

STRUGGLE ★ LA LUCHA

for Socialism | por el Socialismo



Police killings = modern day lynchings

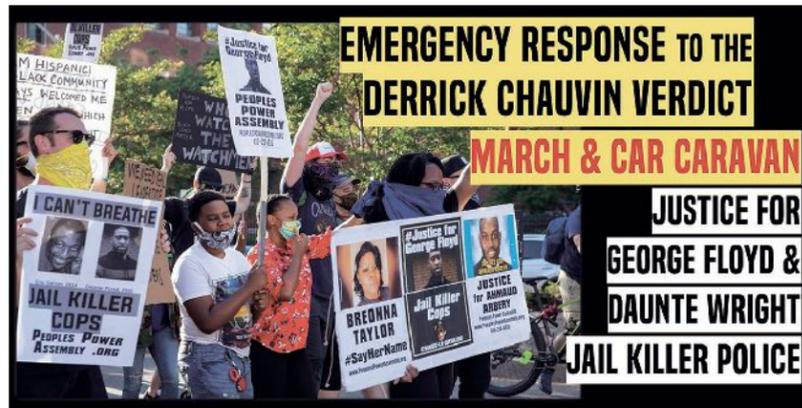
By John Parker

Human-rights organizations have already done multiple studies on the existence of white supremacist gangs within police forces in this country. Perhaps this is why police refuse to hold their fellow officers or the gangs within their departments accountable and continue to enable the genocide we witness almost weekly with the killing of Black and Brown people by law enforcement.

We don't know if the cops who killed Philando Castile and George Floyd, or now, Daunte Wright and Adam Toledo, are members of or enablers of an organized white supremacist grouping within their departments. But we know that the culture of racist policing has an ideology that is pervasive throughout the country.

This ideology has been encouraged by white supremacists holding high office in the government, including former President Donald Trump. They were also encouraged by President Joe Biden's response to the problem of police shootings. His answer, during his election campaign last year, didn't reflect on the shocking number of these shootings, or their racist nature — he just advised that cops should "shoot them in the leg."

What do we know about the motivations of these murdering cops? We know they all felt justified in their killings; that they all tried to cover up either their own or other police killings; that they were willing to add salt to the wounds of the families by participating in the vilification of their victims. And we also know they've shown no real remorse for what they've done. It takes a special kind of person to do those things.



When then-candidates Joe Biden and Kamala Harris stated that they were against even the weak demand to address police murders by defunding police departments, it sent a signal to that kind of person: the cops and others like them.

And, as we've seen so clearly with the murders of George Floyd, killed by former cop Derek Chauvin, and Daunte Wright, murdered by recently resigned cop Kim Potter — they all use childlike excuses for their acts of inhumanity that would make a 5-year-old blush. Yet they still get to use them, and have a good chance of paying with very little time, if any at all, for doing a lot of bad — another encouragement.

In Los Angeles, a well-publicized scandal in 2013 exposed a previous sheriff and senior officers directing sheriff's deputies in extreme violence against prisoners. According to the ACLU, which filed a lawsuit against the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, "Beatings left

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In cities across U.S.

ALL OUT APRIL 24 for MUMIA

By Gloria Verdieu

The Socialist Unity Party, Struggle-La Lucha newspaper and the San Diego Coalition to Free Mumia join in the "Bring Mumia Home" campaign initiated by International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal (ICFFMAJ).

Saturday, April 24, 2021, is political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal's 67th birthday. He has spent 39 of those years unjustly behind bars and faces life-threatening health problems.

ICFFMAJ is calling on people in all cities and towns throughout the United States to gather in public spaces to demand that Mumia be released immediately! In the Northeast, people are encouraged to travel to Mumia's hometown of Philadelphia to join protests, if they are able.

Gather at federal buildings, community centers, libraries, train and trolley stations, or anywhere to send the message to Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf and Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner that Mumia must be released NOW!

No gathering is too small. Hold

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Stop Kroger's grocery shut-downs: 'It's all about greed'

By John Parker

Los Angeles — Kroger is the largest supermarket chain in the country. During the pandemic the company increased its profits by 56%, to \$2.6 billion, while its workers risked their health and their lives to serve their communities.

So when the chain decided to close down five stores in the Los Angeles area, simply because the City Council voted to give the workers a temporary \$5-per-hour pay increase — in recognition of their courageous service and added needs during the pandemic — the community and the workers were understandably outraged.

