

# STRUGGLE ★ LA LUCHA

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# Coast-to-coast solidarity actions Amazon warehouse workers fighting for a union

**ALERT: Demand COVID care for Mumia Abu-Jamal 5**

By Anthony Dawahare

Union activists and community organizations mobilized nationally in late February in solidarity with the 5,800 Amazon warehouse workers fighting to unionize in Bessemer, Ala. Their campaign fighting for fair wages and benefits, against intrusive surveillance and unsafe working conditions during COVID, continues rising. The workers in Bessemer have until March 29 to vote for Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU) representation.

“My father tested positive while working at an Amazon warehouse in Atlanta from lack of PPE and neglected sanitation across the facility. It ended up infecting our entire family, taking them out of work for days,” said Rebecka Jackson of the Socialist Unity Party.

Jackson spoke at a Feb. 19 rally outside the Los Angeles office of Amazon’s union-busting law firm, Morgan, Lewis & Bockius.

If the union vote is won, Amazon, Jeff Bezos and Morgan Lewis will see a historic loss that could have a ripple effect throughout the corporation to demand fundamental workers’ rights and benefits for its employees.

Morgan Lewis, a notorious global law firm, has been attacking the union movement for decades. It has backed Amazon on federal tax disputes, hazardous COVID conditions, and discrimination against pro-Black Lives Matters employees.

Though the Republican-backed law firm has built its foundation on oppressing the working class and supporting corporate interest, today all eyes are on the 85%-Black workforce in Bessemer

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## Union rights are human rights!

By Stephen Millies

Winter rain didn’t stop people from coming out on Feb. 28 in Harlem to show their support for the Amazon workers in Bessemer, Ala. More than a hundred people demonstrated in front of the Amazon-owned Whole Foods store at 125th Street and Malcolm X Blvd.

Charles Jenkins, president of the New York Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, pointed out that 6,000 workers at the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer are already voting by mail in order to get union rights, wages and benefits.

Jenkins, who’s an officer of Transport Workers Union Local 100 which represents New York City transit workers, said a victory in Bessemer will inspire hundreds of thousands of other Amazon workers to fight for a union, too.

Chris Silvera, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 808, spoke of the millions of workers in stores and other workplaces who need union dignity and protection.

Roger Wareham of the December 12th Movement welcomed members of a caravan calling for an end to the U.S. blockade of Cuba. The members of the New York-New Jersey Cuba Sí Coalition had stopped to show their support for the Amazon workers.

SLL PHOTO: STEVE MILLIES

- ▶ Hazard pay
- ▶ Forging SEIU
- ▶ COVID profits
- ▶ Vaccine apartheid

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

Fred Hampton  
Free political prisoners

- ▶ Haiti uprising
- ▶ Cuba science
- ▶ Bombing Syria

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY FOUNDER Clara Zetkin on fascism: A lesson for today

By Sharon Black

On many holidays recognizing people’s struggles and their leaders — for example, the civil rights movement and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. — the present-day celebrations are both sweet and sour.

The only reason for formal recognition is that protests and struggle made it so — and this is a victory. But the other, “give it the side-eye” part is that the actual history of how they originated is covered up in pink ribbons.

The blood, sweat and tears that were shed have been washed away.

International Women’s Day is like that. So much has been done to sterilize it, package it, market it, capitalism-it (my made up word) — foremost in the capitalist West, of which the U.S. is the capital.

But the beating heart behind all of the fancy images and representations is still strong, red and has the potential to change the world. Its red tail pokes out from under all of the corporate debris.

The courage of the Black women workers at Amazon’s Bessemer, Ala., warehouse standing up to Jeff Bezos, one of the richest men in the world



— Indigenous women resisting gender violence, murder and plunderous oil pipelines — immigrant/migrant women fighting for their survival — teachers and nurses resisting COVID-19 — are the continuing heartbeat of International Women’s Day.

So too are the women in Haiti taking to the streets despite rightwing violence; the women in India resisting Modi and fighting for the rights of poor farmers; and the women of Brazil, Argentina, Ireland and Poland fighting for control of their bodies — they are its heartbeat.

And no amount of praise can be spared for the women of Cuba, China, Zimbabwe, Iran, North Korea, Yemen and so many countries’ women who are resisting sanctions and U.S. imperialism.

After all, International Women’s Day was founded on the idea of international solidarity of working and poor women around the globe, and recognized first by the world socialist movement on March 19, 1911.

**International Women’s Day is 110 years old**

Clara Zetkin was its original heartbeat, and she definitely had a red heart.

While advances in human history are never the product of one person or leader, but rather the result of social and material conditions that compel the intervention of masses of people, leaders and their organizations are an indispensable product of that process.

They can’t be separated from these earthquakes, placed above or below it, but rather play an indispensable role in guaranteeing its success. Intense struggle, in the form of huge strikes, pro-

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# Demand for hazard pay spreads on West Coast Kroger threatens closures

By Scott Scheffer

In response to simmering anger, several cities in California as well as the city of Seattle have mandated hazard pay for essential workers. The California Grocers Association is suing and Kroger, the largest supermarket chain in the world, is refusing to pay and threatening to close two supermarkets permanently in retaliation.

There are corporate-sponsored billboards atop buildings and along the highways, from Times Square in New York City to the freeways of Los Angeles, thanking and honoring frontline workers for putting themselves in harm's way during the pandemic. But the lofty messages lose all meaning alongside the actual treatment of those workers by their capitalist bosses.

Supermarkets have become dangerous places to work and many of them have been hotspots for COVID-19 during the pandemic. According to United Food and Commercial Workers, the union that represents 1.3 million workers, more than 400 grocery workers have died during the pandemic and 20,000 have been infected. Throughout the months there have been protests by unionized grocery workers demanding more safety precautions, hazard pay and more paid sick time.

Long Beach, Calif., was the first city to mandate hazard pay by giant grocery chains. Santa Monica soon followed suit. Now Los Angeles and Oakland have passed their own hazard pay laws. San Jose and Berkeley are expected to join in, as is Santa Clara County.

But bosses will be bosses. Last month when Long Beach made an extra \$4 per hour in “hero pay” mandatory, the owner of two super-

markets – Ralphs and a Food4Less – announced it would shut them down for good rather than pay the \$4. The owner is Kroger Corporation, whose profits increased by a whopping 90% last year. The average pay for clerks and cashiers at Kroger-owned supermarkets in Southern California is a little over \$10 an hour, so the “hero pay” does not even bring the average up to the \$15 an hour minimum. If it goes through with its vendetta, some 200 workers in Long Beach will lose their jobs.

## Kroger raked in \$122 billion

Kroger profited from the pandemic when restaurants closed and millions of people began cooking at home more. In 2020 they raked in \$122 billion. Every cent of it came to them because grocery workers took on the risk of reporting for work every day, during this deadliest pandemic in a century.

It is no surprise that Kroger chose Long Beach to challenge the modest demand for hazard pay. Over decades, most Southern California beach cities saw wealthy, mostly-white people move in to enjoy the climate and the beach. At the same time, working-class people tried to escape skyrocketing rents by moving to the desert towns and cities that lie to the east, leaving behind affluent beach cities.

But Long Beach is different. More than 30,000 people from the city work at the Port of Long Beach, as well as more than 300,000 people from other parts of Southern California. There is a giant oil field in the Signal Hill area. Even though the city's manufacturing jobs have dwindled like the rest of the country, it has remained solidly working-class and become more diverse. Sixty percent of the population of

Long Beach are people of color and immigrants. This was the perfect city for Kroger to go on the attack and set an example.

