 prize from the Bradley Foundation for it in 2016. Harry Bradley was a founding member of the John Birch Society, whose headquarters are located in Appleton, Wis.

Between 1977 and 1992, 55,000 factory jobs were destroyed in Milwaukee County according to the Census of Manufactures. Most of them were union jobs.

But there was an increase of 66,000 manufacturing jobs in the rest of the state, which is overwhelmingly white. Big capital wanted to get away from Black workers and unions.

Instead of Black workers getting jobs in the big plants, they were being railroaded to big prisons.

The 53206 ZIP code touches the now-closed A.O. Smith plant where over 7,000 workers used to be employed. Sixty-two percent of the Black adult men there are either incarcerated or have been in prison.

In 2010, slightly more than one in 25 Black people in Wisconsin were locked up. Billionaire families like the Uihleins and the Bradleys have increased the prison population by eight times since the early 1960s.

This is the viciousness that was rejected by poor and working people in Wisconsin. ■

Fascist violence and the form of the state

By Sam Marcy

Below is an excerpt from an article by Sam Marcy, a leading Marxist thinker and fighter of the second half of the 20th century. It was written shortly after Ronald Reagan's inauguration in 1981 — that is, at the beginning of the long period of reaction that is peaking today.

Marcy argues for the importance of Marxist clarity on the difference between violence by the bourgeois-democratic state, however brutal, and that of fascist organizations, "particularly when they are armed and supported materially by right-wing, disaffected, but powerful elements of the ruling capitalist establishment, constitute a threatening parallel form to the legal (bourgeois-democratic) capitalist state."

What is completely left out of consideration is that the spread of fascist organizations takes place in a vastly different, if not wholly new, social, political, and economic situation. The entire social environment in which the spread of this evil disease takes place imparts to it a significance which far surpasses the numerical strength of these organizations.

It is this which adds a really new dimension to the perilous growth of this virulent disease. Fascist violence has been endemic to the maintenance of the domination of the ruling class in the U.S. for a number of decades. It is, however, exceptionally important to distinguish between the violence which emanates directly and openly from the capitalist state, and the extra-legal,

extra-governmental violence of fascist organizations.

The capitalist state is itself, of course, the main generator of force and violence. In its role as an instrument of capitalist domination over the working class and the oppressed, it operates as an organ of suppression in order to maintain and secure its rule over the masses.

Differentiate between government and extra-legal violence

Violence practiced upon the working class and the oppressed is therefore a concomitant element of the rule of the oppressing and exploiting bourgeoisie. Notwithstanding the viciousness, ferociousness or magnitude of the violence which the ruling class visits upon the oppressed, it must nevertheless be considered

as violence within the framework of the bourgeois legal ("democratic") system.

Such violence must be differentiated from, and not be confused with, the extra-legal, extra-governmental violence which is the essential characteristic of fascist organizations of the type under discussion. It is, of course, absolutely true that both legal and extra-legal violence have coexisted along with the bourgeois state since the very inception of the state itself.

In the U.S., legal and extra-legal violence have existed side-by-side for longer than a century. Ku Klux Klan violence is a principal example of how extra-legal violence visited upon the oppressed masses coexists with the

Continued on page 3

Wall Street's New Year's party: Dancing on the backs of poor workers

By Gary Wilson

“Wall Street sets new highs to end 2020,” the Associated Press reported on Jan. 1, 2021.

“Wall Street closed out a tumultuous year for stocks with more record highs on Thursday, a fitting coda to the market’s stunning comeback from its historic plunge in the early weeks of the coronavirus pandemic,” AP reported.

Look at the economy. Some 19.5 million workers are officially unemployed, four times as many as last year at this time. At least another 10 million are unemployed but not included in the official count. Jobs continue to be cut as rising coronavirus infections keep many people at home and state and local governments reimpose restrictions.

Over one-third of the adult population in the U.S. faces eviction or home foreclosure in the next two months according to new data from a U.S. Census Bureau survey. South Dakota, South Carolina, Georgia and Oregon have more than a half of all the households facing eviction or foreclosure.

In some states, food bank lines stretch for miles. Even before the pandemic hit, 13.7 million households, or 10.5% of all U.S. households, experienced food insecurity at some point during 2019, according to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Convert household numbers to people numbers and you get 35 million who couldn’t get enough food. That number doubled during the last year, according to researchers at Northwestern University.

Tens of millions of working-class people have fallen into poverty and

hunger or are near that edge. Stimulus money has mostly gone to big corporations. Over 160,000 small businesses have closed.

The rich got richer

Meanwhile, the richest 500 people on the planet added \$1.8 trillion to their combined wealth in 2020, accumulating a total net worth of \$7.6 trillion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

Walmart and Target reported record sales. Amazon tripled its profits. Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Microsoft now make up 20% of the stock market’s total worth. The tech industry has achieved an unparalleled level of wealth and dominance.

So Wall Street is having a party.

With huge injections of credit by the Federal Reserve Bank at interest rates near zero, and the massive government stimulus payments to big business, the large corporations stockpiled the government-backed money, buying back their own shares or other financial assets. The stock market rocketed to an all-time high.

Wall Street bets on austerity, reduced wages

Wall Street’s rise is betting that the pandemic and mass unemployment, general poverty, hunger and homelessness will force workers to return to work at much lower wages. This will raise the ratio of unpaid to paid labor, leading to a higher rate of profit as business returns to normal.

Then Wall Street expects that dividends will rise and with it stock market prices. In anticipation of the good times they see coming — for the capitalists, that is — stock mar-



Soldiers from the U.S. Army 36th Infantry Division help distribute food items during a Tarrant Area Food Bank mobile pantry event in Arlington, Texas, Nov. 20, 2020.

ket speculators have bid up the prices of stocks.

In the 1920s after the end of the “Spanish” flu epidemic — it actually first appeared in the U.S. — the stock market shot up to new highs, much like what is happening now. Profit rises were even higher, as productivity substantially exceeded real wages. Wealth inequality soared to the greatest level ever seen, with 0.01% owning 25% of the total wealth in the

U.S. That was an inequality level not seen since — until now. Some call it the return of the Roaring Twenties.

Of course, the Roaring Twenties ended with the Great Crash in the stock market of 1929-1930 and the ensuing Great Depression of the 1930s.

Inequality of wealth and income, poverty, homelessness and hunger rule the land while the stock market booms. That’s the current Roaring Twenties. 📌

Jeff Bezos says you don't deserve \$2,000

By Stephen Millies

Jeff Bezos has a fortune of \$194 billion. Just in the United States, over a third of a million people have died from the coronavirus.

The tragedy has been a gold mine for the owner of Amazon. Bezos’ stash gained another \$79 billion in 2020.

Yet the richest man on earth doesn’t think you deserve a \$2,000 stimulus check. His personally owned newspaper, the Washington Post, came out against the proposed \$2,000 checks in a Dec. 29 editorial.

The Post calls this “a bad idea.” It attacked “the progressive left, spearheaded by Sen. Bernie Sanders,” for saying that the \$2,000 would go to desperate families.

Bezos’ newspaper claimed that “huge amounts [are] destined for perfectly comfortable families.” The same phony argument could be made against Social Security and Medicare.

The Washington Post is furious about the alleged \$464 billion cost but is silent about the twice as large annual cost of the Pentagon and U.S. spy agencies.

The real crime in the bill is cutting federal supplemental unemployment benefits from \$600 per week to just \$300.

The initial \$600 weekly amount actually reduced the poverty rate. Seven million more people were thrown below the absurdly low federal poverty level when the checks expired at the end of July.

Sweatshop billionaire

The attitude of Bezos’ mouthpiece shouldn’t surprise anyone. Mr. Amazon’s \$194 billion treasure is based on working to the bone hundreds of thousands of workers in the U.S. and other countries.

Amazon warehouse workers are monitored and if they can’t keep up with the pace they’re fired. Fifteen workers collapsed during a 2011 heat wave at an Amazon warehouse in Breinigsville, Pa., 11 miles from Allentown.

The company knew of the health dangers but refused to reduce the line speed. Amazon instead parked ambulances outside the door.

Even before Bezos bought it, the Washington Post was a company town newspaper, the “company” being the CIA and the military-industrial complex. Its real name should be the Pentagon Post.

The Post broke the 1976-1977 strike of its printing press operators. This defeat of labor whetted the appetite of other union busting capitalists.

Poor and working people — led by Black, Indigenous and Latinx voters — defeated Trump by over 7 million votes. But all the capitalists, landlords and cops have some Trump in them.

Just in order to live, we have to struggle. Union organizing drives at Amazon, Walmart and Target are no more impossible than making Henry Ford sign a union contract in 1941.

The new year will be a fightback against all the billionaires. 📌

Fascist violence

Continued from page 2

legal forms of the capitalist state, and how one promotes the other.

Anti-labor violence employed on a huge scale for many decades by individual employers and industries has been of an extra-legal character. Most particularly noteworthy are strike-breaking organizations and the employment of underworld mobsters. “Right-to-work,” open-shop states are frequently the very same states which have either clandestinely or openly supported the Klan.

The pogroms visited upon oppressed nationalities in Czarist Russia are another example of how extra-legal forms of violence are carried out alongside with and encouraged and promoted by the legally constituted government. Pogrom violence in old Russia didn’t differ much from the massacres carried out by the Night Riders in the U.S.

Every capitalist state tolerates and occasionally promotes this sort of extra-legal violence. The difference, however, between fascist violence and other forms of illegal violence practiced by the government should be made clear.

For example, police brutality is frequently as vicious and as violent as that carried out by the fascists, and on occasion goes beyond legal limits (usually characterized by the

bourgeois press as “excessive”). The two should not be confused even though the police may, and often do, collaborate with the Klan, neo-Nazis and other fascist and neo-fascist organizations.

Fascist groups threaten bourgeois-democratic state

Fascist organizations in their embryonic form, particularly when they are armed and supported materially by right-wing, disaffected, but powerful elements of the ruling capitalist establishment, constitute a threatening parallel form to the legal (bourgeois-democratic) capitalist state.

While receiving encouragement and sustenance from the capitalist state, embryonic fascist forms at the same time rival and stand in antagonism to the bourgeois democratic state. If historical conditions favor them, they have the propensity and organic tendency to overpower the bourgeois-democratic form of the capitalist state.

Such a situation can only exist in periods of extraordinarily acute social crisis when the capitalist state is so torn by accumulating inner contradictions and weakened by its inability to overcome its social crisis that it inevitably gives way to extra-parliamentary, extra-legal forms of rule. 📌

Dispatches from the housing war

By Greg Butterfield

Jan. 1 — Millions of renters and homeowners received a last-minute reprieve when President Donald Trump finally signed the (pitiful, inadequate) congressional stimulus bill on Dec. 27 after several days' delay. The measure extended the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) eviction ban for another month, through Jan. 31, 2021 — just in time to put off a spate of New Year's evictions amidst the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Census Bureau survey released just before the holidays found that an incredible 35.3% of adults in the U.S. are “living in households not current on rent or mortgage where eviction or foreclosure in the next two months is either very likely or somewhat likely.”

“The survey found that residents of Washington, D.C., are the most likely to face eviction or foreclosure, with 67.3% of adults living in households where the prospect is at least somewhat likely,” Newsweek reported. “States with a majority of adults also likely to lose their homes include South Dakota, South Carolina, Georgia and Oregon.”

Desperate workers and families, faced with being thrown into winter streets, could finally take a breath when the stimulus bill was signed — but only just. The CDC eviction ban was extended for just another month, during which time high unemployment and the ravages of disease are unlikely to improve.

And the measure still requires that all back rent and mortgage payments be paid to the landlords and banks — meaning the massive debt crisis facing workers is only getting worse.

“The Federal stimulus bill extends the flimsy CDC ban on evictions (the one that requires you to swear to pay your landlord everything you can) to the end of January,” noted the Crown Heights Tenants Union. “All this moratorium does is require tenants to beg judges not to evict them.”

“It did not, for example, stop the ‘legal’ eviction of public school teacher Clianda Florence-Yarde and her three children in Rochester, N.Y., on Friday night.”

Florence-Yarde, a Black woman, was jailed, as were 15 housing activists who attempted to block the family's forcible eviction on Dec. 18. Florence-Yarde had withheld payments because of awful conditions and numerous code violations, which her landlord refused to correct.

Diane Yentel, president of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, told National Public Radio, “One of the flaws is that [the CDC ban is] not automatic, and so renters need to know that the protection exists and they need to know what actions to take in order to receive that protection.”

“The order is also being treated differently by judges around the U.S.,” notes NPR, “so outcomes vary wildly depending on where people live or what court they end up in,” citing the case of Tiffany Robinson, a Texas mother of three, who was evicted despite doing her best to ful-



The Red House eviction blockade in Portland, Ore.



Clianda Florence-Yarde speaks at a rally after her family's eviction in Rochester, N.Y.

fill the CDC requirements.