Ronald Ford, a worker at the Kroger-owned Ralphs grocery store located in South Central LA, represented by United Food and Commercial Workers Local 770, said of

the scheduled closure: "After 32 years working in this store, I see it's all about greed, it's never enough! Kroger should keep this store going. Don't shut it down, people need jobs. Hazard pay is a blessing for me."

Joe Crosby, president of the Harvard Boulevard Block Club, a South Central neighborhood association, reflected on the planned closing of that store: "My brother works at the Ralphs that's closing. And our neighbors have already been hurt by a Ralphs that closed one block away a few years ago.

"We now have people here who are no longer able to get good food at a decent price, and it severely affects our people who are elderly and those who can't get around as easily, and many people here depended on those jobs," Crosby told Struggle-La Lucha.

"They can't keep closing these stores just because they're too

greedy to share the huge profits they made during this pandemic."

The Ralphs on Crenshaw Boulevard in South Central was the first store focused on by a newly-formed coalition of community groups. They held a protest April 3 in solidarity with the workers and to inform the community about Kroger's plans to close the store in May.

Building labor/community solidarity

The Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice began planning the action there in mid-March and circulated announcements about the event at various union rallies and community gatherings. One of those flyers landed in a City Council staffer's lap, and he immediately called the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which, unbeknownst to the Tubman Center, was

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Members of San Diego Coalition to Free Mumia.

- U.S. decay
- Defend trans youth
- Detroit vaccinations
- Amazon stole the vote!



Gilda Chacon Bravo, Ramsey Clark, Presente!



Justice for Daunte Wright



- Ali Osman Köse
- Justice for Vladik!
- U.S. out of Ukraine
- Manuel Mayí

Why is U.S. capitalism so decayed?

By Stephen Millies

Millions of people in Texas lost their heat, lights and water two months ago during a winter storm. The state's profit-hungry utilities didn't want to spend money winterizing natural gas pumps and other equipment. Over 100 people died because of capitalist greed.

The Texas tragedy is just the latest example of U.S. capitalism being unable to maintain its physical plant, which is called infrastructure. This includes utilities, roads, railroads, airports, school buildings and not the least, housing, health facilities and hospitals.

President Biden and Vice President Harris have proposed a \$2.25 trillion "American Jobs Program" to fix some of these problems. Millions of jobs could be created. That sounds like a lot of money, but the funds will be spent over eight or even ten years.

That's about \$280 billion a year, or a little more than a third of the Pentagon's official budget. It's modest compared to the \$1.6 trillion lifetime cost of the U.S. Air Force F-35 fighter planes.

Yet the U.S. Chamber of Commerce attacked the White House plan. Writing in the reactionary *National Review*, David Harsanyi claims, "Our infrastructure is not crumbling."

Tell that to the children of Flint, Mich., who were lead-poisoned by their drinking water. Thirteen people were killed when the I-35W bridge collapsed in Minneapolis in 2007. Over 45,000 bridges are considered structurally deficient in the United States.

Eight people died in New York City's El Barrio (East Harlem) in 2014 because of a natural gas explosion. A nearby gas main dated from 1887 but the ConEd utility was too cheap to replace it.

This writer worked as a train dispatcher at Amtrak. Every time the 111-year-old Portal Bridge crossing the Hackensack River in New Jersey opened for boat traffic, we hoped it would safely lock up again. Two hundred thousand passengers use it daily to enter and leave New York City.

More is needed

As Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez pointed out, the real problem with the White House plan is that it's not big enough. It was the Green New



Collapse of the I-35W bridge in Minneapolis, 2007.

Deal championed by AOC and other congresswomen of color in "the Squad" that paved the way for any infrastructure proposals.

"Build back better," as Biden calls it, has to include tackling toxic racism. Oil refineries and chemical plants are often built right next to poor communities. The abandoned phosphate fertilizer plant near Tampa, Fla., whose pond threatened a catastrophic flood, is just one of hundreds of dangerously polluted sites.

The Cross Bronx Expressway displaced thousands of New York families, while air pollution from trucks and cars created an asthma epidemic. The I-43 Expressway slashed through Milwaukee's Black community, destroying hundreds of homes.