Hazard pay is supposed to be included in a White House-initiated COVID relief bill. But what is included in that bill would be essentially a handout to the corporations — giant grocers like Kroger wouldn't have to pay an extra dime. The city mandates for hazard pay that have been passed during the last month would mean it would come out of the owners' pockets. But the bosses see that as setting a dangerous precedent.

Unionized grocery workers and other essential workers have been fighting for hazard pay and on other issues regarding the dangers of being in constant contact with so many people. UFCW members have been organizing around the issues regularly throughout the entire pandemic, and there have been protests by progressive organizations in solidarity.

In March 2020, Whole Foods workers, Amazon workers, and the gig workers who deliver for Instacart walked off the job in a one-day job action. At the end of April, Amazon, Target, Walmart, Instacart and FedEx workers did another work stoppage. In July, something occurred that must have shaken the corporate ruling class. The anger over treatment of essential workers — who are overwhelmingly Black and Brown — hooked up with the movement for Black Lives in the form of walk-outs. They joined the powerful mass marches throughout the country after the murder of George Floyd and other victims of racist police, and the marches also demanded economic justice and the right to a union.

Because of this simmering resent-



ment and rage over the last year, and especially during this third deadly COVID-19 surge, city governments throughout California and in the state of Washington see the handwriting on the wall. Though the greedy Kroger grocery store billionaires are intransigent, city government functionaries are concerned about the direction the struggle for hazard pay and real respect for workers may go. Sometimes the role of capitalist government is to force part of the capitalist class to do something for its own good. There is already an historic union drive in the Birmingham suburban area of Bessemer, Ala., where 5,800 Amazon warehouse workers are having a union election — brought on by worsening and dangerous conditions during the pandemic.

Capitalists and those who serve them feel desperate to stop the pandemic from becoming a flashpoint in a resurgent workers' movement. Of those cities that instituted the hazard pay laws it remains to be seen how willing they are to enforce them. They're not exactly in a position of power against giant corporations. But working-class history has shown that if the 'sleeping giant' that is the working-class awakens, Kroger and the other giant corporations will wish they'd paid the hazard pay. ☐

# How a Black elevator operator helped forge the SEIU

By Stephen Millies

One of the largest unions in the United States is the Service Employees International Union. Two million essential workers belong to it.

Hospital workers belonging to 1199SEIU are on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic. So are the SEIU members keeping thousands of buildings clean coast-to-coast.

An important battle to build the 175,000 member strong SEIU Local 32BJ was a 1934 strike. Its spark was the firing of Black elevator operator Thomas Young, an immigrant worker from the Caribbean.

At the time there were 20,000 elevator operators in New York City. Their labor was essential for Manhattan's old garment district.

Over 200,000 workers were employed there, often in 12-story high buildings. Ninety years ago they produced close to half of the clothing worn in the U.S.

Elevator operators were needed to move goods and workers from floor to floor. By the 1920s, most of the elevator operators in the United States were Black men.

Landlords paid them misera-



Thomas Young

ble wages and demanded that they act like obedient servants. A. Philip Randolph — who later led the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and helped organize the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom — tried unsuccessfully to organize elevator operators into a union.

## 1934 strike

In November 1934, Thomas Young was fired for saying “step in, please” instead of “down, please.” The operators and other building workers had enough.

They went on strike to get a union and dignity. Strikers went from building to building in midtown Manhattan pulling out workers.

But how could they win? A quarter of the working class was jobless. There was no unemployment compensation.

Solidarity was the answer. The garment workers, most of whom were women, had reestablished the International Ladies Garment Workers Union the year before in New York City's dress shops. (Eighty years later the ILGWU joined other unions to form UNITE HERE!)

One of the ILGWU members who joined a sit-down strike was a teenager named Ethel Greenglass. At the age of 15 she graduated from Seward Park High School but had to go to work to support her family.

Within a generation the vast majority of ILGWU members were Puerto Rican and Black. Later, thousands of Dominican and Chinese workers were employed.

But in 1934, most of the workers came from Eastern and Southern European immigrant families. Many spoke Italian or Yiddish.

Garment workers and Teamsters refused to cross the picket lines of the strikers, many of whom were Black. New York City's then largest industry was shut down tight.

The Communist Party's daily newspaper in Yiddish, “Morgen Freiheit” (Morning Freedom), was read by thousands of garment workers. It called for all-out support for the strikers. Within four days the landlords were forced to sign a union contract with the elevator operators and other building workers. (“Local 32B-32J: Sixty Years of Progress”)

## The struggle continues

Ninety years later Manhattan's Garment District is a memory. Sure, there's still some sample shops open.

But the vast majority of clothing sold in the United States is produced by super-exploited workers overseas. They need our solidarity just like the elevator operators did in 1934.

Global capitalism gets more and more deadly. The March 25, 1911, Triangle Shirtwaist fire in Manhattan killed 146 workers, the vast majority of whom were women. The April 24, 2013, collapse of the Rana Plaza in Dhaka, Bangladesh, killed 1,134 workers — eight times as many.

The elevator operators are almost all gone as well. Black workers are often the first victims of automation.

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# My experience with COVID-19 in Los Angeles

By Jefferson Azevedo

February 24 – The number of COVID-19-related deaths in the U.S. has reached five hundred thousand and, although a little slower than in the last months, it continues to rise.

Unfortunately, here in the U.S. when the One Percent are in trouble, they get bailed out by the government. When someone who is not part of this group needs help, even if it is a life threatening situation like COVID-19, they better have the money or else they will have to deal with “not-for-profit” institutions like the Good Samaritan Hospital.

On its website, the Good Samaritan Hospital says: “Good Samaritan Hospital is a progressive, tertiary, not-for-profit hospital. Our mission is to provide accessible, quality, cost-effective, and compassionate health care services that meet the needs of our patients and their families, the community, physicians, and employees.”

I can attest from my own experience that they are lying when they say that they are not-for-profit and compassionate. After falling ill with SARS-CoV-2 at the end of last year, I needed to go to the hospital. I went to the Good Samaritan Hospital in the Downtown Los Angeles area. Without having insurance, I asked them how much it would cost as soon as I got in but they said that they could not tell nor give an estimate. I thought it would cost around \$200-\$300 at most, but I was in for a huge and very unpleasant surprise.

After having the usual procedures

done, the nurses sent me to the waiting room where they took a radiography of my chest and did an EKG. The doctor arrived after a long time, spoke to me for about ten minutes, prescribed three medications, and left. A few weeks passed and I received a bill of \$3,998 from the hospital. That wasn't all. I also received two other separate bills of \$40 and \$30, from different labs, for the electrocardiogram and the x-ray respectively. All this makes me wonder about the people who were hit with hospital bills bigger than the ones I received and, like me, have no means to pay them but, unlike me, still have not recovered their health.

## Capitalism kills!

As in all the unfortunate things that happen in countries where capitalists dictate the rules, the most vulnerable members of these countries suffer the most. Even when they have the luck to survive the COVID-19 infection, many will suffer with lingering symptoms – which can be physical, psychological, or both – and the financial burden that often follows those who need medical treatment, even when they are insured, in the richest country on Earth: the United States.

A country that somehow is able to afford a military budget that is greater than the next ten biggest military budgets combined, sends spacecraft to Mars, gives trillions of

dollars to big corporations, but cannot end, or at least reduce, some of the socio-economic diseases of an economic system that puts profits ahead of the well-being of its people: capitalism.