A quick survey of local news media across the U.S. is enough to show that this is a deep, widespread, country-wide crisis, not limited to the most expensive coastal cities. From Tampa, Fla., to Youngstown, Ohio, the story is the same: working-class families with few resources facing eviction, landlords hungrily preparing for mass evictions as soon as restrictions are lifted, and already overburdened tenants' advocates unable to meet the massive need for legal and material support.

Not a new crisis

As the Lower Hudson news site reported Dec. 21, “Before the pandemic, 48% of rental households in the nation were already ‘rent burdened,’ or paying more than 30% of their income towards rent, according to the 2018 American Community Survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau.”

“The majority of renter households below the poverty line spent at least half of their income toward rent in 2018, with one in four spending over 70% of their income toward housing costs, according to 2018 U.S. Census Bureau data.”

No wonder that the fight for housing rights has been among the most widespread working-class struggles in recent years, along with the movement to defend Black lives from police violence. Because of widespread housing discrimination, racist redlining by banks and attacks on public housing residents by white supremacist politicians, these struggles also overlap to a great extent.

Even before the current economic crisis, Black women were twice as likely to be evicted as white people in at least 17 states, according to Sandra Park, senior attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union Women's Rights Project.

“Unfortunately, the fallout will be borne most by women of color, who have also had to bear so much of the fallout of the pandemic and economic crisis overall,” Park told The 19th News.

Here are a few current hotspots in the housing struggle.

Portland: Red House defense

In early December, police in Portland, Ore., attempted to raid a house

in the gentrified North Portland neighborhood and evict the Kinney family. Their home, known as the Red House, is one of the few remaining Black and Indigenous-owned homes in what was once a predominantly Black neighborhood.

Activists supporting the Kinneys, who have camped out near the house since September, managed to fight off the cops. An “eviction blockade” has been established around the house, including barricades and spikes on the street, with 24-hour people's patrols to keep cops out. The defense of the Red House is being carried out in the militant spirit of the Black Lives uprising that has kept up a nightly presence in Portland since late May.

Bankers and developers have been attempting to steal the Kinney's house — owned by the family since 1955 — using Oregon's policy of “nonjudicial evictions” that allows for automatic foreclosures without the protections that would be present in a court case. The Kinneys and their supporters explain that this is just a modern version of Portland's long history of segregation and theft of Indigenous lands.

“Known white supremacists continue to illegally brandish arms without consequences,” the Kinney family said in a statement. “We refuse to be characterized as a violent movement when our leadership is rooted in an Afro-Indigenous ethic of land reclamation.”

For more information, visit RedHouseOnMississippi.com.

New Yorkers win stronger eviction ban

New York City is notorious for its exorbitant rents. Workers and families are forced to double, triple or quadruple up in cramped apartments, often owned by slumlords who refuse the most basic repairs for health and safety. According to the Coalition for the Homeless, nearly 60,000 New Yorkers were homeless on any given night in October 2020 — many of them children. That's twice as many as 10 years ago.

Politicians in City Hall and the New York state Capitol in Albany, including Mayor Bill de Blasio and Gov. Andrew Cuomo, are beholden to the interests of big landlords and real estate developers.

So it was an important victory for fighters for housing justice and all New York state residents when the state legislature and Cuomo were forced to enact a strengthened ban on evictions during a special session Dec. 28.

Under the measure, most evictions will be halted until May 1, 2021, as long as tenants and homeowners sign a declaration stating that “they have lost income or dealt with increased costs, or if moving would put them or a member of their household at higher risk of COVID-19 due to an underlying medical condition.”

“An eviction moratorium is only a temporary solution,” said Cea Weaver of the Upstate-Downstate Housing Alliance. “Between now and May 1, we have to come together as a movement, stronger than ever before, to ensure that all back rent accrued during the crisis is cleared. New York's leaders need to fund social and supportive housing, and make a real plan to end homelessness.”

“Now we have to ORGANIZE, continue to build the #RentStrike, to #CancelRent by May Day so that no one owes any rent and all cases are permanently dismissed on May Day. We won this victory on the eviction ban by persistent struggle in our buildings and the streets. We can and WILL cancel rent by May Day,” vowed the Crown Heights Tenant Union.

Los Angeles: Families seize empty houses

A pitched battle between homeless families and the vicious California Highway Patrol (CHP) on Nov. 25 made national headlines. The families and supporters were attempting to occupy 19 empty homes in the El Sereno neighborhood of Los Angeles.

The homes are owned by the California Department of Transportation, which acquired them decades ago as part of a since abandoned plan to extend the 710 Freeway. In March 2020, the Reclaiming Our Homes movement, led by homeless Black and Latinx women, seized 13 of these long-vacant homes, inspired by the 2019 Moms 4 Housing takeover in Oakland, Calif.

“During a press conference in March 2020, reclamer Ruby Gordillo stood on the porch of the modest bungalow she occupied with a banner that read ‘shelter from the storm.’ She told a crowd of news media that reclaimers were calling on officials to open the homes for Angelenos experiencing homelessness,” reported Bitch Magazine.

“With this health crisis and this housing crisis, we need every vacant house to be a home for those who don't have a safe and stable place to sleep in,” Gordillo said.

Taken off guard by the bold action, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Los Angeles Housing Authority allowed them to stay. But there are 200 vacant houses in all. Now CHP storm-troopers patrol the area to prevent further attempts to house people in need, like the one in November.

A homeless census released in June 2020 counted more than 66,000 unhoused people in Los Angeles County, a 12.7% increase over 2019. But that's only part of the story. Downtown Los Angeles has one of the country's largest concentrations of homeless people, while families in the suburbs cram into garages rented out as “apartments.” In July 2019, the L.A. City Council cruelly reinstated a ban on sleeping overnight in cars, criminalizing thousands for using their only shelter. ■

Traveling to Cuba in the time of COVID-19

By Cheryl LaBash

Of course, by the time this small story is read, the conditions and procedures giving rise to these experiences will likely have changed.

We hope that one thing will change and be no more: COVID-19, now spreading silently where people gather, especially inside, in enclosed spaces, where people are in close, extended contact. Airlines say the air on planes is filtered. Passengers respected the marked-off, socially distanced seating at the gate, but, as Cuba travelers know, the U.S. economic, financial and commercial blockade makes our travel experience from the U.S. special.

Unable to travel to Cuba since March and with remittance transfers via Western Union newly blocked by the U.S., my co-fliers had plenty of luggage. Personal check-in required. The airline is required to ask, record and keep the category each passenger declares for the privilege of a general license to travel. A privilege only for travelers from the U.S. and those under U.S. jurisdiction. Cuban tourist visa? General license category? Surcharge for COVID-19 health screening? The line was long, slow and closely packed although with proper face coverings.

I drove from Detroit to Tampa, my direct flight to Havana departure point. The 17 hours in my coronavirus safe car seemed to be a wise decision to minimize airport time, especially when I heard that a recent traveler to Cuba tested posi-



The Plaza de la Revolución in Havana.

tive in her second test. She traveled through three airports and planes.

My traveling outfit included an N95 mask donated by my scientist brother, a cloth mask over that plus a face shield. The airline notified us in advance that the center seats would not be reserved on this flight, offering to reschedule if we objected. I arrived at the airport at 8:30 a.m. My flight took off at 1 p.m. and landed about 50 minutes later. We were told to stay seated when the doors opened.

The first 12 rows were called to stand. In groups of 10, we deplaned down the steps, walking a short way to the terminal. Usually, the reception area is a wide-open space with passport control booths at the other side. Not this day. A barrier channeled us all to the left where our health certificate — with our passport number added to it — was collected by a nurse who gave me a

small box with a number written on the top. I was number 51.

The testing stations, each with two seats, made short work of the line, opening the way for the next 10. The little box had a vial for my test. A little swab in each nostril and I was on my way to the familiar passport control. Then carry-on x-ray and metal detectors. Collect bags with nothing to declare and off to the taxi stand. Oh, I thought maybe I'd go to an etecsa store [the government telecommunications service provider] and get a Cuban SIM card for my phone. Nope — directly to your place of accommodation and stay there until your test result.

Or so I thought. I arrived on Wednesday. On Thursday, a nice doctor came by to check on my health. She impressed on the person I am renting from, who lives just down the hall, that there are stiff fines for both of us if I violate the quaran-

tine. The fine is not what keeps me in the apartment. Every day, I watch the COVID-19 report. Eighty-six new cases, most in Havana, many from visitors. Respect for the Cuban medical system that has controlled the virus and avoided most deaths, without a vaccine, keeps me inside.

Cuba, too, is testing vaccines — four of them. But they didn't wait to save lives. The Cubans know what they are doing. Then, on Friday, another nice doctor came by, but with a paper for me to sign that says to stay inside for 10 days! Friday is only day two or three. And I am only here for 14 days!

The person I am renting from is intersecting with the Consultorio to explain the situation. Hopefully, I will get my second test on Monday — 5 days after arriving, then a day or two for results, and it will be seven or eight days not ten.

The process for people staying in hotels — by the way, people from the U.S. are forbidden to stay in Cuban hotels by the U.S. government — or people staying with their families isn't part of my experience

It is in the interest of all of us on both sides of the Florida straits to #unblockCuba2021. Please support the Saving Lives Campaign (on Facebook or at SavingLivesCampaign.org) to get your union, city council or state legislature to pass a resolution to speak out against this 60-year injustice.

Nine U.S. cities and three labor councils have done this since May 5. Together we can make 2021 the year to end the blockade of Cuba. 📍

Los Angeles car caravan says: 'End the blockade of Cuba. Medical collaboration to fight COVID-19'

By Cheryl LaBash

On Sunday, Dec. 27, COVID-stricken Californians filled Los Angeles hospitals. In response, an 18-car caravan showed support for Cuban families caravanning in Miami and other cities. Decked out with signs calling for an end to the U.S. economic war against Cuba, the protest also called for ending barriers to medical and scientific collaboration with Cuba. Spanish language TV Telemundo reported the action: "Instan al gobierno que acepte ayuda de enfermeras y médicos cubanos."

In the fight against COVID-19, Cuba's Henry Reeve Brigade responded to the call from dozens of countries on all continents to relieve

exhausted medical teams and share their internationally recognized experience fighting epidemics and the aftermath of natural disasters. The U.S. attempt to strangle the Cuban economy intensified, even during the pandemic, blocking fuel and COVID relief to the island. Yet Cuba's research and pharmaceutical industries have developed not just one vaccine, but four COVID-19 vaccine candidates now in trials. At least one Cuban vaccine can be administered through nose drops, really giving hope to the world that everyone can be protected from this virus.

While Black, Brown and Indigenous U.S. communities suffer disproportionate deaths from COVID-19, the U.S. blockade stymies

collaboration that has proven to save lives. Not one Cuban medical professional has died of COVID-19, nor have pregnant women or children. For more information on how you can help to open the door to medical and scientific collaboration with Cuba to save lives, go to SavingLives.US-CubaNormalization.org.

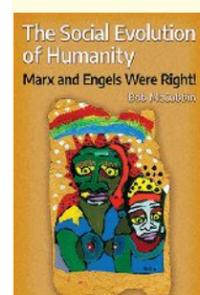
The caravan was initiated by the Los Angeles U.S. Hands Off Cuba Committee. Cars decorated with signs and banners spread the message as they drove from the Westwood Federal Building across Los Angeles to Echo Park.

Organizers announced nationally coordinated actions to take place on Jan. 20 that will further the same demands. 📍



SLL PHOTO: SCOTT SCHEFFER

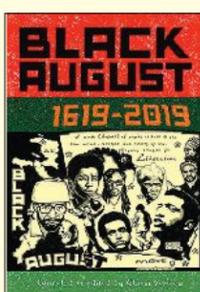
Los Angeles, Dec. 27.



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The trials and tragedy of Duryea Green

By Lev Koufax

In 2004 in the Baltimore neighborhood of O'Donnell Heights, two teenagers playing basketball were shot. To this day, it is unclear what exactly happened.

What is clear is that this was a frame-up and the wrong man is still in prison for a crime he did not commit.

Duryea Green was arrested and charged, convicted and imprisoned for the attempted murder of the two teenagers. Two witnesses were pressured by police to identify Duryea as the shooter.

The Green family was your typical Baltimore family. Both parents, Van and Duryea, worked full time, doing their best to raise two sons. Due to racism, a corrupt police detective and a thoroughly rotten Baltimore police department, their lives were turned upside down.

In the weeks following the shooting, Van Green started to receive strange visits to her house from the Baltimore City Police Department. There were three visits by the investigating officer, Detective James Lloyd, who would eventually be promoted to sergeant. During Lloyd's first visit, he asked for an individual named "Darrell Green."