The American Jobs Program proposes spending \$85 billion on public transit and \$80 billion for passenger and freight railroads. Millions of workers, students and seniors need better transit.

Big Oil, General Motors and Firestone conspired to get rid of streetcar systems coast-to-coast. The tracks of the Key System connecting San Francisco and Oakland, Calif., were ripped out of the Bay Bridge in 1958. The last passenger service on the Pacific Electric — which once had 700 miles of tracks serving the Los Angeles area — was in 1961.

Socialist China built 23 new subway systems between 2009 and 2019. The People's Republic has more high-speed rail than the rest of the world.

The \$165 billion proposed for transit and rail in the U.S. over eight

years is a fraction of what China is spending. Just in 2018 China invested \$117 billion in railroads alone.

That doesn't prevent right wingers from attacking the Biden-Harris plan as extravagant. They take particular ire at spending \$400 billion over eight years for home- and community-based care for seniors and people with disabilities.

This is probably the most progressive part of the American Jobs Program. It calls for higher wages and benefits for miserably-paid home-care workers.

Opponents claim this isn't "infrastructure." Helping millions of people is just as important as pouring concrete.

WPA and the socialist example

There's much better mass transit and many more passenger trains in capitalist Western Europe and Japan. Meanwhile, in the United States, spending on infrastructure as a percentage of the total economy has been cut in half since the 1960s.

Why is this so? The billionaire class in the United States doesn't see any individual profit in such investment. Wall Street as well as the British banks instead depend on a reverse blood transfusion of profits stolen from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Private utilities refused to even update the electrical grid, which is absolutely necessary for capitalist production. The capitalist state — via President Obama's stimulus program — had to spend billions on it. More billions are scheduled under the Biden-Harris plan.

Lenin — the leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution — called this the "parasitism and decay of capitalism" in his 1916 pamphlet, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism." Monopolies are just like landlords in their unwillingness to spend money to upgrade their property.

Why should slumlords spend any money on fixing dangerous conditions or getting rid of rats as long as they can keep collecting high rents? New York City had to pass local laws 10/80 and 11/98 to force landlords to fix their facades after Grace Gold was killed by falling debris in 1979.

People still use and enjoy hundreds of well-built bridges and attractive parks built under the Works Progress Administration during the 1930s. Millions of workers were employed by the WPA during the Great Depression.

The Roosevelt administration was forced to set up the WPA because of a working-class upsurge. The Communist Party organized unemployment councils and fought evictions. Millions of workers joined unions and built the Congress of Industrial Organizations — the mighty CIO.

Another big factor was the example of the socialist five-year economic plans in the Soviet Union. These plans abolished unemployment and allowed the Soviet Union to defeat Hitler.

It's the Black Lives Matter movement with over 20 million people demanding justice for George Floyd and all other victims of police murders that's driving any social change in the United States. So are the campaigns to bring union wages, benefits and protection to Amazon employees and millions of other workers.

The example of socialist China doubling its economy since 2008 during the biggest capitalist economic crisis since the 1930s also put infrastructure on the political agenda. President Biden pointed to China's success as an argument for passing his administration's plan.

We need a massive jobs program that will build what we need. Don't mix that up with poisonous attacks on Asian people and the war drive against the People's Republic of China.

China has what we need: a socialist revolution that will abolish police terror and poverty. [📄](#)



Altagracia Mayí and Martha Laureano Perez.
SLL PHOTO: STEPHEN MILLIES

Manny Mayí remembered Murdered 30 years ago by racist mob

By Stephen Millies

People gathered outside the office of Queens County District Attorney Melinda Katz on April 2 to demand justice for Manuel Mayí. The 18-year-old Dominican man, known as Manny, was murdered 30 years before on March 30, 1991, by a white racist mob in the Corona neighborhood of Queens, New York City.

Altagracia Mayí, Manny's mother, spoke to supporters and the media. She movingly described her decades-long struggle to bring her son's murderers to trial.

A son of Dominican immigrants, Manny was an honor student who wanted to become an engineer. He was chased almost 20 blocks through the streets of Corona.

The racists caught up to Mayí at the corner of 36th Avenue and 108th Street (two blocks away from the home of the late Louis Armstrong). The mob used baseball bats, pipes and a fire extinguisher to beat Manny to death.