If there is one benefit that is possible from the COVID-19 pandemic, I would say that it's the way it is making the working class realize that the system is rigged against them. Especially when they are suffering some of the symptoms of the capitalist virus like extreme poverty, homelessness, hunger, unemployment, lack of access to basic services, and no health care.

Although the symptoms of the capitalist virus seem to be the norm – like a regular flu – to most people in the United States, it is not common in some other countries that have adopted policies that put the needs of the people ahead of profits. This is why in countries like Vietnam, the DPRK, Cuba, and China the death toll in this pandemic has been among the smallest of all; even for a country with over 1.4 billion people, like China.

## Cuba 308, Los Angeles 20,987

Just for comparison, Cuba, which has a population of 12 million people and is approximately the size of Los Angeles County, has a death toll of around three hundred people (308). In comparison to Cuba, Los Angeles County, with a population

of approximately ten million people while being one of the biggest economies on the planet, has a death toll of over 20 thousand people (20,987) due to COVID-19 infections.

Such a disparity occurs because in one place, despite the lack of resources, the government prioritizes what is most valuable and essential, the lives of its people, and makes sure that medical treatment is not a luxury but a right. Money is not a necessity for those who need to see a doctor in the countries mentioned above, which cannot be said about the United States.

Another comparison that is very interesting is Vietnam and California. The former, with a population of approximately one hundred million people and with a land mass equivalent to eighty percent of the size of California, has a death toll of thirty five people due to COVID-19. Moreover, the People's Republic of China has lost about 4 thousand people (4,636) to this virus so far, despite being hit by the pandemic before any other country, thus not having all the information available today to fight it. It is important to note that the Chinese population is more than four times bigger than the population of the U.S., that a comparative death toll in the U.S. would be under 2 thousand. As for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it has no COVID-19-related deaths, whereas its neighbor in the South, the Republic of Korea, has 1,581 deaths according to the World Health Organization. Socialism saves lives. 🇺🇸



# Begging for a vaccine: 'Fight, don't die!' My story

By Sharon Black

This is what it's like in the United States; people desperately competing with each other to get jabbed with a needle. Of course, it's not just any needle, it's a potentially life saving vaccine.

I live in Baltimore city, and since day one when I became eligible, over a month ago, I began the impossible, painstaking process of trying to get a vaccine. Early in the morning and later at night when I wanted to be asleep, I hunted. I signed up every single day. But no vaccine.

Eventually, a friend sent me a spreadsheet showing how to work the system – not about jumping it, but how to use the internet portals more successfully – and a Facebook group called “Maryland Vaccine Hunters.” I lost myself in reading the posts and finally broke down in tears.

Post after post told the same story. “My husband has cancer, please help me get him a vaccine.” “I'm 80 years old, can anyone help me.” “My grandma needs a vaccine.” “My mom's too old to get to the site, she needs a ride.” You get the picture.

It was no longer about me personally; besides I said to myself, I'm tough.

The issue became about, why in a country with as much wealth, resources and technology, can we not simply vaccinate people.



The U.S. military and Pentagon can spend millions on jet fighters and manage to keep over 500 unwanted military bases equipped and functioning around the world, but can't seem to prioritize the logistics of making, transporting and giving vaccines.

What happens to my neighbors, the older ones, who I used to bring extra food to from the People's Power Assembly food distributions, or even the younger workers on my block who work at Amazon or one of the hospitals? These are the people I see in the morning and in the evening when I walk, that I love and hold dear.

The complete inhumanity of watching people compete to get life-saving vaccines; to watch people despair and simply give up is unbearable. Or to know full well that this system deems most of us as unnecessary if we are older, or less than human in the case of Black, Indigenous and Latinx people, or for that

matter workers who can be expendable, is criminal.

Capitalism has workers globally competing against each other for jobs and over wages; and now we are competing to live during a pandemic. Frankly, dogs have it better than humans under capitalism.

## Baltimore and Johnson & Johnson's vaccine

If the lack of vaccines, the terrible inequality and decentralized way in which they are being distributed isn't enough to make you want to scream, look at Baltimore.

Emergent BioSolutions, a Big Pharma transnational corporation, set up a manufacturing plant on the edge of East Baltimore. I live in East Baltimore. Their plant, located next door to the Black and Latinx community hit hard by COVID-19 deaths, is set to produce Johnson & Johnson's new vaccine.

They say they will be producing 400 million doses, 100 million of

which are set aside for the federal government and who knows where the other 300 million are slated to go.

Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott has asked – maybe he is pleading – that just a small amount be distributed to Baltimore and its underfunded Baltimore Health Department. He's gotten no answer, “crickets” from Emergent BioSolutions. In our city only 5% of those qualified have been vaccinated.

Everything is based on what they call the market. They should tell the truth. Everything is based on what is most profitable!

## Maybe I could go to Cuba as a tourist and get vaccinated

I have friends that I met in Cuba when I attended the International Che Brigade; I don't know how I could explain this to them. I remember it was so hard for some of the Cubans to comprehend homelessness; they were incredulous that it could exist in the wealthy U.S.

It's not only that health care is free in Cuba; it's about human dignity. At the present, Cuba has four vaccines. You won't hear too much of this in the big business media. Three are ending their trials. Public health is a priority in Cuba.

If you want to see for yourself, watch the film “Cuba & COVID-19:

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# Commentary on Judas and the Black Messiah

By Larry Hales

I remember the feeling of being in the theater to see the movie “Malcolm X.” I was 15. My political interests had already been piqued by the L.A. rebellion which began on April 29 of the same year. I had been forced to leave the city of my birth, a city in the middle of the industrial belt, picked up and dropped down in Dallas, Texas. Everyone spoke in a different accent, used different slang. I was lost and confused, missing home, and so sat down in the theater alone.

The beginning credits are overlaid with a U.S. flag which is interspersed with the grainy black and white footage of Rodney King being repeatedly battered with batons by LAPD. Denzel Washington recites parts of speeches given by Malcolm X.

The audience in the film retorts and it begins a call and response. In the theater there was silence. This was before YouTube, so I’d never heard Malcolm’s voice but had only read his autobiography. Denzel’s voice might as well had been Malcolm’s.

Rodney King lies on his side and the baton swings from the hands of the faceless cops continue. Malcolm’s words punctuate each blow. The flames begin to engulf a flag I had already learned as a symbol of something not meant for people like me. A chorus rises over the accompaniment and a car drives by in the black and white footage as Malcolm talks of the hypocrisy of so-called democracy and gets to the barbarity that gave rise to the U.S. and to the initial capital from which capitalism grew.

**“We don’t see any American dream. We’ve experienced only the American nightmare.”**

– Malcolm X

“Malcolm X” is certainly not a perfect biographical film. It omits Malcolm’s further development as an internationalist and anti-capitalist. Nevertheless, it still was groundbreaking to have a movie about one of the preeminent political minds produced in the U.S. I had never seen anything like it. I imagine most my age hadn’t either. It was rare to see a movie with a majority Black cast even, let alone something focused on the life of a Black radical.

After the film most of the moviegoers sat in the audience. Perhaps some remained to listen to Aretha Franklin’s cover of Donny Hathaway’s “Someday We’ll All Be Free.” For me it was that I could not get up. Simple as that. It was a mixture of ardor and hurt that stirred my mind and I couldn’t move an inch, and didn’t for maybe 5 minutes.

For years after the L.A. Rebellion I felt that it was the event that affected me most and was responsible for my political trajectory. It was a spark. But it is significantly much more complex.