As this wasn't Duryea's name, Van told the police that she did not know anyone named Darrell Green. A week later, Detective Lloyd returned and asked for someone named "Derrick Green." Again, Van didn't know a Derrick Green. These two requests were particularly strange because the Green family had lived in the same home for ten years. Duryea's name was on the records and known in the community.

The first two times the police visited the Green home, Duryea was at work. Eventually, Lloyd interviewed the couple in their living room. Duryea asserted he could not have committed the crime as he was working at the time. After a brief conversation, Lloyd left.

For approximately a month, the Greens didn't hear anything from



Andre Powell of the Baltimore Peoples Power Assembly demands: Free Duryea Green!

SLL: PHOTO

the Baltimore police. One day, James Lloyd arrived again at the home; however, this time he forced his way into the house. He was accompanied by other patrol officers. All of their guns were raised. The only people home at the time were Van and her two sons.

Lloyd and his officers physically forced Van onto her couch, guns still raised. Her two young sons were scared and confused. Lloyd berated Van and her sons with questions. The family was eventually placed in a police van, the same type used in the murder of Freddy Gray, and were taken to the Southeastern District station. They were held in a cell for over three hours, but not told why. After three hours, Van started to protest and demand to know why she and her children had been thrown in jail. Several hours after this, Lloyd appeared and presented an arrest warrant. This warrant is supposed to be for Duryea Green, yet the name on the warrant is "Derrick Green." To this day, the name "Derrick" appears in the case file and court documents.

The miscarriage of justice based on these facts alone is disgraceful. However, in many ways it is just the tip of the iceberg. The state violence and racism against the Green family is a stirring example of a bigger problem: an inherently racist and profit-motivated criminal justice system. Nothing represents this bet-

ter than the record of the lead detective on Duryea's case, James Lloyd.

James Lloyd, a corrupt cop in a corrupt department

The corruption and racism manifest in the Baltimore Police Department is well documented in mainstream news. This heinous record includes not only a long history of racist murder, but also planting evidence, beating suspects, and paying witnesses to provide false testimony.

James Lloyd is a poignant manifestation of this corruption, demonstrated by two particular incidents during his career. The most telling example is that James Lloyd is currently being held without bail on charges of extortion and kidnapping. According to court documents, Lloyd used threats of arrest and kidnapping to extort large payments from several individuals. The charging documents assert that Lloyd had a pattern of using his position in the police department to force cash payments. The prosecution provided such a wealth of evidence that the judge denied bail. It is extremely rare for police officers to be indicted, let alone held without bail.

As if this wasn't enough, James Lloyd is notorious in the area for being the assigned detective to the Sean Suiter case. Sean Suiter was a Baltimore police officer set to testify before a grand jury investigat-

ing a corrupt Baltimore police task force. The night before his scheduled testimony, Suiter was found shot by his own service weapon in his patrol car. The police first locked down the neighborhood where Suiter was found, Harlem Park. The narrative pushed by the BPD was that someone in the community murdered Suiter. The brutal and racist lockdown lasted six days. Not long after the lockdown ended, Lloyd concluded that Sean Suiter had committed suicide. To this day, many in Baltimore doubt the veracity of this conclusion. It is commonly assumed by many that Suiter was murdered to prevent his testimony. Given Lloyd's checkered and violent history, it is even possible he killed Suiter.

The criminal injustice system

Sixteen years later, Duryea Green remains in prison as the COVID pandemic rages; furthermore, Green is currently battling cancer and is thus vulnerable to the virus. The Baltimore Peoples Power Assembly along with this publication demand that he be released immediately. Frankly, if this article were to detail every injustice committed against Duryea by the police, the courts and his own attorneys during this process, it could easily fill a book.

In the United States, we are always told that the police are here to protect and serve us. We are told that we have the greatest court system in the world. We are the land of the free and the home of the brave. How is that working for Duryea Green and his family fighting tooth and nail to get him home? This case demonstrates what is truly at the heart of the police, courts and jails in this country. It certainly isn't justice. Those three institutions are committed to the will of the wealthy and the powerful. Consequently, they adhere to two tenets and two tenets alone: racism and profit.

Duryea Green deserves better. Oppressed communities deserve better. Community control of the police now! Free Mumia! Free Duryea Green! Free them all! 📌

Stop killing prisoners with COVID-19!

By Stephen Millies

Winter weather didn't stop people from protesting the coronavirus plague that's being allowed to sweep through U.S. prisons. Dozens gathered in front of New York City's main post office on 8th Avenue on Dec. 15. Other rallies were held in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

Prisoners are some of those most vulnerable to COVID-19. Over 200,000 of those locked up — one-out-of-ten inmates — have caught the virus. In an outbreak at California's San Quentin prison, 3,200 inmates fell ill and 28 died.

At the New York rally, former political prisoner and Black Panther Tarik James Haskins described the dangerous prison conditions:

"I spent 17 years in various prisons. Consequently, I know prison superstructures provide highly favorable breeding grounds for con-



Tarik James Haskins

tacting COVID-19.

"In most prisons four or more cells share the same vent shaft. When a prisoner in one cell lights up a smoke, all the other prisoners connected to his vent smell his smoke.

"Moreover, those prisoners not housed in cell blocks are housed in

dormitories. Their beds are not six feet apart. Both living arrangements provide ideal breeding grounds for contracting COVID-19."

Governors procrastinate as prisoners die

Brother Shep — Sadiki Olugbala — of the Universal Zulu Nation chaired the rally. When he was 19 years old, Shep joined the Black Panther Party.

Relatives of prisoners talked of their imprisoned loved ones being refused adequate medical care. A granddaughter of Mutulu Shakur described how the 70-year-old political prisoner has been diagnosed with bone cancer. Yet prison authorities delayed giving him a cat scan.

Baba Zayid Muhammad tore into the governors of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The three Democratic officials have delayed freeing prisoners despite the dire



SLL PHOTOS: STEPHEN MILLIES

Brother Shep (Sadiki Olugbala)

health conditions that Tarik Haskins described.

Following the rally, people marched through Manhattan's Penn Station with signs. A final rally was held across from Macy's biggest department store. 📌

What Biden's cabinet picks show

Many organizations participated in the Dec. 12 International Human Rights Day: *Uniting Beyond 2020* webinar, with speakers addressing the need for continued political struggle against policies of war and poverty promoted by both the Democratic and Republican parties in the U.S. and for international solidarity with working and poor people around the world in their struggle against imperialism. The event was organized by Anakbayan LA, CISPEs LA, Students for Justice in Palestine/UCLA, the Palestinian Youth Movement, Unión del Barrio, the African Peoples Socialist Party, Bayan-SoCal, the Socialist Unity Party, the Student Labor Advocacy Group and others.

Following is the talk given by John Parker, representing the Socialist Unity Party, who spoke on Biden's proposed cabinet and administration and its essentially pro-business, pro-war, pro-cop, anti-worker character.

By John Parker

Sometimes the ruling class will use the real issue and need for representation of the oppressed in a cynical way to further more oppression and exploitation against our class. That's what's going on with regard to Biden's new cabinet picks.

Records are being broken in his selection of the first Black woman as vice president, Kamala Harris, who is so pro-cop she's against even the most minimal demands to end police repression. And then there are cabinet appointments, including the first woman to run the Treasury Department, the first Black deputy treasury secretary and the first



John Parker

Black chair of the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA).

The fact remains, however, that the capitalist state needs repression to maintain inequality and exploitation of our class and, with regard to economics, their goal is to maintain profits and the exploitation that keeps us in poverty for the sake of their profits.

Biden made that clear during a campaign event to rich donors in the summer of 2019, where he said that "no one's standard of living will change, nothing would fundamentally change." At an event by the Poor People's Campaign that he attended, he said the opposite.

With regard to war, Biden's pick for U.S. secretary of defense is retired Army Gen. Lloyd Austin, who led the U.S. Central Command from 2013 to 2016 under Obama. Austin would be the first African American secretary of defense.

Austin was in the U.S. military when, as reported by the Council of Foreign Relations, the U.S. dropped an average of 72 bombs every day

— the equivalent of three an hour — in 2016. The council admitted that these numbers were low. Around the same time, a report from military officials admitted that twice as many civilians were killed as previously reported.

Austin is on the board of Raytheon, one of the country's most powerful defense contractors. Last year, Raytheon received more than \$16 billion in federal government contracts, the fourth-most of any company.

Imperialist war, however, is also a domestic war, and this may be why Susan Rice, former national security adviser under Obama, was chosen as Biden's pick for White House Domestic Policy Council. The job is supposed to, among other things, help fight racial injustice. However, Rice, along with another Biden pick, John Kerry, pushed Obama toward bombing. And, as national security adviser under Obama, Rice was an integral part of Obama's use of drones for assassinations and admittedly pushed Obama toward the war against and destruction of Libya.

According to an article in the Guardian, Obama increased drone strikes by ten times from the preceding former President Bush. To attempt to justify this legally, they categorized all males of military age in these regions as combatants, "making them fair game for remote-controlled killing."

If Rice was part of and encouraged this type of racial profiling with the use of military weapons, why would Rice be opposed to the profil-

ing and frequent assassinations of Black and Brown children "of military age"? The extrajudicial killings and bombings that occurred during the Obama administration occurred largely in countries around East Africa, including Somalia and Yemen, and there were mounting numbers of civilians killed on the African continent by U.S. terrorism. Again, if Rice couldn't see the racial injustice of U.S. imperialist war, why would Rice see it in Black and Brown occupied communities?

Regarding climate change, unfortunately it's business as usual with the appointment of John Kerry as the head of Biden's climate change effort. Kerry told National Public Radio that he was relying on the market — the same market that failed miserably in supplying health and safety equipment during this pandemic.

The market is in search of profits, not the saving of humanity. And the two goals are often irreconcilable. The ruling class is willing to run humanity over the cliff of nonexistence with its irrational allegiance to capitalism and profit. This explains Biden's cabinet, which will be predominantly made up of the enablers of capitalism's many diseases, along with war criminals who belong in a jail and not in office. Therefore, it will take a unified movement of our working class to promote and fight for a society that puts the control of the resources and the land and factories in the hands of the people, not the profiteers. That's why we must fight for socialism. 

Trump's racist revenge executions

By Stephen Millies

During his final days in the White House, Trump is executing more prisoners than any U.S. president has since the 1950s. Starting on Bastille Day (July 14) this year, 10 prisoners have been put to death by the U.S. government.

Five of those executed were Black and one was Indigenous. The mentally disabled Black man Alfred Bourgeois was executed on Dec. 11, despite the opposition of Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor.

Two more Black men — Cory Johnson and Dustin John Higgs — are awaiting execution.

Trump also wants to kill Lisa Montgomery, a white woman who suffered psychosis from childhood rapes. Montgomery would be the first woman executed by the U.S. government since Ethel Rosenberg was burned to death in the electric chair for allegedly typing spy reports.

Killing people by lethal injection doesn't satisfy Trump. His Justice Department changed the rules to allow prisoners to be electrocuted or shot by a firing squad. Crucifixions are still a no-no.

The wave of executions is Trump's revenge for losing the election by 7 million votes. The billionaire president blames Black, Indigenous and Latinx voters for his defeat.

While Rudy Giuliani and other Trump lawyers are trying to throw

out Black votes, Trump wants to execute as many Black, Indigenous and Latinx people as he can. The only reason Trump hasn't executed any Latinx prisoners is because those on federal death row haven't exhausted their appeals.

Trump has a special hatred for Indigenous people. He refuses to pardon Leonard Peltier. The framed American Indian Movement leader has spent 44 years in federal prisons.

Trump lost Arizona by just 10,457 votes. But he lost Arizona's Apache County — which is 77% Indigenous — by 11,854 votes.

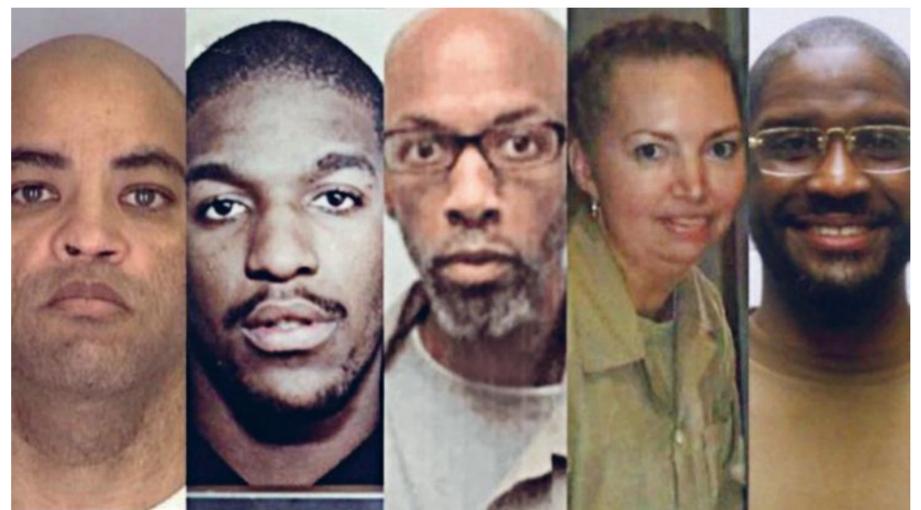
Trump's lust for revenge is shared by his Proud Boy supporters. The fascists attacked two historic Black churches in Washington, D.C., on Dec. 12 and set Black Lives Matter banners on fire.