New York City was later forced to name the corner after Mayí. But the

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Defending trans youth is a struggle for all workers

By Struggle-la Lucha

In tandem with racist attacks on Black voting rights like SB 202 in Georgia, the ultra-right is waging war on transgender youth in state legislatures across the country. Specifically, numerous bills have been introduced to deny young people's rights to gender-affirming health care and to participate in public school sports programs.

Like the attacks on voting rights, these measures target some of the most vulnerable members of our working class, and with the same goal: to divide and conquer.

At least 174 anti-LGBTQ2S bills are currently under consideration in state legislatures. "Of those, 95 directly target transgender people, and about half of those would bar transgender girls from participating in sports consistent with their gender identity. Many of the other anti-trans bills seek to ban gender-affirming care for minors," the Advocate reports.

On April 6, Arkansas became the first state in the country to ban gender-affirming health care for trans youth after the state legislature overrode Gov. Asa Hutchinson's veto. But Hutchinson is no friend of trans people; just days before, on March 26, he signed a law banning trans youth from sports teams, paving the way for the anti-health-care measure.

Mississippi banned trans youth from sports on March 11. Tennessee then enacted an anti-trans sports law, while South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem — a notorious COVID denier who has especially waged war on Indigenous peoples' health during the pandemic — signed two executive orders banning trans people from participating in public school and college sports programs.

The right-wing hopes to exploit backward ideas and prejudices about trans people to throw a wrench into the class struggle. The whole capitalist ruling class was panicked by the Black Lives Matter uprising following the police murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor last year. Black, white, Latinx, Asian, Arab and Indigenous people united in the streets in defense of Black lives and against officially sanctioned white supremacist terrorism.

Now more than ever, sowing division is the top priority of the bosses and their political agents.

Build unity, defend the most oppressed

The job of all class-conscious workers, progressives, socialists and communists, on the other hand, is to counter the bosses' divide-and-conquer plans by building unity.

And unity starts with defending the most oppressed members of our class: Black people whose lives and voting rights are on the chopping block; prisoners and migrants in COVID-ridden cages; Asian communities facing violence; and trans youth who are being demeaned and scapegoated.

Just look at who is promoting the wave of anti-trans legislation. It's the same politicians and anti-peo-

ple forces that want to ban the right to protest for Black lives, who deny the need for public health measures against COVID-19, and supported Donald Trump's attempt to overturn the 2020 election results.

They are being aided by opportunist Republicans who opposed Trump's coup attempt but are now desperate to get back in the ultra-right's good graces before the next election cycle. And they are further helped by mainstream centrist and liberal Democratic politicians who give lip service to trans rights while trying to exploit the crisis for their own electoral gain.

Denying health care kills

Trans people have had to fight tooth and nail to have their identities acknowledged and to be treated respectfully by health-care institutions. Taking away the right of young trans people to be treated with respect, and to have the agency to seek hormone therapy, choose sex-reassignment and other affirming care, is a life and death matter.

According to a 2020 study by the University of Pittsburgh, about 85% of trans adolescents reported "seriously considering suicide," and over half had attempted suicide. A 2019 study by an crisis-prevention group found 1 in 3 transgender youth reported attempting suicide.

Institutionalized prejudice not only hurts — it kills.

Before the COVID pandemic, the U.S. was already awash in an epidemic of violent attacks and murders of trans people. Young trans women of color are the most frequent targets.

Thirteen murders of trans people have already been reported in 2021. Last year saw 44 murders of trans people, the highest number recorded since the Human Rights Campaign began tracking them in 2013. The true numbers are likely much higher, since police and media often misgender victims.