The L.A. Rebellion itself was due to a confluence of factors that mark a long winter. The internal liberation movements, especially the Black liberation movement, having been smashed by the political powers in the U.S. via their police forces and courts, along with the politicization



of the drug trade, deindustrialization, the growth of neoliberalism, the waning of global leftist movements and the later collapse of the Soviet Union are all contributing factors. Rebellions are a semi-regular feature of life under capitalism. In the instance of the L.A. Rebellion, as in many other cases, it was against the state apparatus, of which police are a part. It was a cry, however, that seemed to echo in a political vacuum. It is not entirely true of course, but because of the context listed it seemed that way.

Now comes “Judas and the Black Messiah.” As a movie it is well made. The acting is tremendous. Daniel Kaluuya is very convincing as Chairman Fred Hampton. His performance is on par with Denzel’s Malcolm.

There is less footage of Chairman Fred, because he was only 21 when he was assassinated and his political life, the point from which he was thrust into leadership and the national spotlight, was too brief. Kaluuya is 11 years older than Chairman Fred was at his death. Some have complained of the disparity in age. However, it would be difficult to find someone closer to the right age who could truly display the emotional and intellectual maturity Chairman Fred exuded. Plus, it is a rare feat for an actor to play the same age as their character, especially in early adulthood. Hampton belied that which is normally attributed to someone only 21 years of age. This is not meant to be a knock against young adults of course. In reality, while full maturity is not reached at 21, the expectations then versus now were different.

Dominique Fishback as Deborah Johnson, now Akua Njeri, is understated yet very effective. The scene where the cops execute an already shot and drugged with a lethal amount of barbiturates Chairman Fred is so effective that her rage radiates through the screen. Fishback explained that Akua told her not to cry and that she refused to look back because she wanted to remain defiant. Fishback is able to convey that desire to want to see her beloved and at the same time not wanting to give his murderers the satisfaction of seeing her affected.

If this were a straight review on the artistic merits, the performances of the actors of the film and the aesthetics of the cinematography, then I’d commend all the other actors. That isn’t my primary duty, but a cursory one. I’d be remiss to not write about Lakeith Stanfield.

The main point of contention for political appraisals of “Judas and the Black Messiah” is the dual focus, which gives equal screen time to William O’Neal, played by Stanfield. The movie opens with a dramatization of the interview O’Neal did for the second part of “Eyes on

the Prize.” It then shows actual footage of rebellions during the period of the mid to late 1960s, with speeches given by various political leaders, from Angela Davis, to Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale and others, until it shows Martin Sheen as J. Edgar Hoover speak-

ing to F.B.I. agents and labeling the Black Panthers as the single greatest threat to national security.

Stanfield is 12 years older than O’Neal was when he was arrested for driving a stolen vehicle across state lines. Stanfield looks considerably older than pictures of O’Neal. The only recorded footage is from the “Eyes on the Prize 2” documentary, which was released the same night O’Neal committed suicide by running out into traffic. O’Neal was 40 at that time, but looks slightly older than Stanfield does in the movie. That aside, Stanfield is convincing as a person drowning in his circumstance. This is not surprising as Stanfield has range as an actor and his lithe frame lends itself to the role. His eyes convey a charming lost slitheriness, an amalgam of a fox, doe and snake. A good actor has to embody a character down to the fingertips and the most minute of gestures. He has what we have come to imagine O’Neal to be down to the molecule.

**“I don’t know what I’d tell him other than I was part of the struggle.”**

–William O’Neal, 1989, “Eyes on the Prize 2”

On the criticism of focus:

One can only imagine what O’Neal meant by the quote above. He most likely meant it differently than what his actual part in the struggle was. He was an informant. A snitch. A rat. He participated in the assassination of Chairman Fred Hampton and Defense Captain Mark Clark and the maiming and terrorizing of an oppressed community. He was one of many, unfortunately. He is perhaps the most well known.

Is it a missed opportunity or a mistake to have him as a focus of the film? It is clear from the interviews with the director. It is no accident that the film plays as a thriller, because that was the intent. There are a great many similarities to “The Departed.” It doesn’t have the same amount of tension, mostly because it exists in the real world history and so doesn’t have the same level of trickery and twists.

It works mostly as a piece of art, but also in displaying the complexities of people and history. It would be easy to consign O’Neal to a minor role, despite the outsized effect. But to do so would mean missing an opportunity to show the reach of the state — the police, courts, all the means by which power and control over society is exercised and help those in power remain so.

Additionally, O’Neal was a person, with his own backstory, connections and motivations; in this instance it was self preservation. Such people are fairly commonly seen now, for example, Lil Wayne support-

ing Donald Trump for a pardon is O’Nealesque. In fact, the qualities of many wealthy neocolonial types are those that O’Neal expressed. The FBI is very much as the film portrays it, as political police who know few boundaries when it comes to the means to suppress dissent. Using a 17-year-old who delved in the underground economy for survival presented no ethical dilemma.

The greatest effect of the dual focus is the juxtaposition. Chairman Fred Hampton embodies the idea of revolutionary suicide. Huey P. Newton explains it as such:

**“Revolutionary Suicide does not mean that I and my comrades have a death wish; it means just the opposite. We have such a strong desire to live with hope and human dignity that existence without them is impossible.”**

It is not simply a life desired as an individual but a desire for all to live in such a way. This is evident throughout the film, whether it be Chairman Fred meeting with a gathering of white people assembled by the Young Patriot Organization or in the solidarity with the Young Lords. It is also displayed in the final scene where Chairman Fred refuses to go on the run and uses the money given to him for the opening of the medical clinic.

**“Why don’t you live for the people. Why don’t you struggle for the people. Why don’t you die for the people.”**

– Chairman Fred Hampton

O’Neal’s life is in contradiction to Chairman Fred’s quotes above. He is driven by self-preservation and commits a reactionary suicide, his spirit crushed by the conditions of the system, his soul murdered. And so it would seem that it was of little consequence to him to commit to the acts to undermine the Black Panther Party and to take part in the assassination of two of its brightest leaders, and in Chairman Fred Hampton one of the brightest strategists, organizers and theorists. He showed value in only his life. In the end, surely haunted by his own actions, his own physical life meant very little and so he ended it by running into traffic.

In the current context: a world where there is no longer a socialist camp, but independent economic spheres that threaten the primacy of U.S. imperialism, and one where there exists a profound political and ideological crisis, it is important that any tool be recognized that presents an opportunity to present ideas many are not familiar with.

While not many people are seeing this film in a theater, but at home, I am imagining them sitting there and interacting with the film as the current social and political context as their backdrop. How might the ideas expressed impact them? How might we use the film as a tool to drive discussion and develop their understanding of the world about them? That is the task and it is the great value of the film that not only is it well made and engaging but useful in its presentation of the politics of the most impactful communist-inspired organization of the last 50 years. ☐

# Mumia must have COVID care

*‘We could not save Malcolm X, but we can save Mumia. We can save him, and we must save him, because we love our Brother, and we need our Brother to help us fight for our freedom.’*

– Assata Shakur

Dear Friend

On Feb. 27, Mumia Abu-Jamal was hospitalized. When he put in a sick call slip and was seen by the SCI Mahanoy medical staff he was taken immediately to the hospital suffering chest pain and shortness of breath. Diagnosed with congestive heart failure he was given a battery of tests. It is unclear how long Mumia was hospitalized, but by Wednesday he was in isolation in the prison’s infirmary. This diagnosis of a weakened heart requires careful monitoring and treatment.

At the hospital his serology blood test was positive for COVID-19. This followed three negative, or false negative, COVID-19 tests and a negative antigen test administered recently by the medical staff at SCI Mahanoy.