Many more executed by Trump

Those killed on federal death row are just a small percentage of those executed by Trump. He bragged about ordering U.S. Marshals to execute anti-racist activist Michael Reinoehl on Sept. 3 without a trial.

Trump also executed Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani by a drone strike in Baghdad on Jan. 3, 2020. The Iraqi government wasn't consulted about assassinating the father of two children.

Thousands of children and adults killed by drones and bombs in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia and



From left, Alfred Bourgeois, Cory Johnson, Dustin Higgs, Lisa Montgomery and Brandon Bernard.

GRAPHIC: FIGHTING WORDS

Yemen were executed by Trump. Two million Yemeni children suffering from severe malnutrition are being slowly executed by Trump.

Will Biden be any different? The president-elect says he's now against the death penalty. So is Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.

Biden was singing another tune when he was a U.S. senator. He voted for the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996. Some of those executed by Trump were killed under its provisions.

Biden declared that "the liberal wing of the Democratic Party is now for 60 new death penalties. The liberal wing of the Democratic Party is for 100,000 cops. The liberal wing of

the Democratic Party is for 125,000 new state prison cells."

Biden changed his position on the death penalty only because of the Black Lives Matter movement with over 20 million people in the streets.

In 1988, George Bush-the-First defeated the Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis by 7 million votes. The elder Bush ran racist ads about Willie Horton, a Black prisoner, and emphasized Dukakis' opposition to the death penalty.

Thirty-two years later, Joe Biden, running on an anti-death penalty platform, defeated Donald Trump by 7 million votes. Biden's 81 million

Continued on page 11

Blood and Oil and Trump and Biden Trump seeks war on Iran to save U.S.

By Bill Dores

The Trump regime sees war with Iran as its salvation. They're using his last legal weeks in office to provoke one. The racist state of Israel is their advance guard and agent provocateur. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is a partner in the crime.

It's not about Iran's peaceful nuclear energy program. Or Trump's ego and legal woes. It's a last-ditch effort to bail out the fracking billionaires who own Trump and the Republican Party, and prevent the collapse of the U.S. fossil fuel industry.

Fracking — the hydraulic fracturing of oil and gas from shale rock — is the cornerstone of Trump's fantasy of "U.S. energy dominance." He tells his followers it's a recipe for peace. But in fact the fracking industry needs endless war to survive. And the idea of "U.S. energy dominance" is genocidal and insane.

Blood and fracking

The "shale revolution" that once enchanted bankers and investors was a product of the energy-price boom caused by the 2003 Iraq War. It was an artificial bubble, sustained for over a decade by bloody wars and cruel sanctions.

It has now burst. Hundreds of billions of dollars have been lost. Mountains of debt cannot be repaid. The Trump regime is trying desperately to reinflate it.

The shale debacle turned many on Wall Street against Trump. But he retains a base among those capitalists whose fortunes depend on fracking.

Those fortunes are collapsing with the price of oil, and Trump's political fortune with them. The fracking barons are desperate for subsidies, tax breaks and an end to environmental regulation.

They are also desperate for an oil war. Not a war to "get oil" — contrary to popular belief, the U.S. has never, ever gone to war for that purpose. Rather, a war to restrict supply and drive up prices, profits and rates of return. That's what Washington's 30-year war in the "Middle East" (Western Asia and North Africa) is all about.

Stealing Palestine's gas

Also involved is the fate of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's pet East Mediterranean Pipeline Project, a U.S.-Israeli scheme to bring stolen Palestinian gas to Europe. Its investors dream of challenging Russia for the European energy market.

The racist state of Israel has always been Washington's hit man in the region — a highly paid one. Washington props Israel up with an endless stream of arms and dollars. Within that relationship, the Republican Party and Netanyahu's Likud Party have a special alliance.

Their ties grew stronger in 2010, when Texas-based Noble Energy began drilling for gas in the stolen waters off the coast of Palestine. Noble built close links with the Trump campaign in 2016. In October 2020, oil giant Chevron acquired Noble for \$5 billion. It also assumed the com-

pany's \$8 billion debt. Chevron has now replaced ExxonMobil (XOM) as the largest U.S. oil monopoly.

On Oct. 20, the racist Israeli regime and the United Arab Emirates signed a deal to transport UAE oil to Europe via occupied Palestine. The oil would travel through the Eilat-Ashkelon Pipeline, built to bring Iran's U.S.-owned oil to Europe in the Shah's time. There is now talk of a direct pipeline from Saudi-occupied Arabia to the Mediterranean across stolen Palestinian land.

U.S. & Israel: partners for war

On Nov. 27, in a brazen terrorist attack, an Israeli death squad murdered Dr. Mohsen Fakrizadeh, director of Iran's Center for Defensive Innovation and Research. They ambushed him on his way to visit his family. Dr. Fakrizadeh helped Iran produce its own medical equipment, including a COVID-19 test kit. Trump retweeted an Israeli post praising his murder.

A week before Dr. Fakrizadeh's murder, Trump's Secretary of State Pompeo met Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in Jerusalem. Bahrain's Foreign Minister Abdullatif Al Zayani joined them there. As Pompeo arrived in occupied Palestine, Israel's made-in-the-USA air force attacked Damascus International Airport in Syria.

War criminal Elliot Abrams, Trump's "special representative" on Iran and Venezuela, met Netanyahu on Nov. 9. Abrams, who served under Ronald Reagan and both Bushes, has a long record of involvement with covert operations and death squads. He was pardoned by George H.W. Bush for lying to Congress about U.S. crimes in Central America.

On Nov. 21, the U.S. Air Force dispatched B-52 bombers to the Arabian/Persian Gulf. They flew over Israeli-occupied Palestine before landing in Qatar. Pompeo was in Qatar that day.

On Nov. 23, Pompeo and Netanyahu were in Saudi-occupied Arabia for a secret meeting with Crown Prince Mohamed Bin Salman. As they met, Yemeni Resistance missiles hit a Saudi ARAMCO oil storage site in Jeddah.

The Saudis deny this meeting happened. Reports say the Saudi prince is reluctant to risk war with Iran. Like the U.S. ruling class, the House of Saud is riven with factions.

On Nov. 30, the U.S. aircraft carrier Nimitz and its strike group of guided-missile cruisers and destroyers entered the Arab/Persian Gulf off the coast of Iran.

On Dec. 1, Israeli media reported a drone attack on Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps soldiers at the Iraq-Syria border. The IRGC is helping both countries fight U.S.- and Saudi-funded terrorists. It also claimed the assassination of an Iranian official in oil-rich Ahwaz province.

On Dec. 2, Pompeo was back in Riyadh, this time with Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner and a "team." Kushner has built a real estate empire with Saudi and Israeli cash.

Kushner also went to Qatar to meet Prince Hamid Khalifa and bring him into the anti-Iran alliance. The ruling-class faction behind Trump

wants to build an international alliance that outlasts his presidency.

On Dec. 10, U.S. B-52 bombers based in Louisiana flew another run over the Arab/Persian Gulf off the coast of Iran. Saudi, Bahraini and Qatari warplanes — made in the USA — flew with them.

Murder in Iraq and Yemen

The Trump regime has worked desperately to provoke war with Iran. Last Jan. 3, 2020, Trump ordered the assassination of Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad. Iraqi commander Abu Mahdi Al Mo-handas was also murdered in the U.S. drone strike. The two had led the fight against ISIS and al-Qaida in Iraq and Syria.

Gen. Soleimani was in Iraq to meet Saudi representatives about reducing tensions. On Sept. 22, Trump bragged about the assassinations in a hate filled rant to the United Nations General Assembly.

Following the assassinations, on Jan. 10, Iraq's parliament voted that U.S. troops should leave the country. The Trump regime refused.

It has also escalated the war in Yemen. In March, U.S. Marines invaded the Yemeni island of Socotra. They came to back up UAE forces in the genocidal war against Yemen. Israeli troops joined them there.

Every 10 minutes, a Yemeni child dies from the brutal blockade that the U.S., Saudi Arabia and the UAE have imposed on that impoverished land.

In 2019, Trump vetoed bills restricting U.S. involvement in that war and ending U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

On Dec. 11, Steve Mnuchin's Treasury Department put sanctions on five Yemeni officials. The White House says it will add Yemen's Ansarullah government — the "Houthis" — to the State Department terror list. Aid organizations say that that will make it harder to bring humanitarian aid to the war-ravaged country.

On Dec. 9, Iran sanctioned U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Christopher Henzel for his role in the humanitarian catastrophe there.

Trump's 'peace deals' are war moves

War with Iran is the object of Trump's vaunted "Abraham Accords." That's what he calls the "peace deal" he "brokered" between Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and the Israeli occupation regime in Palestine.

Bahrain is over 1,200 miles from Palestine. The UAE is more than 1,600 miles away. Neither state has ever been at war with Israel. Bahrain is, however, only 480 miles over open water from Iran. The UAE is just over 600 miles away. That's 20 and 30 minutes respectively as the F-35 stealth fighter flies.

The U.S. has already gifted Israel two squadrons of F-35s. On Dec. 9, the U.S. Senate approved Trump's \$23 billion arms sales to the UAE. Fifty F-35s are included in the sale. Lockheed Martin keeps a production line running to supply F-35s to Bahrain.

On Dec. 10, Trump announced that U.S.-backed King Mohammed VI of Morocco would also "normalize" relations with the Israeli settler

state. In return, the U.S. would openly recognize Morocco's annexation of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. The king, who has a personal fortune of \$2.1 billion, spent \$3.5 billion of his people's money on U.S. arms this year.

The 'supermajors'

Powerful forces in the U.S. ruling class are wary of Trump's war schemes in the Arab/Persian Gulf, unless they can be assured of a quick victory and that they would reap the benefits.

They worry about its impact on their European and Asian investments, the price of oil and the value of the U.S.'s No. 1 export: the dollar. Bankers fear war would disrupt the flow of petrodollars that the ruling families of the Arabian peninsula pour into their vaults.

The four energy "supermajors" — XOM, Chevron, British Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell — made huge profits off the wars in Iraq, Libya and Syria. Now they share the crisis of their industry. They have lost tens of billions of dollars this year.

In January, Chevron wrote off \$11 billion in fracking investments. In August, BP — registered in Britain but controlled by U.S. investors — reported a \$17 billion second-quarter loss. XOM, once the crown jewel of the Rockefeller empire, lost its 92-year-old spot on S&P's Dow Jones Industrial Average. On Dec. 1, the oil giant wrote off \$20 billion in U.S. domestic assets, the biggest downgrade in its history.

Their most important strength in the world market is their relationship with Saudi Aramco, which owns the biggest and cheapest oil reserves in the world. They once owned it outright, when it was the Arabian-American Oil Company. They still control most of its exports. They also operate in Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain and the UAE. With those resources, they dominate the Asian energy market.

The Big Four have close ties to JP-Morgan Chase and Citibank, which "manage" hundreds of billions of Gulf State petrodollars. XOM owns much of the Saudi petrochemical industry.

Those companies owned Iran's oil when the U.S. puppet Shah was in power. When the Iranian people overthrew the tyrant in 1979, they lost a gold mine. They dream of overthrowing the Islamic Republic and making Iran a colony again.

But a war that disrupts Arabian energy production or closes the Straits of Hormuz could make their bad situation worse. They don't want to lose vital markets to Russia — which they see as their main competitor — or lose out to their rivals in the U.S. fracking industry. Trump helped his friends at Cheniere Energy score liquefied natural gas (LNG) supply contracts with China and South Korea this year.

"Middle East Escalation Threatens Global Chemical Supply, Demand," Business & Industry Connection magazine warned after the Soleimani assassination.

Like the frackers, the supermajors want higher prices. But the prices

Continued on page 9

fracking industry

Continued from page 8

the frackers need would also boost the renewable energy and electric vehicle industries. In their fight for the world market, the supermajors need access to cheaper production.

'Game of Thrones' in Washington: Persian Gulf vs. Permian Basin

Former XOM CEO Rex Tillerson was Trump's first secretary of state. He said it was in the "U.S. interest" to stay in the Iran nuclear deal. Trump fired him in March 2018. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis agreed with Tillerson. He was gone by the end of that year.

Trump replaced Tillerson with CIA Director Mike Pompeo. In his time on Capitol Hill, Pompeo was known as the "Congressman from Koch." Koch Industries gets most of its revenue from North American energy operations. It also competes with XOM in the petrochemical industry.