After initial treatment for fluid buildup in his body, he was discharged from the local private hospital and put in isolation in the prison infirmary. On Wednesday he was able to reach his supporters who were gathering in Philadelphia at 3 Penn Sq. outside the DA’s office, demanding that he receive appropriate medical attention. He expressed his gratitude for the worldwide support and attention to his and other elders with life threatening conditions in prison.

We must remember that the prison infirmary at SCI Mahanoy is the very

same place that in 2014 diagnosed Mumia as having critically low blood sugar, i.e. a diabetic episode or reaction to a topical steroid he was taking for a raging skin condition. The infirmary then ignored the notation in his chart to monitor his blood sugar levels for three weeks. It was not until he fainted and went into renal failure that he was rushed to the hospital. His lawsuit in that case, Abu-Jamal v. Wetzel, is still pending. It took a federal civil rights lawsuit, the order of a preliminary injunction, and world wide protests for Mumia to receive the fast acting anti-viral cure to his belatedly diagnosed Hepatitis C.

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has repeatedly failed to provide adequate care for our family members.

Abridged from the NYC Jericho Movement

For more info: [FreeMumia.com](http://FreeMumia.com)

We need to take action now!  
We demand:

1. The immediate and unconditional release of Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has congestive heart failure and has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and is vulnerable.
2. The immediate release of all political prisoners.
3. The immediate release of aging prisoners, people who have contracted COVID, and others who are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.
4. Write Mumia a personal note: Smart Communications/PADOC Mumia Abu-Jamal AM 8335 SCI Mahanoy, PO Box 33028 St Petersburg, FL 33733

When We Fight, We Win.  
Jennifer Black, Noelle Hanrahan and Jennifer Beach for Prison Radio

## Another side of Black History

By Gloria Verdieu

Abridged talk by Gloria Verdieu, Socialist Unity Party member and longtime organizer in the struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, for “Another Side of Black History: a Black Socialist Perspective,” presented by the Black Caucus of the Socialist Unity Party on Feb. 28. Watch in full on YouTube: [youtu.be/QS7A6F1ooPk](https://youtu.be/QS7A6F1ooPk)

Verdieu, who lives in Texas, has been without water or heat while caring for grandchildren. She has still not been able to get a COVID vaccination.

Historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History announced the second week of February 1926 to be “Negro History Week”, 95 years ago.

Negro History Week led to Black History Month or African-American History Month.

Certainly, Woodson did not expect us to take only a week out of the year to study Black History, nor should we expect to take only a month to focus on African History.

Political Prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal explains in one of his many commentaries on history titled “How Black is our Black History Month?”:

“Black History Month is a time to remember that which the corporate culture wishes is forgotten. A time to remember rebellion, resistance, and what it means to be Black in a white nation — today.”

This year our focus in the Socialist Unity Party Black Caucus will be to intensify the movement to release Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Russell Maroon Shoats, Mutulu Shakur, Sundiata Acoli, Imam Jamil, Ruchell Magee, all political prisoners. Immediately.

We join the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression and others calling to take immediate steps to depopulate jails, prisons, immigrant detention centers and juvenile facilities that are genocidal hotbeds for COVID-19 infections and death camps for millions.

**Free Mumia**

I’ve been involved in the movement to Free Mumia and all Political Prisoners for many years.

I went to a meeting in San Diego where Pam Africa of the Interna-



Gloria Verdieu

tional Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal was the keynote speaker along with members of the MOVE organization, I brought Mumia’s book, “Live From Death Row,” and after reading it, I was sure that we would succeed in stopping his execution.

I also knew we would free him because it was clear to me that he was innocent. That was over 25 years ago.

I joined the San Diego Coalition to Stop the Execution of Mumia, a group that met weekly at San Diego City College. We would begin each meeting by reading an essay by Mumia.

My education about the prison-industrial complex, the disparities of mass incarceration, state sanctioned death sentences, and the U.S. criminal justice system deepened.

Mumia’s essays are filled with Black people and Black people’s movements that are left out of the Black History Month news stories, and sensational events covered in mainstream media outlets.

In 2003 Mumia wrote “Why kids flunk history.” Some 89% of U.S. students at junior and high school ages could not meet the requirements of U.S. history at their grade level!

Mumia writes from his own experience. At an early age he witnessed and participated in student protests demanding Black Studies in school. These protests were somewhat effective because Black Studies made it into Ben Franklin, the high school Mumia attended.

One of his African culture teachers taught the students some Swahili and assigned them Swahili names. Wesley Cook took the name Mumia (Prince) and at 14, began using this name. He later changed his last name to Abu-Jamal (“father of Ja-

mal”) when his son was born in 1971.

His Black Studies teachers hung pictures of Malcolm X, and W.E.B. Dubois so Black students would know what their leaders looked like. He learned about Africa and that Africans had a cultural heritage that predated slavery. Africa was not only the cradle of humanity but the cradle of civilization.

Knowing this opened the doors for him to want to know more, to read more. Mumia read “The Autobiography of Malcolm X,” “The Souls of Black Folks” and he took books home to read.

**Born in the South**

In my own education, born in the South, in the Florida panhandle, history was not one of my best subjects in high school.

I favored math because I like solving equations, and English literature because we got to choose what we wanted to read and write about.

I didn’t have an appreciation for history until I took U.S. history from an African perspective at San Diego City College.

The Black Studies department at SDCC was created in 1971 through Black student activism demanding that the administration create a Black Studies department.

Professor Nathan Katungi was my first introduction to African history. The required reading in the first course was “Before the Mayflower” by Lerone Bennett. At that time, I was thinking that this class was an easy “A” until I realized the history of Africa is huge. The contributions of African people worldwide is vast.

I continue to learn and read about my African history in the Americas and around the world.

Black History Month, the shortest month of the year, cannot hold the wealth of information guarded over the last 5 centuries of Black life in this New World — a “World” that is certainly not new to the Native people who dwelled here an estimated 50 thousand years before European invasion.

African History should be a part of every discipline in all educational curricula from kindergarten to high school, college and on.

Today we continue to fight for Black Studies, more broadly ethnic studies, in all schools, especially public schools where most of our children attend.

Black History Month should be a time to celebrate what we have learned and accomplished throughout years of reading, our experiences, current events that we must study, analyze, and reflect on to determine how we are to move forward.

Imprisoned radio journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal’s death warrant was signed twice by the state. He came dangerously close to execution on August 17, 1995, and December 2, 1999 (the anniversary of the death of John Brown). It was the mobilization of a mass international movement that saved his life.

Today, Mumia is in poor health, suffering from cirrhosis of the liver, the result of a recent near-fatal bout with Hepatitis C.

On Feb. 26, Pam Africa got a call from Mumia telling her he is suffering from Covid-19 symptoms, difficulty breathing and chest pain.

Mumia is 67 years old with pre-existing conditions — a high risk for getting COVID-19 and he thinks he has COVID. This is an urgent moment because Mumia rarely talks about his own condition.

The International Concerned Family and Friends are demanding his immediate release, treatment, and hospitalization, not solitary confinement.

At a Saturday rally, organizers called for the release of Mumia and all inmates older than 50 and any who are medically vulnerable.

For an update and a clear picture of the case of Mumia and what you can do to gain his release, visit the Mobilization4Mumia facebook page and Jamal Journal created by the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal — [jamaljournal.blogspot.com](http://jamaljournal.blogspot.com).

Also March 6, the Mobilization4Mumia, Campaign to Bring Mumia Home and International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal are having a Global Street Meeting — with a special appearance from Fred Hampton Jr.

“Freedom has never been so close.”

# From the streets of Haiti: End the dictatorship of Jovenel Moïse

By John Parker

Paralleling the dictatorial aspirations of Trump, Haitian President Jovenel Moïse is attempting to hold onto office, a position that was stolen in the first place with the support and backing of the U.S. government. In 2016 with U.S. backing, Moïse took the office of president despite getting only 6% of the vote in the election. And, as protests swelled against that undemocratic placement of Moïse into office by the U.S., so now are they erupting in demands for his removal since his term in office has, by law, ended.

However, laws in and about Haiti — whether national or international — are irrelevant and cast aside for the will of imperialist interests. Especially in regards to the U.S. since its 1915 invasion and years of occupation of Haiti, which forced control of its economy and de facto control of its government into the hands of the U.S.

This denial of Haitian sovereignty continues under the Biden administration, since most imperialist foreign policies are consistent between Democratic and Republican administrations.

This interference by the U.S. and the ever worsening poverty and repression under President Moïse was again answered in the capital of Port-au-Prince on Feb. 14 with protests against the illegal hold on power that even the official institutions like the Haitian Bar Association and Superior Council of the Judicial Power cite as violations of the constitution and the 2015 Electoral Laws, according to a recent article in *Haiti Liberté*.

Unlike the claims of a stolen election by Trump from his white supremacist, anti-science, anti-fact supporters, the claims of election fraud in 2016 that put Moïse into power were echoed by all of the contending candidates, citing the elimination of ballots and disen-



Feb. 14 mass protest in Port-au-Prince.

franchised voters, with only 21% of eligible voters being counted.

Although, for the most part, the mainstream media did not question the results of those elections, the *Wall Street Journal* had to admit a peculiarity in the low numbers of voter participation where voter turnout was just 21% with a large percentage of ballots being discarded for supposed irregularities. The *Journal* quotes a Haiti expert in Washington: “The real story is the collapse of a functioning democratic system, where 80% of the electorate decided not to participate or was unable to participate,” said Jake Johnston, a Haiti expert with the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, who noted that in 2000 and 2006, Haitian presidential election turnouts were around 70% and 56%, respectively.

“There is a general dissatisfaction with the political and economic elite in Haiti that makes people think, not only does my vote not matter, but it may not be counted either,” Johnston continued.

This history of the Moïse administration has been one of increased violence by police and gangs associated with the police. In 2019,

a massive demonstration erupted in response to the repression and worsening poverty. Those who spoke out against the deteriorating situation in Haiti, whether civilians or officials, were met with violence and kidnappings. This strategy by the Haitian government is repeating today.

Officials who have questioned Moïse’s refusal to step down have been arrested or pursued for arrest. *Haiti Progrès* reported that on Feb. 7, at least 23 people were rounded up in the early morning hours, including Supreme Court justices. Also the mayor of Port-au-Prince was forced to flee to the Dominican Republic, fearing for his life after a police raid of his home.

The deadly force being used against protesters and journalists has increased significantly and its international visibility has become an embarrassment for the U.S., and the United Nations which has worked in concert with U.S. policy in Haiti.

Although the Biden administration had echoed unconditional support for Moïse, that visibility forced a tweet from Julie Chung, Assistant secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, on Feb. 16: “I

am alarmed by recent authoritarian and undemocratic acts — from unilateral removals and appointments of Supreme Court judges to attacks against journalists. ... Respect for democratic norms is vital and non-negotiable.” Of course this sentiment does not include the extremely blatant sabotage of democracy that occurred when the U.S. removed from office and kidnapped the democratically-elected president of Haiti in 2004, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who put fighting poverty and Haitian sovereignty and self-determination before any subservience to the U.S.

The violence has reached a point where it had to be taken up in a UN Security Council meeting, reported *Haiti Progrès*. There, French Ambassador Nathalie Briadhurst asked Moïse to address the issue of the gang leader Jimmy Chérizier, who has been cited in national and international reports and accused of numerous massacres, yet remains free.

Add to the refusal of the Biden administration to discontinue U.S. military and financial support for Moïse with the fact that since Feb. 1 over 500 Haitians were deported by ICE. It is clear that this administration, like the Trump and Obama administrations, is all about the appearance of democracy while denying it for African peoples and any targets of U.S. imperialism’s drive for profits and hegemony.

The Haiti Action Committee, a San Francisco Bay Area-based network of activists who have supported the Haitian struggle for democracy since 1991, is demanding of the U.S. government:

- ▶ End all support for the dictatorship of Jovenel Moïse
- ▶ End all recognition of the government of Jovenel Moïse as of Feb. 7, 2021, as required by Haiti’s constitution
- ▶ Stop all funding of the criminal Haitian police and security forces. 📌

## How a Black elevator operator helped forge the SEIU

Continued from page 2

Twenty thousand elevator operators lost their jobs in New York City. The jobs of 50,000 Black coal miners were eliminated between 1930 and 1980. (“Black Coal Miners in America,” by Ronald L. Lewis)

The young striker Ethel Greenglass married the electrical engineer Julius Rosenberg. Both activists were burned to death in the electric chair by the U.S. Government on June 19, 1953.

The Rosenbergs were framed during the anti-communist witch hunt for giving “atomic secrets” to the Soviet Union. W.E.B. DuBois gave a eulogy at their funeral, declaring these martyrs died because “they would not lie.”

### Justice for janitors

Despite these tragedies the working class continues to fight. Over the past 35 years, hundreds of thousands of building workers have joined the SEIU.

A hallmark of the union’s organizing efforts has been its “Justice for Janitors” campaign that was launched in Denver in 1985. In 2001 alone, 10,000 janitors working in the suburbs of cities like Washington D.C., Philadelphia and New York joined the SEIU.

Los Angeles was this movement’s crucible. On June 15, 1990, the LAPD viciously attacked a demonstration of striking janitors, most Latinx, who cleaned the gleaming office towers in Century City.

At least 148 people were injured, including a pregnant woman who miscarried. The city was eventually forced to pay \$2.35 million in damages to these SEIU Local 399 members and supporters.

The massive police violence was the turning point in a two year long organizing campaign. Visiting Danish trade unionists were appalled at the anti-union hostility of Danish-owned cleaning contractor ISS,

which employed 250 of the 400 janitors in the Century City complex.

This outfit signed a union contract the same day its unionized New York operations were threatened by SEIU Local 32B-32J following the cop attack.

The 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion was sparked by the acquittal of sadists-in-blue who clubbed Rodney King 56 times. But the Century City police riot was part of the social tinder of the uprising. Just as the LAPD attack on the Nation of Islam’s Muhammad Mosque No. 27 in 1962 — in which Ronald X. Stokes was killed — helped lead to the 1965 Watts Rebellion.

The struggle at Century City stopped a decade of union busting in Los Angeles office buildings. The number of janitors more than doubled there between 1980 and 1990, reaching a total of 28,883.

Scab cleaning contractors were the norm in new office buildings. Already unionized outfits demanded

wage cuts.

Building workers, many of whom were immigrants, revolted and organized. Ten years after the 1990 police riot they marched up Wilshire Boulevard — named after a real estate developer who became a socialist — and returned to Century City.

After nearly three weeks on strike they won a 26% wage hike for workers employed at 900 buildings across Los Angeles County.

Ninety-eight percent of these strikers were immigrants. Eighty per cent were from Central America. Fifty-five percent were women. (“A Clean Sweep”, by Harold Meyerson, *The American Prospect*, June 19, 2000).