For Koch, a devastating war in the Arab/Persian Gulf would be a windfall. As it would be for all the fracking barons and speculators behind Trump. They don't have access to the oil and gas of West Asia, Africa and South America. The supermajors have locked them out. They don't have interlocking directorates with transnational banks and corporations or their vast cash reserves. They want to follow in the footsteps of the Rockefellers, Pews and Mellons: robber barons who became monopolists. They are a century too late.

Their profits come from the Permian Basin in the southwestern U.S. — a region stolen from Mexico and Indigenous peoples — not the Persian Gulf. Yet they are no less imperialist than their blue-chip cousins. They too must follow the iron law of capital: expand or die. They too are in constant struggle with declining rates of profit. They too must conserve the value of their capital and find new outlets for its profitable investment.

That law has driven every U.S. imperialist war since President William McKinley invaded Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines in 1898.

The billionaires who own Trump

Who are they? "Big oil remembers 'friend' Trump with millions in campaign funds," the British Guardian reported August 9. The headline is misleading.

The capitalists behind Trump are very rich indeed. But they are not from among the shrinking club of giant multinationals that made up Big Oil. They are "new money" oil drillers and speculators, corporate "outsiders." Their fortunes multiplied in the energy-price boom created by the Iraq War. The biggest banks flooded them with cash. They are deep in debt and fighting to survive.

The Iraq War pushed them into the big leagues. Trump got them the White House. They don't want to give it up.

The Guardian article describes a fundraising gala for Trump at billionaire Kelcy Warren's "palatial Dallas, Texas, home." Warren's company, Energy Transfer Partners, is majority owner and operator of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL).

Trump's first act in office was to

unleash federal troops against Native water protectors blocking the pipeline. Trump personally invested in ETP and Phillips 66, which owns 25% of DAPL.

The Guardian also mentioned Trump donors Harold Hamm of Continental Resources, Jeff Hildebrand of Hilcorp, John Catsimatidis of United Refining Co., Syed Anwar of Midland Energy, Robert Murray of Murray Energy and Joe Craft of Alliance Resource Partners. Joe Craft is married to Kelly Craft, Trump's representative to the United Nations. She introduced his hate-Iran talk at the General Assembly in September by bragging about U.S. intervention in Syria.

Other big capitalists who've bet big on Trump and fracking include Blackstone Group's Steven Schwarzman, Ken Fisher of Fisher Investments, Texas banker Andy Beal, John Paulson of Paulson & Co., Jack Fusco of Cheniere Energy, Henry Kravis of KKR, Marc Rowan of Apollo Global Management, Paul Singer of Elliot Management, and the Hunts and the Wilks brothers. Oil-money heirs Timothy Mellon and Ross Perot Jr. also gave big to the Trump campaign.

Schwarzman has since called for Trump to accept the election results. So has energy magnate Charles Koch, who helped put the Manhattan real estate parasite in the White House. No doubt promises have been made.

Trump's biggest lie

In the Oct. 22 presidential debate, Trump told a whopper even by his standards. "We are energy independent for the first time," he claimed. "We don't need all of these countries that we had to fight wars over because we needed their energy. We are energy independent."

But even Trump knows that Washington's 30-year war in the "Middle East" is not about getting oil. He knows it's a war for monopoly, to control the world's energy reserves and revenues. Trump basically admitted that a year ago when he ordered U.S. troops to seize Syria's oil fields. He offered them to XOM.

Trump also knows that the U.S. fracking industry cannot survive without endless war.

Fracking barons need war

Fracking is not only environmentally destructive. It is very expensive. It costs from \$45 to \$90 per barrel to extract a barrel of oil from North American shale. Pumping a barrel of crude in Iran or Iraq costs less than \$10. A barrel of heavy crude from Venezuela's Orinoco Belt costs about \$12 to pump. A barrel from Arabia's giant Ghawar Field costs less than \$3.

A barrel of bitumen oil from Canada's Athabasca tar sands costs \$85 to produce. The Koch brothers made billions there after the Iraq War. They abandoned their leases there last year.

Meanwhile, the onward march of technology is making renewable energy — wind, solar, fuel cells, etc. — cheaper and more practical, threatening the future of fossil fuels.

In April, the price of oil fell to -\$40 a barrel — that is, below the cost of production. Oil companies had to pay



Persian Gulf Star Co. oil processing plant in Bandar Abbas, Iran, in 2019.

for storage. It wasn't just the COVID pandemic. There was a price war between Russia and Saudi Arabia.

"Bloodbath For America's Oil Frackers As Saudis Declare Price War On Russia" was the headline of a March 9 article in Forbes magazine.

Here is how Forbes described the situation: "Oil companies are suffering massive share price losses, with ExxonMobil down 10%, Chevron 13% and BP 19%. Shares in Saudi Aramco also lost about 10%, sending the implied market cap of the world's biggest oil giant down to \$1.6 trillion — down 20% from its December high.

"Those losses are modest. The pain is much more acute among the heavily indebted, high-cost shale frackers like Chesapeake Energy (-22%), EOG Resources (-30%), Occidental Petroleum (-35%), Marathon Oil (-40%) and Diamondback Energy (-48%) so far today.

"At the beginning of 2020 oil prices were just above \$60 per barrel — even that was scarcely high enough for American drillers to break even. Now all of a sudden we've nearly revisited the lows of \$26 last seen during the price war of 2016."

The Financial Times of March 29 declared, "Wall Street calls time on the shale revolution."

What did Trump do? In words, he tweeted, "Good for drivers, low gas prices." But in deeds, he ordered the U.S. Strategic Reserve to buy oil and drive up prices. Then he gave the Saudis an ultimatum: Stop the price war and cut production. If not, the U.S. would end military support for the genocide in Yemen.

War in Iraq made fracking profitable

The year 2020 has been the energy industry's worst year since 1998. That's when the collapse of the Russian ruble drove prices below \$10 a barrel. That crash happened despite the murderous sanctions on Iraq imposed by the first Bush regime. Bill Clinton continued the Bush sanctions, hoping to induce U.S. oil firms to invest in the former USSR.

The year 1998 was also the year that Texas wildcatter George W. Mitchell patented the technology that the fracking industry uses today. It took the 2003 invasion of Iraq to make it profitable.

The entire U.S. ruling class and political establishment united behind the Iraq War, and the invasion of Afghanistan before that. Sen. Joe Biden of Delaware was the cheerleader from the Democratic side of the aisle.

Blood feast in Iraq

The U.S. invasion of Iraq devastated that country. Hundreds of thou-

sands of Iraqi people died. Five million children became orphans. Six million people became refugees.

In the U.S., skyrocketing fuel prices forced poor families to choose between heating and eating. Lakota elders on the Pine Ridge reservation burned their clothes for fuel. Venezuela's Bolivarian government led by Hugo Chávez donated heating oil to help poor and oppressed communities in the United States. The U.S. government didn't care.

For Big Oil and Wall Street, the war was a bonanza. To these modern-day plunderers, Iraq was what the silver mines of Potosí were to the 16th-century Spanish conquistadores. Except in this case, the plunder came not from enslavement and exploitation but from simple destruction.

Accumulation by destruction

In 2002, before U.S. invaders destroyed Iraq's state-owned oil industry, the price of West Texas Intermediate crude, a benchmark used by the oil industry, hovered around \$20 a barrel. By April 2003, when U.S. tanks rolled into Baghdad, WTI crude was over \$40 a barrel. By 2007, it hit \$79 a barrel. XOM and Chevron saw their profits rise nearly 300%.

Then, the 2007 subprime mortgage meltdown hit. Prices fell back to \$30 a barrel. In January 2008, the U.S. Navy provoked a confrontation with Iran in the Straits of Hormuz. In March, the Bush regime imposed new sanctions on Iran, Sudan, Syria and Venezuela.

By July, oil prices soared to \$147 a barrel. It was XOM's most profitable year ever. The oil giant's market cap hit \$504 billion. It was \$234 billion in 2002, the year before the invasion of Iraq.

Mass murder in Iraq made profitable the DAPL and Keystone XL pipelines, the plunder of Canada's tar sands, and mountaintop removal projects in Appalachia. Or so it seemed.

Shelved projects like BP's Bakou-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean and XOM's Chad-Cameroon Pipeline in West Africa became realities. XOM and Saudi Aramco built a huge refinery in Tianjin, China.

The slaughter unleashed a 21st-century gold rush into the shale plays and tar sands of North America. Credit flowed like a river. "Non-performing" loans became "performing" loans. "Nonproductive" assets became "productive" assets. Millionaires and billionaires became multibillionaires.

XOM and Chevron competed with

Continued on page 10

Trump seeks war on Iran to save U.S. fracking industry

Continued from page 8

“new money” wildcatters and speculators for fields once thought marginal. The biggest banks competed to finance them all.

Shale oil, bitumen, offshore drilling, coal, even ethanol, all flourished. Firms like General Electric and Berkshire Hathaway poured money into fracking. Four of the top 10 companies on Fortune’s 500 list for 2009 were energy companies. XOM was No. 1. In 2020, only XOM remained, at No. 3.

The flood of investment in North American shale paid off big in Obama’s second term. In 2013, the U.S. Energy Information Agency declared that the U.S. had replaced Russia and Saudi Arabia as the world’s top petroleum producer. (Trump, of course, claims it happened on his watch and that he made it possible.)

Capitalist bubbles always burst

But the boom was not without downsides for the U.S. capitalist class as a whole. High oil prices hurt such sectors as airlines, retail, auto sales, trucking and delivery companies and online retailers dependent on them (including Amazon).

High prices helped oil-producing countries free themselves from the grip of U.S. finance capital. They empowered the Venezuelan-led ALBA bloc in South and Central America and Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi’s vision of an African central bank and a gold-backed pan-African currency.

The Chávez government in Venezuela was able to build 500,000 units of rent-free housing and even help poor and oppressed communities in the U.S. It also strengthened Russia economically and militarily. A surge of Russian direct overseas investment challenged Wall Street.

But the biggest problem was capitalism itself. When prices and profits boom, capitalists will produce and invest more than “the market can bear.” Collapse follows. Every capitalist bubble bursts. Every boom leads to a crash.

In 2009, XOM spent \$30 billion to buy fracking giant XTO. The firm was No. 5 on Fortune’s list of “100 fastest-growing companies.” The purchase made the biggest U.S. oil company the biggest gas producer in North America.

Financial analysts now say that the purchase was the worst decision the XOM ever made. On Dec. 1, 2020, the giant wrote off XTO as a \$20 billion loss.

From restricting supply to predatory pricing

The Obama administration’s wars inflated the bubble further.

The year 2011 was a bloody year. The U.S. and its NATO allies bombed Libya and murdered Muammar Qaddafi. It joined with the Saudis, the UAE and Israel to arm and fund a mercenary war in Syria. That war has raged for nine years and taken hundreds of thousands of lives. It has blocked construction of the planned Friendship Pipeline, a project to bring natural gas from Iran and Iraq to the Mediterranean.

The U.S. also imposed new sanctions on Iran, Sudan and Venezuela. Oil prices stayed over \$90 a barrel.

Nonetheless, by January 2014, overproduction was driving prices

downward. In February, the U.S.-backed coup in Ukraine threatened Russian energy shipments to Europe. “Oil hovers near \$108 as Ukrainian crisis worsens,” CNN reported on April 14, 2014. Foreign Affairs magazine, the organ of the Council on Foreign Relations, devoted its spring issue to the glorious future fracking would bring.

Russian gas kept flowing west, however. And east. In May 2014, Russia and China agreed to build a \$55-billion gas pipeline, called Power of Siberia, from Yakutsk to China. A second pipeline deal was signed that September.

In July 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin toured Latin America, meeting Fidel Castro, Daniel Ortega, Nicolás Maduro and Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff. In Havana, Putin announced that Cuba’s \$32-billion debt to Russia was canceled. Russia agreed to help Cuba develop newly discovered oil deposits in its waters, pledged more aid to Venezuela and to help build a canal across Nicaragua.

Washington responded with a major strategy shift, from doomed efforts to restrict supply to “predatory pricing.” Ida Tarbell popularized that term in the late 19th century to describe a tactic John D. Rockefeller’s Standard Oil trust used to crush its competitors. The Reagan regime and Saudi Arabia used it in the 1980s against the Soviet Union.

In June 2014, Secretary of State John Kerry met Saudi King Abdullah in Riyadh. According to Reuters, Kerry and Abdallah “briefly discussed oil supplies.” In reality, the U.S. ordered its Saudi clients to ramp up production and flood the world oil markets. The two met again in September.

On Nov. 27, at an OPEC ministers’ meeting in Vienna, the Saudis blocked production cuts. When the Saudis opened their taps, everyone else had to do the same. The price of oil plummeted. By January 2015, it was back below \$40 a barrel.

The Saudis got paid off in March 2015, with U.S. support for their war against Yemen.