The fighting spirit of these Latinx immigrant workers, overwhelmingly women, revitalized the labor movement throughout Southern California. There’s a little bit of Thomas Young and Ethel Rosenberg in “Justice for Janitors.” 📌

# Two victories in Cuba shape the world today

By Cheryl LaBash

The Cuban Revolution was just two years old in 1961. Two victories won in that year, 60 years ago, laid crucial foundations for today's resilient, rebellious and free country just 90 miles from the U.S.: The Literacy Campaign and the 72-hour rout of the U.S. invasion at Playa Giron, more commonly referred to in the U.S. as the Bay of Pigs.

Shortly, within months, Cuba's Soberana-02 COVID-19 vaccine will conclude final testing. Soberana-02 is one of four vaccine candidates developed by Cuban scientists. This accomplishment is unmatched among small countries emerging from centuries of colonialism, slavery and neocolonial imperialist domination.

What's more, Cuba's internationalist record and projection of producing 100 million vaccine doses — far exceeding the needs of its 11.3 million people — gives hope to countries in the global South who are left out when rich countries compete to buy up and corner life-saving vaccine production. Cuba has already signed agreements with Iran, Vietnam, Venezuela and India, said Dr. Vicente Várez Bencomo, Director General of the Finlay Vaccine and Serum Institute.

Many in the U.S. are incredulous. They ask: "Where will Cuba get the vaccine? From Russia?" How can it be that Cuba is developing and planning production for a vaccine on the same time frame as corporations in the U.S., Britain and Germany?

## The U.S. blockade is real

Unlike the billions in development funds for "Operation Warp Speed," the U.S. economic war against Cuba was finetuned even during the pandemic to create maximum suffering for the Cuban people. Spare parts for medical devices are withheld by U.S.-owned international corporations fearful of fines. A flight from China refused to land. Venezuelan oil trade with Cuba was interdicted by the U.S. This is more than the "previous administration" policy. It was the U.S. State Department itself that admitted these cruel intentions. The Malloy-Rubottom State Dept. internal memo of April 6, 1960, explained the U.S. strategy still in play today:

"Every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the



PHOTO: IRENE PÉREZ / CUBADEBATE

Gissel Saldívar, a 19 year old chemical technician, supervises work at the Immunoassay Center's Biosensors plant in Havana.

economic life of Cuba. If such a policy is adopted, it should be the result of a positive decision which would call forth a line of action which, while as adroit and inconspicuous as possible, makes the greatest inroads in denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government."

## Education is a right

Yet how does Cuba do it? The short answer is socialism. It is Jose Marti's words that "Homeland is Humanity." It is Fidel Castro in his defense statement after the attack on the Moncada Barracks in 1953 describing the conditions the revolutionaries sought to end:

"In any small European country there are more than 200 technical and industrial arts schools; in Cuba, there are only six such schools, and the boys who graduate have no place to use their skill. That little rural schools are attended by only half of the school age children — barefooted, half-naked, and undernourished — and frequently the teacher must buy necessary materials from his own salary. Is this the way to make a nation great?"

In December 1960, the new revolution announced a great campaign to eliminate illiteracy. At the United Nations, Fidel Castro announced they would do it in one year. By mobilizing young urban volunteers to be teachers, Cuba not only uplifted the dignity of formerly illiterate rural and urban families, but educated the more privileged to the everyday hard life in the country where they worked as well as taught.

In what was at that time a traditional patriarchal society, young women — more than half of the brigadistas — gained unheard of independence, overcoming the resis-

tance of their parents. Today Cuban scientists are developing vaccines and using nanotechnology to solve the problems confronting people in Cuba and the world. A June 14, 2018, report in Granma noted that 53 percent of the scientists are women. They are the daughters and granddaughters shaped by the Literacy Campaign. Watch this eight minute trailer of the movie "Maestra, women of Cuba's National Literacy Campaign" to get the feeling of the time: [tinyurl.com/8pkxw7fa](http://tinyurl.com/8pkxw7fa)

## April 1961 — what was won

In April of the year to end illiteracy, the U.S. launched a direct invasion at Playa Giron, known in the U.S. as the Bay of Pigs. Literacy teachers were targeted, tortured and killed. In a playbook seen many times since then, bought and paid for U.S. agents attempted to gain a beachhead, falsely presenting themselves as authentic representatives of the Cuban people to unleash direct U.S. military intervention and reimpose imperial domination. The invasion was quickly defeated.

But what would a U.S. victory in April 1961 have meant today? Of course, we can point to Haiti and Puerto Rico as examples. But we have actual U.S. documents, too: The 2004 plan written by the Bush administration's "Commission for the Support of Free Cuba."

Luis A. Montero Cabrera, professor and member of the Cuban Academy of Science, says it best in part three of his series of articles, "Vaccines and Sovereignty."

"We Cubans have a very remarkable platform for biomedical production, one might even say extraordinary for a country like ours. An infamous 2004 document from the 'Commission for the Support of a Free Cuba' of a previous administration in the U.S. described it as unnecessary and very expensive for such a poor country as ours: 'Large sums were also directed to activities such as the development of biotechnology and bioscience centers not appropriate in magnitude and expense for such a fundamentally poor nation, and which have failed to be justified financially.' (p. 256)

"The only thing to be added to this is that those of us in the South with darker skin ought not to have the luxury of science. But our biopharmaceutical sector is the child of necessity, of the creative initiative of a lover of knowledge and a true revolutionary, as was our Fidel, and of an educational policy that gives everybody without distinction the right to reach the highest level of human knowledge and to with that knowledge, create. It was not begun with a specific strategy or goal but became, as it is today, a bastion of the knowledge, science and culture of our country. It was and is the fruit of revolutionary thinking."

It is through the lens of this history that we look toward the vaccinations with Soberana-02 that are coming soon to Cuba, and the world. Soberana, sovereignty, self-determination powered by the people, for the people, not for corporate profit. 📌



Staff at the Immunoassay Center's Biosensors plant.

PHOTO: IRENE PÉREZ / CUBADEBATE

## Begging for vaccine: 'Fight, don't die!'

Continued from page 3

Public Health, Science & Solidarity."

I will bet my entire but meager Social Security check with anyone who wants to wager with me, that Cuba has its entire population vaccinated in a month. Take my bet, I need the money.

Public health has not been cut like it is here. There is no ridiculous patchwork of lucrative giveaways to private companies like CVS, Walgreens, Rite Aid, Giant Pharmacy, Walmart, etc., whose confusing websites have been impossible to navigate.

Cuba's health teams will go to where the people are.

I wish this was just my story, just the story of Baltimore, but it isn't.

The same can be said of every poor and oppressed community in the United States. In Indigenous communities and on reservations where COVID-19 deaths have ravaged in what amounts to genocide. The same can be said for Black, Brown and Latinx communities. And we cannot forget the poorer countries that cannot afford to buy vaccines from the capitalist world.

"Don't starve, fight!" was the battle cry of workers during the Great Depression. I think the new battle cry for our time should be "Fight, don't die!" I'm going to fight, and I'm going to organize every old person, young person, worker and friend to do the same! 📌

## Youth Against War & Racism condemns Biden-ordered airstrike on Syria

Youth Against War & Racism condemns without qualification the Biden-ordered airstrike that murdered 22 people in Syria. While millions of people in the United States are unemployed, sick, dying, short on food, and awaiting relief payments and vaccines, the Biden Administration, in the first month of its reign, decided it was more important to establish military dominance.