Another kind of war

U.S. corporate media, which pretend the Saudi kingdom is an independent country, played the price war as an attack on U.S. producers: OPEC vs. Texas. “Oil prices keep plummeting as OPEC starts a price war with the U.S.,” Vox news reported dutifully. But in fact, the “price war” was waged in collaboration with both Washington and the oil supermajors who export and market most Saudi oil.

Rightwing military analyst Ralph Peters (USA Lt. Col. ret.) called it more honestly. “Saudi Arabia’s oil war against Iran and Russia” was how he described it in Rupert Murdoch’s New York Post (Dec. 14, 2014).

“Did you know there’s an oil war? And the war has an objective: to destroy Russia,” Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro said on Dec. 29, 2014. “It’s a strategically planned war ... also aimed at Venezuela, to try and destroy our revolution and cause an economic collapse.”

“The fall of the oil prices is not just something ordinary and economical, this is not due to only global recession,” said Iran’s Prime Minister Hassan Rouhani. “It is a polit-

ical conspiracy by certain countries against the interest of the region and the Islamic world.”

The U.S. fracking industry also took a beating, however. To the supermajors it was all good. They had huge cash reserves, ties to the biggest banks, and cheap oil and gas from around the world. If the “independent” drillers went under, they could buy up their assets and take their place in the next boom.

“Exxon Could Be the Big Winner of the Oil Crash,” wrote Bloomberg News on Feb. 2, 2015.

Fracking barons revolt, bring in Israel

Then the Obama White House announced progress on the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA), which could lead to lifting sanctions. “Iran’s Nuclear Deal Could Open Oil Flood,” Murdoch’s Wall Street Journal warned (March 15, 2015).

(Full disclosure: Rupert Murdoch sits on the board of New Jersey-based Genie Energy, which had a contract to explore for oil in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. The project was found to be “not commercially viable” — prices weren’t high enough.)

The frackers rebelled. Their political servants in the Republican Party invited Israel’s Netanyahu to address a hate-Iran, hate-Obama rally in the Capitol on March 3, 2015. It was an unprecedented action.

In June 2015, Trump threw his hat into the ring. He made tearing up the JCPOA a plank on his platform. He also said Saudi Arabia should have nuclear weapons. And he raved against Obama’s alleged “war on coal.”

Price wars are easier to start than to finish. Capitalist market forces don’t advance or retreat on command. By 2016, even the supermajors were hurting. In April, Standard & Poor’s stripped XOM of its AAA credit rating. It had held that rating since the Great Depression, when the company was known as Standard Oil of New Jersey.

The Saudis and the UAE also chafed at Washington’s low price diktat. They threatened to cut back on U.S. arms contracts. They funneled money to the Trump campaign.

Trump’s rebellion of oil billionaires

Donald Trump’s campaign was neither a Russian plot nor a populist upsurge. It was a rebellion of the fossil fuel industry against low prices, environmental regulations and the Obama administration’s retreat from military confrontation with Iran and Syria.

In December 2016, the Obama White House ordered work stopped on the DAPL pipeline. It was a parting shot against the frackers. Trump lifted the stop-work order and unleashed federal troops against Indigenous water protectors.

In January 2017, the Saudis made major production cuts and most of OPEC followed. “Saudis cut oil output to lowest in 2 years, pledge further reductions,” Reuters reported (Jan. 12, 2017).

Trump wanted to assassinate Syria’s president

In April 2017, Trump did what Obama backed down from doing in September 2013. He ordered the first direct U.S. attack on Syrian government forces: a missile strike on the Syrian airbase at Al Shayrat. In September 2020, Trump told Fox News



that he had planned to order the murder of Syrian President Bashar Assad. He said Secretary of Defense James Mattis restrained him.

The exit of Tillerson and Mattis marked the breaking of the alliance that put Trump in the White House. The most desperate “new money” oil interests and speculators were now in charge. They were less interested in invasion and occupation than the quick profits of destruction. War with Iran was their priority.

Everything the Trump regime has done in the last two years — from troop redeployments to the courting of Turkey’s President Recep Erdoğan — should be seen in that context.

An example of the conflicts inside the ruling class was Trump’s April 21, 2020, order to Chevron to stop drilling in Venezuela. It was good for Trump’s fracking bosses and bad for Venezuela. But it was also bad for Chevron.

The new regime

What will Joe Biden do? The same as every other U.S. president has done: What he’s told.

Presidents, including Trump, are not decision makers. They are paid actors hired by ruling class factions. There will be a fight over which ruling class faction does the telling.

In monopoly capitalist states, finance capital is the ultimate power. But even the bankers are not their own masters. The sands of the world economy shift constantly beneath their feet. They are slaves to the ceaseless battle of capital against crisis and contraction, which defines the monopoly capitalist era.

The Biden regime is also a coalition. It faces the same contradictions as Trump’s does. There is the clash between the position of U.S. monopoly capital in the world economy and the need and right of oppressed nations to develop their own productive forces. There is a constant battle for position between capitalist factions, which intensifies in times of economic contraction.

It often appears as a fight over grand strategy, but usually comes down to who gets what. Both are expressions of the contradiction between the explosive growth of human productivity and the fetters of capitalist ownership. That contradiction leads inevitably to crisis and war.

The real interests of working-class and oppressed people in this country are opposed to those of monopoly capital. We have nothing to gain from U.S. banks and investment funds being at the center of the world economy. Imagine how much better off we would be in a world of cooperation, not competition, destruction and plunder.

Shut down the U.S. Central Command! Bring home all the troops, ships, planes, spies and other weapons and agents of destruction! End the sanctions! End all U.S. aid to the racist state of Israel!

Make the arms plants manufacture vaccines, ventilators, medical equipment and PPE, not weapons of destruction. Money for health care, housing, schools and the people, not endless war! 📌

Spies are going to spy.

Five questions on the so-called Russian hack

By Gary Wilson

“Russian Hackers Broke Into Federal Agencies, U.S. Officials Suspect,” was the Dec. 13 New York Times headline on a report by David Sanger.

U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin said the hack is “virtually a declaration of war.” U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio said that “America must retaliate, and not just with sanctions.” A Reuters headline said, “Biden’s options for Russian hacking punishment: sanctions, cyber retaliation.”

What’s really going on?

1. What is the role of the media?

The report on the hack in the New York Times said that Russia did it, even though none of the agencies reporting the hack cited Russia in any way.

David Sanger’s report said the official story is that Russia hacked into U.S. government networks.

That became the story used by all the big media in the U.S. For example, NBC followed with a report that the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency “has not said who it thinks is the ‘advanced persistent threat actor’ behind the ‘significant and ongoing’ campaign, but many experts are pointing to Russia.”

Sanger has written multiple pieces blaming Russia for hacking, much like what he and his colleague, Judith Miller, did leading up to the U.S. war on Iraq, insisting on the presence of weapons of mass destruction — weapons that never existed.

Sanger was also an originator and promoter of the false claim of a Russian hack of the Democratic National Committee and top officials in the 2016 Hillary Clinton campaign. That accusation was used as a distraction after it was learned that WikiLeaks was about to publish emails that showed how Clinton and the DNC had intervened to block Bernie Sanders.

Too many still believe the Russia hacking and Trump campaign conspiracy story. But, like the weapons of mass destruction, it never happened.

2. What happened?

About 18,000 organizations

around the world downloaded a software update for the SolarWinds Orion network management tools that contained a hidden software tool that opened a backdoor into any system running Orion. That was reported by SolarWinds on Dec. 14.

The SolarWinds Orion software is used by nearly all Fortune 500 companies, all of the top 10 telecommunications companies, all five branches of the U.S. military, and all of the top five accounting firms. SolarWinds software is used by more than 300,000 companies and government agencies around the world.

According to Microsoft President Brad Smith, of the 18,000 organizations that downloaded the backdoored app, only 0.02% were actually accessed through the backdoor, that is, only 40 corporations or agencies. Most were in the U.S., but not all.

Of the 40 institutions accessed through a follow-up hack, 44% were tech companies and 18% were government agencies. The rest were other kinds of private companies.

Microsoft’s Smith says that this kind of operation is typically done by private cybersecurity companies.

Smith writes: “One illustrative company in this new sector [private cybersecurity companies] is the NSO Group, based in Israel and now involved in U.S. litigation. NSO created and sold to governments an app called Pegasus, which could be installed on a device simply by calling the device via WhatsApp; the device’s owner did not even have to answer. According to WhatsApp, NSO used Pegasus to access more than 1,400 mobile devices, including those belonging to journalists and human rights activists.”

3. Who did it?

The actual security reports on the attack say no source for the hack can be identified. There is no evidence that Russia was involved. If there was, the media would have presented it instead of attributing the charge to anonymous sources.

The hack was discovered by the network security company FireEye. “The highly evasive attacker” used “difficult-to-attribute tools,” FireEye said. Neither FireEye nor Micro-



soft could identify any source for the “difficult-to-attribute” intrusion.

Max Abrahms, an international security professional and author of a book on terrorism, said on Twitter: “The U.S. government did not publicly identify Russia as the culprit behind the hacks, first reported by Reuters, and said little about who might be responsible.”

“You know this story will be retold as all 17 intel agencies 100% certain Putin is behind it.”

A second Tweet by Abrahms added:

“American Media:

- “1. Punish Russia
- “2. Possibly continue investigating whether the Russian government carried out the cyberattack
- “3. Only report evidence corroborating the media’s priors that Moscow was behind the attack
- “4. Find additional rationales to punish Russia.”

4. What was the hack?

The hack was in some ways very simple. The SolarWinds Orion software is used by companies and agencies to centrally monitor IT systems. It provides information on the internal systems being run by the company. It is a system used to monitor network and server performance.

A SolarWinds adviser warned the company that it was an “incredibly easy target to hack.” Ian Thornton-Trump, who now works as the chief information security officer at Cyjax, told Bloomberg News that he’d warned SolarWinds in 2017 of its vulnerability. According to the Bloomberg report, access to the Orion software distribution server that delivers system updates used the password “solarwinds123,” which was publicly visible until sometime in 2019.

The hacking software that was put on the SolarWinds Orion distribution server was newly developed, according to FireEye. It was not built using hacking tools that were developed by the U.S. Defense Department’s National Security Agency (NSA) that were leaked in 2017 and have become the primary tools used for spying operators outside the U.S.

The capability to develop these kinds of spy tools is held primarily by the NSA, along with Britain’s Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) and Israel. China and Russia have some capability, but all recent reports indicate their spying is often done using the tools leaked from the NSA or something based on those NSA tools. Microsoft’s Brad Smith suggests that it is likely a private cybersecurity company that is involved.

Despite the lack of evidence that points to a specific actor, the U.S. media immediately blamed Russia for the spying attempt.

5. Was this an act of war?

Cybersecurity and legal experts say that the hack would not be considered an act of war under international law and most experts consider it a routine act of espionage. Espionage is internationally allowed in peacetime.

To qualify as an act of war, United Nations resolutions and other sources of international law require the use of force or destruction. In this case, there has been no loss of life or damage of any kind to the infrastructure. The hack has been for data collection only. The intrusion has not reached any systems on the specially protected “secret” networks.

The hackers gained access to the U.S. Treasury Department’s unclassified systems but really just saw what the system was doing, the applications running and that sort of thing.

“At this point, we do not see any break-in into our classified systems,” Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin said on CNBC. “Our unclassified systems did have some access. I will say the good is there’s been no damage, nor have we seen any large amounts of information displaced.”

Breaking into unclassified government and corporate networks, reading other people’s emails — that’s spying. That’s the kind of cyber spying that the National Security Agency does 24 hours a day against Russia, China, Iran, Cuba, Venezuela and many more.

“Warfare implies violence, death and destruction,” said Duncan Hollis, a professor of law at Temple University specializing in cybersecurity. Hollis and other experts said the attack appears to have been carried out to steal sensitive U.S. information, and should be viewed as espionage.

“Simply stealing information, as much as we don’t like it, is not an act of war — it is espionage,” said Benjamin Friedman, a policy director at the think tank Defense Priorities.

The U.S. is the primary purveyor of espionage in the world. As Edward Snowden revealed, the U.S. Defense Department’s NSA is engaged in this kind of data collection on a global scale as well as in the U.S.

There is a difference between espionage and war.

Take it from Carl von Clausewitz, the Prussian general and military theorist whose “On War” is required reading at West Point. Clausewitz wouldn’t consider this “war” either, says Tom Mahnken, a veteran of long service in the Navy and civilian Pentagon posts who now heads the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments.

Clausewitz defined war as “an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will,” Mahnken noted. “What remains essential to war is that it is meant to compel an adversary — to achieve political objectives. That’s not what this hack is about: It is a classic intelligence-gathering operation.”

Trump’s racist revenge executions

Continued from page 7

votes were almost double the votes cast for Dukakis.