The Biden Administration claims the bombing was in self-defense, or a response to attacks on the U.S. Embassy in Iraq which killed American

mercenaries. Of course, U.S. military forces remain in Iraq despite the Iraqi parliament voting to expel them in January 2020.

One of Biden's campaign promises was to make America the greatest country in the world again. He means to re-establish American military dominance by death and destruction, and he is starting here.

Youth Against War & Racism demands:

U.S. hands off Syria, Iran, and Iraq! Shut down the U.S. military bases! Defund the Pentagon! 📌

# Puerto Rico es un estado fallido

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

PR es un estado fallido donde los gobernantes ni siquiera intentan ejecutar políticas que beneficien al pueblo.

Un ejemplo es el sistema de educación.

Se han venido cerrando cientos de escuelas de manera atropellada con la excusa de que por la migración, quedan menos estudiantes.

El gobierno nombra oficiales de Educación incompetentes cuya misión es atrasar al estudiantado y perturbar el trabajo del magisterio, abonando al proceso de colonización que intenta erradicar los valores,

historia, y cultura puertorriqueña para hacer de la población una masa sumisa y sirviente de los extranjeros ricos que se van apoderando del archipiélago.

Luego de los terremotos que comenzaron en enero del 2020 en el sur de la isla, muchas escuelas fueron cerradas y hasta el día de hoy, no se han rehabilitado. Esto, junto a la pandemia que llegó al mes siguiente, forzaron al estudiantado a quedarse en sus casas y participar remotamente de sus clases dejando a miles de estudiantes fuera por la falta de acceso al internet.

Ahora, quieren abrir las escuelas el 1 de marzo sin que se haya dado un

proceso ordenado de reparación de los edificios ni se pongan en práctica las medidas salubristas necesarias por la pandemia.

Esta es una de las muchas luchas que se están ahora dando en este país.

Desde Puerto Rico para RADIO CLARIN de Colombia, les habló Berta Joubert-Ceci.

📺



## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY FOUNDER

# Clara Zetkin on fascism: A lesson for today

Continued from page 1

tests in the streets, sit-downs at the workplace, occupations and ultimately insurrections and uprisings, are the engine of change.

In the case of International Women's Day, you could call Clara Zetkin the tireless driver of that engine.

During this period, women in Europe and other parts of the world were emerging from feudalism and slave-like conditions, where they were subjugated to sexual abuse, isolated in their homes and villages as serfs and peasants; only to be forced into a new kind of slavery, toiling alongside their children in the brutal sweatshops of capitalism.

In these new conditions, revolutionary socialist and communist women agitated and organized women workers to resist even when this meant doing so under illegal conditions, subjecting them to jail and exile.

The First World War compounded suffering in unimaginable ways. It

brought death and starvation, but it also brought resistance, especially by women.

While the declaration of International Women's Day was made in Europe, Zetkin's aim as a revolutionary socialist and communist was that it would be international in scope, uniting women across all boundaries.

### Inspiration from New York City

One of the earliest of women's protests that helped fuel the movement took place in the United States on March 8, 1908. Thousands of women garment workers, mainly immigrants, took to the streets demanding their rights.

This was followed a year later with the 1909 "Uprising of the 20,000," also called the New York shirtwaist strike, a three-month garment workers' strike.

### Women kick off a revolution

But the unforgettable turning point that sealed the deal was when

the women of Russia touched off a revolution.

On March 8, 1917, striking women textile workers joined other women attacking bakeries over high bread prices in Petrograd, Russia. They implored soldiers to put down their rifles.

Some 90,000 protesters took to the streets demanding "peace, land and bread."

This was the opening salvo that toppled Russia's hated czar and in less than a year, the workers, peasants and the poor led by the Bolshevik Party took power in November 1917.

While encircled and under attack by the imperialist powers, they formed the first socialist workers' state. One of the very first things the new Soviet revolution did was codify women's equality.

### Zetkin the theoretician, organizer and doer

While Clara Zetkin dedicated much of her time and effort to the cause of working class women, she was simultaneously a thinker and writer, what we call a theoretician, and as a revolutionary, a doer, organizer and participant.

Sometimes there were painful splits and conflict. Zetkin left the Socialist Party of Germany in 1916 because of its imperialist pro-war position and, along with Rosa Luxemburg, helped pave the way for the founding of the Communist Party of Germany.

She was jailed repeatedly for opposing World War I. Remarkably, Lenin met with her to strategize on the question of women.

### Another part of Clara Zetkin's story — fighting racism

Zetkin was fiercely opposed to Jim Crow and lynching in the U.S. South.

She played a major role in building international support for the Scottsboro Case (1932) of nine Black teenagers falsely accused of raping two white women. They were found guilty and Alabama sought the death

penalty for 8 members (the ninth member was only 12 years old). While they were eventually freed, it took years before the teenagers were released.

You can find Zetkin's call, "Save the Scottsboro Black Youth," in "Clara Zetkin: Selected Writings" edited by Philip Foner with a foreword by Angela Davis.

### Zetkin and right-wing putsch at U.S. Capitol

As we continue to discuss the January 6, 2021, events at the U.S. Capitol, we can evaluate and learn from Clara Zetkin.

Zetkin understood the causes of fascism, connecting it to the decay of capitalism, urging socialist and working class unity. Rather than poorly summarize it for you, you should read and study Zetkin's report given on June 20, 1923, to the Communist International: "The Struggle Against Fascism." ([tinyurl.com/y6btwyt4](https://tinyurl.com/y6btwyt4))

Zetkin's writings, presentations and polemics were not abstract. She did not have the luxury of looking back but rather had to write in the middle of the maelstrom. This makes her contributions sharp and even more remarkable.

At the age of 75, gravely ill and nearly blind, she spoke for an hour in the German Parliament (Reichstag) on August 30, 1932, as Nazis yelled death threats at her.

When Hitler came to power, Zetkin was forced into exile and lived her last days in the Soviet Union. She was 76 when she died on June 20, 1933.

Clara Zetkin lived an amazing life, filled with hardship and struggle. She endured the murder of her close friends and comrades Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, but she also witnessed the birth of the Soviet Union and saw genuine advancements for women.

This real history cannot be shoved underground.

Zetkin's red heart will remain with us. 📺

## Coast-to-coast solidarity actions

# Amazon warehouse workers fighting for a union

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as a beacon of justice.

People gathered at the Los Angeles protest chanted: "Morgan Lewis you can't hide — you and Trump worked side by side. And Amazon, you're their boss — it's Black workers you choose to toss."

Social-justice groups that rallied at the Morgan Lewis office were greeted by a wall of barricades and police watching over the entrance under the ominous concrete tower in the heart of LA's downtown financial district.

Representatives from the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, Union Del Barrio, the U.S. Hands Off Cuba Committee and the United Electrical Workers union joined forces in providing fuel for the Bessemer workers. They attempted to deliver a "people's cease and desist" letter to the law firm but were turned away by security.

Their action clearly caught Mor-

gan Lewis's attention from the increased security precautions and scare tactics.

"Our union is in solidarity with the Amazon workers who are making history in their organizing drive, which is an inspiration to other workers to stand up against unsafe working conditions and low wages and exploitation in general," declared Fernando Ramirez, a UE representative.

More than 40 actions were held across the U.S. on the weekend of Feb. 19-21, including another protest at a Morgan Lewis office in Philadelphia. Supporters in East New York, Brooklyn, rallied at a local Amazon facility, while a car caravan and picket line moved through the city of Baltimore.

Even through barricades, traffic-light tampering and a close call on halting mail-in ballots, the working class is sending a clear message that we hear the Bessemer workers and are standing side by side. 📺

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