Some Democratic Party leaders are claiming candidates can’t win calling for community control of the police or defunding them. That’s the same thing that was said about the death penalty.

Why isn’t Trump on death row?

If the death penalty is supposedly reserved for the worst murderers, why isn’t Elliot Abrams on death row? The war criminal has the blood of thousands on his hands by organizing death squads throughout Central America in the 1980s.

Abrams is now attempting to

overthrow the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela’s elected president, Nicolás Maduro Moros.

Why isn’t Trump awaiting execution for murdering children? Among his victims was 19-month-old Mariee Juárez. She died because of neglect and mistreatment in one of Trump’s migrant concentration camps.

The death penalty, like deportations and police terror, is meant to terrorize the working class.

There’s never been a millionaire executed in the U.S. The death penalty is reserved for the poor.

But it’s billionaires like Trump who spread death and misery all over the earth. 📌

Mass voter opposition leaves rulers of the world's largest economy in a struggle for stability

By Gary Wilson

Donald Trump was the biggest loser in the November election.

In a record turnout of the voting-eligible population, 51.4% of the vote went to Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. Donald Trump and Mike Pence got 46.9% of the vote. It was the biggest voter turnout percentage-wise since 1908, with more than 66% of those eligible voting.

Trump had made racism the core of his campaign, and the vote was mostly seen as a rejection of Trump and racism.

The U.S. consistently has nearly the lowest voter turnout of all the industrialized countries in the world. This is due, in part, to the extensive voter suppression in the U.S. — including poll taxes, registration fees and “literacy tests” — and the many undemocratic measures that prevent participation in the elections, such as holding voting only on work days.

There are also millions who are blocked from voting because they are immigrants or were formerly incarcerated. Also, the unofficial — but strictly enforced — rule that only a Democrat or Republican can be president discourages a great many voters.

This election year had unusual complications because of COVID-19, which made voting at traditional polling stations dangerous. As a result, many voted by mail. Voting by mail is not only safe, it is democratic, removing some of the restrictions that prevent people from voting. Trump, therefore, has made a special issue of opposing voting by mail.

Donald Trump encouraged his supporters to vote in person, while the anti-Trump voters generally voted by mail. Since in-person votes were usually counted first, Trump racked up huge initial leads in most of the swing states as returns were reported on the evening of Nov. 3. At that point, Trump declared victory.

However, by the following day, as the mail-in votes were counted, Trump's large leads in those states disappeared. By Friday, Nov. 6, it was clear that Biden had won the Electoral College as well as the popular vote.

However, the Associated Press, which unofficially declares the president-elect, held out for another day. On Nov. 7, AP finally declared Joe Biden the president-elect of the United States.

This unusual delay gave Trump and the Republicans a considerable head start in their campaign to steal the 2020 election. The archaic U.S. Constitution, written in 1787 — modeled on the slave-holding Roman Republic's government, with its senate and single consul (president) with supreme command of the army and the civil administration which was chosen by something like the Electoral College — provides many ways to disregard the majority vote against Trump.

First, Trump demanded recounts and looked for evidence of voter fraud. By voter fraud, Trump does not mean the suppression of the Black, Brown and Indigenous vote. Trump says there was ballot-box stuffing, with Democratic voters

sending mail-in ballots and then voting in person, noncitizen immigrants voting, ballots sent in the name of dead people, and computerized voting machines programmed to flip a certain percentage of Trump votes to Biden.

If Trump could block the votes in a few key cities — Detroit, Philadelphia and Atlanta were particularly targeted — he could shift the Electoral College vote enough to claim victory, even though he still would have lost the popular vote badly. The trick was to shift just 4 states so that Trump would have 269 electoral votes, causing an Electoral College tie that Congress likely would have decided in his favor.

According to the Constitution, if no candidate gets a majority in the Electoral College, then Congress decides, using a unique formula for its decision. Each state's delegation gets one vote, so that a state with a majority of Democrats in the House of Representatives will be expected to vote for the Democratic candidate, and likewise for majority Republican states.

On that basis of one state, one vote in the current Congress, which has been heavily gerrymandered, the Republican candidate would win.

So challenging the vote in just four states had the possibility of gaining an Electoral College victory or pushing it into a selection by Congress.

A Trump coup?

Almost 90% of the Republicans in Congress have refused to acknowledge the winner of the popular vote. Top officials in 18 states and more than half of House Republicans supported a lawsuit trying to reverse the result through the Supreme Court and the Electoral College. The court turned down the challenge on Dec. 11. Getting an Electoral College victory was one of Trump's strategies from the beginning of his campaign. He never tried to win the popular vote. The Electoral College is designed to block democracy and provides many avenues for special interests to manipulate the outcome.

The Constitution allows states to select their electors any way they want. They are not required to choose the winner of the state's vote.

A state could decide to select its electors based on what they declare would best serve the national interest. Or a state legislature could step in after an election and select the electors, claiming that the will of the voters was unclear. (For more on the anti-democratic Electoral College, see Jesse Wegman's book, “Let The People Pick the President: The Case for Abolishing the Electoral College.”)

Trump might be counting on creating constitutional and legal chaos, including large-scale violence by Trump supporters in the streets, as a basis for declaring martial law. During his first “debate” with Biden, Trump had told the fascist Proud Boys to “stand down and stand by.”

On Dec. 12, two days before the Electoral College vote, fascist Proud Boys wearing “MAGA” hats were recorded on video burning a Black Lives Matter banner at the Asbury

United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C., an action widely characterized as “reminiscent of cross burnings.” A similar attack took place at the nearby Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church.

In Olympia, Wash., at a pro-Trump rally at the state Capitol, a counter-protester was shot; police reportedly removed a bomb found at the site that, had it detonated, “could have caused significant injury.”

Trump's shakeup of the Pentagon leadership has certainly fueled speculation, and his attempt to remove civil service protection from most federal employees, making them political appointees to be hired or removed at the will of the president, makes little sense for a president that will be leaving office in less than two months.

But if the U.S. capitalist ruling class, including the military brass, allows a Trump coup that way, they will lose the crucial legitimacy that 231 years of uninterrupted constitutional rule has given them. Would they do that just to keep out Joe Biden?

While a declaration of martial law is unlikely to get support, it shouldn't be completely discounted.

Many capitalists prefer Trump

As is always the case in U.S. presidential contests, the big capitalists differ among themselves as to which Democrat or Republican candidate should be president. While many capitalists preferred Trump, others backed Biden.

The argument for Trump is that as a big capitalist and landowner, he is one of their own and understands their interests. Over the last four years, Trump has run the most “pro-business” U.S. administration in history. He won over to his side many originally skeptical capitalists.

Trump first sabotaged the Affordable Care Act, trying to drive tens of millions of people off health insurance and reducing coverage for those who have it. Trump moved to dismantle public education with devastating funding cuts to the Department of Education, starving public schools and pushing privatization schemes.

Trump gutted regulations designed to protect workers and the environment. Along with the congressional Republicans, Trump pushed through a massive tax cut for the rich in 2017. He has consistently opposed any policy to combat climate change and took the U.S. out of the Paris Climate Agreement.

Then during the COVID-19 pandemic, he pulled the U.S. out of the World Health Organization. Trump has also filled the federal judiciary from the Supreme Court down and the National Labor Relations Board with pro-business and anti-labor judges.

But even those capitalists who hoped for “four more years” of this may not now support the attempts of Trump to go beyond the law and tradition in order to cling to office. That could do far more damage to their class interests than will any slight moderation of Trump's “pro-business” policies by Biden.

The Nov. 23 New York Times reported, “Concerned that President Trump's refusal to accept the election results is hurting the country, more than 160 top American executives asked the administration on Monday to immediately acknowledge Joseph R. Biden Jr. as the president-elect and begin the transition to a new administration.”

Signers of this letter “included the chief executives of Mastercard, Visa, MetLife, Accenture, the Carlyle Group, Condé Nast, McGraw-Hill, WeWork and American International Group, among others. They included some of the most important players in the financial industry: David M. Solomon, the chief executive of Goldman Sachs; Laurence D. Fink, chief executive of the asset management giant BlackRock; Jon Gray, Blackstone's president; and Henry R. Kravis, a prominent Republican donor who is the co-chief executive of KKR, a private equity firm.” In other words, a representative group of the ruling capitalist class.

The ruling class

Since Trump's 2016 presidential victory, the ruling capitalist class has been strongly divided on Donald Trump. Who are the people that collectively make up the U.S. ruling class?

The capitalist class is not just the 358 billionaires on the Forbes 1,000 list of February 2020. Though that is how it is sometimes seen, that's not how Karl Marx defined it in his writings. The 1% percent or even 0.001% doesn't really define it.

The ruling capitalist class, as Karl Marx defined it, consists of those people who live off profit — banking interest, stock market dividends, business profits and landlord rent. The working class lives off the wages of labor. There is also an intermediate class — the middle class — between the capitalist class and the working class. In the Communist Manifesto, written by Marx and Frederick Engels, they use the traditional French name for the middle class — the petty bourgeoisie.

As Marx elaborated, if you can live off property income — profits, interest and rent — at a level exceeding that of a skilled worker without having to hold a job, you are a member of the capitalist ruling class.

In the U.S., there are some 20.2 million millionaires, according to the Credit Suisse “Global Wealth Report 2020.”

Only part of the capitalist class are actually business people, what Marx called “active capitalists.” These include heads of banks and other financial corporations as well as the CEOs of industrial and commercial enterprises. The active capitalists are those people who manage large and medium-sized businesses.

Small business people generally have net assets of less than \$10 million, even if they hire and exploit wage workers. Having \$10 million or more in assets should be sufficient to have an upscale living standard without engaging in wage labor.

Without at least \$10 million in as-

Continued on page 13

¡Alto a la guerra contra los vendedores ambulantes!

Continúa de página 13

el Lower East Side de Manhattan, hoy Loisaida. Las calles se llenaron de carritos de mano operados por personas pobres del este y sur de Europa que intentaban sobrevivir.

La policía disparó 41 veces contra Amadou Diallo el 4 de febrero de 1999, asesinando a este inmigrante desarmado de Guinea. La partidaria de Trump, Heather Mac Donald, llamó a la víctima africana “un vendedor ambulante de videos pirateados y calcetines”.

¿La venta de calcetines merece la pena de muerte? Hilter solía atacar a los vendedores ambulantes judíos.

Los propietarios quieren deshacerse de los vendedores ambulantes porque no les pueden cobrar alquiler. Lo mismo ocurre con los bancos donde están las hipotecas de los propietarios.

Es Amazon, no los vendedores ambulantes, lo que está arruinando miles de tiendas minoristas. Es el propietario Jeff Bezos, con su fortuna de 194.000 millones de dólares, el responsable de vaciar los centros comerciales.

¿Qué tiene para vender?

En una sociedad capitalista como Estados Unidos, todo el mundo tiene que vender algo. Para la gran may-

oría de la población, esto significa vender la capacidad de uno para realizar un trabajo.

Karl Marx, el fundador del socialismo científico, llamó a esta capacidad “fuerza de trabajo”. La mano de obra calificada está compuesta de mano de obra más simple.

Millones de agricultores en Estados Unidos, incluidos los aparceros, han sido expulsados de la tierra desde la Gran Depresión. Pero no todo el mundo pudo encontrar trabajo.

Eso incluye a activistas que fueron incluidos en listas de “no contratar”. Martin Irons, líder de una huelga de ferrocarriles de 1886, se vio obligado a vender maní en las calles de St. Louis para sobrevivir. El organizador comunista negro Hosea Hudson tuvo que vender productos de afeitado durante la caza de brujas anti-comunista de la década de 1950.

Las decenas de millones que venden su fuerza de trabajo a los capitalistas y los millones de personas que se ven obligadas a vender en las calles son aliados naturales.

La defensa de los vendedores ambulantes va de la mano con la lucha contra el terror policial. Es parte de la misma lucha como luchar por la atención médica y detener los desalojos. ¡Manos Fuera de los vendedores informales! 📌

Continued from page 12

sets, small business people can't retire from the active management of their business and hire professional managers to run it. They must at the very least perform the labor of supervising and managing and are therefore not full members of the capitalist class, even if they exploit hired labor.

At the bottom are the smallest business people, who cannot even hire workers and must depend on their own labor and the labor of their family members. This category of business owners — which includes small family farmers — can swing between the working class, hiring themselves out part time to avoid extreme poverty, to “successfully” moving into the capitalist ruling class.

In large corporations, the CEOs don't usually own anything close to a controlling interest in the corporation. But if they have net assets exceeding \$10 million, they can live quite well even if they lose their corporate positions. They are therefore both active capitalists who represent the owners of the corporation as well as being money capitalists in their own right through their ownership of capital.

The closest allies to the capitalist class are the near-capitalists: the upper middle class. These are the people who have accumulated an amount of capital enabling them to almost but not quite quit working altogether and live off profits, interest, or rents.

To maintain their upper-middle-class lifestyle, these people still have to work either in high-salaried jobs or as managers in their own businesses where they are not quite rich enough to hire professional managers. These candidate members of the capitalist class identify with the class

they hope to join as full members.

Some people unrealistically expect to become capitalists in the future and thus identify with the interests of the class they will never in fact join. These range from people doing tech startups to small business people who lack enough capital to hire professional managers and therefore must work hard in their businesses to enjoy a “decent” middle-class lifestyle.

Another group identifying their interests with the interests of the capitalist class are the local, state and federal police and prison guards — the chief instruments of state power to ensure capitalist class rule. These are the men and some women who do the dirty work of the capitalist class. Virtually all the police “unions” in the U.S. endorsed Donald Trump.

Still another group in the middle area that identifies their interests with the interests of the capitalist class are the managers and supervisors. In “Capital,” Marx described how the division of labor requires a complex managerial hierarchy: “An industrial army of workers under the command of a capitalist requires, like a real army, officers (managers) and NCOs (foremen, overseers), who command during the labor process in the name of capital.” These are the salaried workers with high incomes.

The working class, those who live off the wages of labor, makes up the vast majority in this country, but not 99%. Based on Marx's definitions of the capitalist class, the middle class and the working class, the working class in the U.S. makes up 67% of the population, according to one estimate.

If there were real democracy in the U.S., the rich would have been voted out of power years ago. But that'll only come with socialism. 📌

Iran and Iraq demand Trump's extradition

A year before his abortive coup attempt in Washington, Donald Trump ordered the murder of Iran's Gen. Qassem Soleimani in cold blood. Eight others died with the general in the Jan. 3 drone strike at Baghdad International Airport. Among them was Majdi Abu Muhandas, deputy commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units. Now both Iran and Iraq have filed requests for Trump's extradition.

General Soleimani's funeral was one of the largest in history. Mil-

lions turned out as his coffin was carried across Iraq and Iran to his final resting place in his hometown of Kerman. He was loved for leading the fight against ISIS, Al Qaeda and other U.S.-backed terrorists in Syria and Iraq and his role in driving U.S.-Israeli forces out of Lebanon. His murder was a “crime against peace” under international law, an attempt to start a war. The U.S. should honor Iraq and Iran's just requests and send Trump to face justice. 📌



Iraqis take part in a protest at Tahrir Square to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the U.S. assassination of Iraqi military commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and Iranian military commander Gen. Qassem Soleimani on January 3, 2021.

Stop U.S. attacks on Iran. No war! End sanctions!

Continued from page 1

panied by two other warships, passed through the Strait of Hormuz.

On Dec. 20, several Katyusha rockets were fired at the Green Zone in Baghdad, Iraq, which houses the U.S. Embassy. One Iraqi civilian was killed and there was minor damage to the perimeter of the U.S. Embassy complex. The U.S. Central Command issued a statement claiming that the attack was “almost certainly conducted by an Iranian-backed rogue militia group,” a charge disputed by Iraqi officials. On Dec. 23, Trump tweeted: “If one American is killed, I will hold Iran responsible. Think it over.”

The Trump administration's baseless and illegal withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement was a pretext to escalate war preparations. Unilateral sanctions imposed on Iran by Washington and enforced against other countries have caused terrible economic harm as well as death, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sanctions are another form of war.

Last January, Trump ordered the assassination of Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani while he was on a peace mission to Iraq. Soleimani helped lead the resistance to imperialist-funded forces seeking to overthrow the sovereign government of Syria. On Dec. 24, Israel launched a missile attack in western Syria.

The section of the U.S. capitalist class that most favors Trump in-

cludes oil and gas bosses who profited from the fracking boom after the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. Overproduction of oil on the global market has sent their profits into a downward spiral. They are eager for a war to disrupt the supply chain and boost their profits at any cost.

Trump may use a war with Iran as part of his strategy to overturn the election and remain in office. But even if Joe Biden takes office on Jan. 20, there is no guarantee that he would end a war that Trump set in motion. One only needs to look at recent congressional bipartisan actions — \$696 billion for the U.S. war machine and a mere \$600 in “stimulus” for workers — to see the real priorities of both the Republicans and Democrats.

Thirty-one years ago, George H.W. Bush and the Pentagon used the December holidays as a screen for the brutal, illegal invasion of Panama. The rulers must be put on notice that they will be met with opposition in the streets if they dare to attack the people of Iran.

Money for COVID relief for the people, not for war!

U.S. troops out of Syria and Iraq!

**End the sanctions!
U.S. hands off Iran!**

Socialist Unity Party/Partido de Socialismo Unido and Struggle-La Lucha newspaper

December 25, 2020

Intento de golpe: ¿Se acabó el peligro?

Por Sharon Black

El asalto al Capitolio por supremacistas blancos incitados por Trump, que detuvo temporalmente el voto de certificación, tuvo que contar con la colusión de las agencias policiales federales y locales. Es imposible que no hubiera preparación cuando estos mismos eventos habían sido telegrafados durante meses por el propio Trump. "Civil War 6 de enero de 2021" estaba impreso en las sudaderas de MAGA; esto no era ningún secreto. La única forma en que la mafia racista podría ocupar libremente el Capitolio es si la policía tomó la decisión deliberada de dejarlos.

El mundo observó mientras fascistas armados que portaban banderas confederadas y arietes metálicos violaron detectores de metales, tomaron como rehenes al Congreso, tomaron oficinas, rompieron ventanas, llevaron escaleras abiertamente para escalar el Capitolio, posaron para selfies con la policía y finalmente fueron escoltados fuera del edificio sin arresto.

Se confiscaron dos bombas caseras, armas y municiones y se informó que cuatro personas murieron. Se erigió una soga inspirada en el KKK en el extremo oeste del Capitolio.

Esto recordó cómo las autoridades de Alabama permitieron que el Klan atacara a los jinetes de la libertad en Anniston, Alabama, el 14 de mayo de 1961, casi matando a varias personas. La policía local no hizo nada durante al menos 15 minutos.

El asalto al Capitolio fue conscientemente en la tradición del derrocamiento anterior de los gobiernos de Reconstrucción democráticamente elegidos y gobernados por mayoría en Carolina del Sur, Mississippi, Louisiana y todo, que culminó con el golpe y la masacre en Wilmington, Carolina del Norte, en 1898.

Compare esto con Kenosha, Wisconsin. En anticipación a la ira de la comunidad por la negativa de acusar a la policía por el asesinato de Jacob Blake, se cerraron las calles y se mo-

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vilizó a la Guardia Nacional antes de la absolución.

¿Qué pasa después, se acabó el peligro?

La respuesta extremadamente débil de Biden es profundamente problemática en términos de hacer retroceder a los fascistas y lo que significa para el futuro. En lugar de hacer un llamado para disolver a los matones fascistas, la mafia racista o arrestar a Trump, Biden pidió la unidad.

¿Unidad con quién y para qué?

Esta fue una oportunidad para que Biden y los demócratas asesten un golpe definitivo contra Trump y el movimiento que ha generado. Pudo haber pedido el arresto de Trump o hacer un llamamiento a la gente para que se movilice contra la amenaza racista y reaccionaria. No lo hizo.

En muchos aspectos fue una traición a los votantes negros, especialmente en Georgia, quienes resistieron valientemente las amenazas racistas de votar contra el racismo y la reacción.

La timidez de Biden y los demócratas no es sorprendente.

Lo que subyace a estos desarrollos y las vigas de la reacción fascista es la contracción de la economía capitalista y la profunda decadencia y crisis del sistema. Aunque aparentemente oculto, reemplaza la voluntad de los políticos capitalistas que intentan representar a una sección u otra de la clase dominante.

Es una lección importante. La clase capitalista, independientemente de sus divisiones, no tiene voluntad de arrojar a esta escoria racista al basurero de la historia. Al igual que los banqueros y las empresas que financiaron a Hitler hasta la última bala,

están cubriendo sus apuestas. Son reacios a aplastarlos.

Peligro de guerra imperialista y los próximos 14 días

Sería un grave error no declarar la amenaza obvia de una guerra imperialista dirigida más inmediatamente a Irán, pero en última instancia, independientemente de qué administración esté en el cargo, dirigida a cualquier país que busque trazar un curso independiente del imperialismo, ya sea Venezuela, China, la RPDC o Cuba. Vea la convocatoria para acciones de respuesta a emergencias.

Todavía quedan 14 días antes de la inauguración del 20 de enero.

Así como exigimos el encarcelamiento de policías asesinos, debemos movilizar el movimiento para pedir el arresto inmediato de Trump y detener a las turbas supremacistas blancas.

Trump no solo debería ser arrestado sino también extraditado por crímenes de guerra. Trump ahora es buscado en Irak por ordenar el asesinato del general iraní Qassim Soleimani y del comandante iraquí Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis; Irán también ha emitido una orden de arresto a través de Interpol (Organización Internacional de Policía Criminal) por el mismo crimen.

El antídoto contra el fascismo es la solidaridad y el socialismo de los trabajadores

Mientras los multimillonarios están obteniendo ganancias sin precedentes, ganando mientras se acumulan las muertes de las víctimas de COVID, la gran mayoría de las personas se encuentran viviendo en

una miseria más profunda. Los gobiernos capitalistas no han podido detener la pandemia de COVID y han fracasado terriblemente en brindar atención médica a la gran mayoría. El desempleo amenaza no solo a los trabajadores con salarios bajos sino también a la clase media. Millones se enfrentan a desalojos, ejecuciones hipotecarias y cortes de servicios públicos.

Es la clase media quien tradicionalmente, los dueños de pequeños negocios y otros como ellos que están aislados y en

Tradicionalmente es la clase media, los propietarios de pequeñas empresas y otros como ellos que están aislados y desesperados, quienes son engañados por la ideología fascista. Es solo un movimiento de la clase trabajadora fuerte, unido, anticapitalista y antirracista lo que puede sacarlos de un callejón sin salida tan destructivo.

"Tal situación solo puede existir en períodos de crisis social extraordinariamente aguda cuando el estado capitalista está tan desgarrado por la acumulación de contradicciones internas y debilitado por su incapacidad para superar su crisis social que inevitablemente da paso a formas de gobierno extraparlamentarias y extralegales.", Dijo Sam Marcy sobre la lucha contra el fascismo.

Se necesitará la organización de la clase trabajadora en general y el liderazgo de sus personas más oprimidas, negras, morenas, latinas, indígenas, árabes, asiáticas, mujeres y LGBTQ2S para desarrollar una defensa de sus propios intereses de clase y colocar el socialismo en la agenda.

¡Alto a la guerra contra los vendedores ambulantes!

Por Stephen Millies

Los hombres desempleados vendieron manzanas durante la Gran Depresión. Noventa años después, muchas aceras de la ciudad están llenas de comerciantes informales que intentan vender comida, ropa y equipo de protección personal.

¿Por qué estos hombres y mujeres están dispuestos a estar de pie en todo tipo de clima durante 10, 12 horas o más al día? Porque tienen que hacerlo.

Esa es la única forma en que los vendedores pueden comer y pagar el alquiler, no solo para ellos, sino también para sus hijos. Muchos comerciantes ambulantes envían dinero a sus familias en otras tierras, manteniéndolos así con vida.

Incluso durante los períodos de "prosperidad" capitalista, millones están desempleados. La discriminación en la contratación, particu-



Vendedores ambulantes marchan a través del puente de Brooklyn para protestar por el acoso policial y demandar ayuda para COVID en la ciudad de Nueva York, el 12 de noviembre.

larmente contra los indocumentados, impulsa a muchos inmigrantes a vender en la calle. La actual pandemia y crisis económica del coronavirus ha aumentado su número.

La pérdida de millones de pue-

tos de trabajo en las fábricas es otra razón. Muchos trabajadores negros que solían tener trabajos sindicales ahora se ven obligados a convertirse en vendedores ambulantes. Solo en la ciudad de Nueva York, los capitalistas destruyeron 900.000 puestos de trabajo de manufactura.

Ninguno de estos trabajadores es delincuente, sin embargo, son víctimas de la policía. El "generoso" Ayuntamiento de Los Ángeles votó a favor de prohibir la venta ambulante sin licencia.

El mismo gobierno de la ciudad otorgó a los desarrolladores inmobiliarios y propietarios de hoteles de

Los Ángeles mil millones de dólares en exenciones fiscales.

Odio de larga data

Donald Trump siempre odió a los vendedores informales. Trató de expulsar a veteranos discapacitados que vendían cerca del Trump Tower en la elegante Quinta Avenida de Manhattan.

Los soldados pueden ser saludados, exhibidos y enterrados después de que regresen de otra guerra por las grandes petroleras. Pero cuando intentan ganarse la vida, los policías los arrestan.

No era diferente hace un siglo en

Continúa a página 13

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