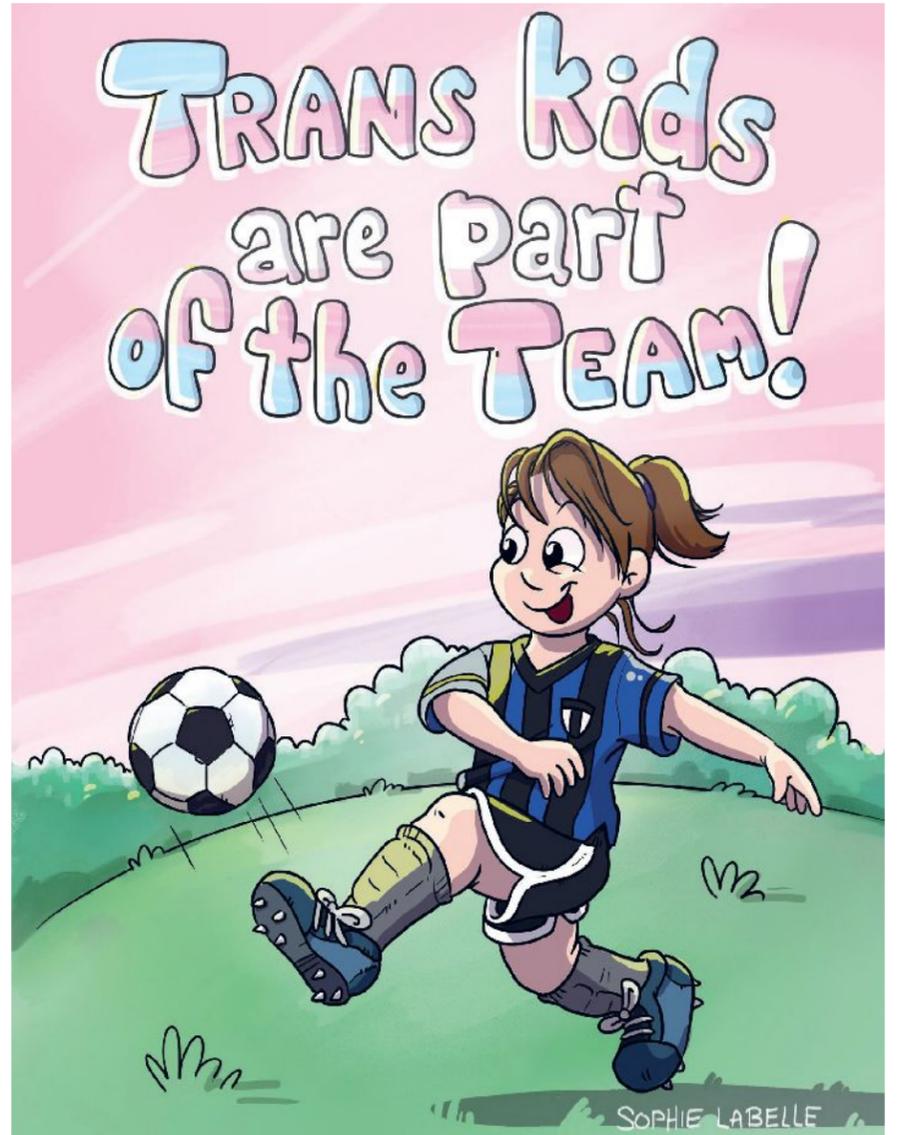
Efforts to deny trans youth the right to affirm their identities through participation in sports programs fuels these acts of bigoted violence, just as Trump's and Biden's anti-China rhetoric fuels anti-Asian violence.

'An attack on the humanity of trans people'

Champion soccer player Megan Rapinoe is known for her commitment to solidarity. An out lesbian, Rapinoe supported Colin Kaepernick's crusade for Black lives in professional sports and other anti-racist causes.

Rapinoe wrote a powerful op-ed in the March 28 Washington Post, "Bills to ban transgender kids from sports try to solve a problem that doesn't exist":

"You may not know that a person



GRAPHIC BY SOPHIE LABELLE (SERIOUSTRANSVIBES.COM)

in your life is trans — you may not be aware of the fullest self within your co-worker, friend, relative or even the child playing in your living room. Trans people contribute meaningfully to our society: our schools, neighborhoods, communities and families. Trans people deserve dignity, respect and opportunity. These bills are an attack on the humanity and belonging of trans people, and that's why this issue is important to me as a member of the LGBTQ community.

"For some, discrimination is the point. But we can celebrate all girls and women in sports while ensuring trans people aren't discriminated against. That is why all women must stand up and demand that exclusion is not done in our name.

"The value of participating in sports is well-documented. Transgender kids deserve the same chances to enjoy sports; to gain confidence, self-respect and leadership skills; and to learn what it means to be part of a team. When we tell transgender girls that they can't play girls' sports — or transgender boys that they can't play boys' sports — they miss out on these important experiences and opportunities. And we lose the right to say we care about children."

Numerous legal challenges are being prepared to fight the anti-trans state legislation. That's important and necessary, but it's not enough. Workers' and community organizations need to take up the

struggle, and take it to the streets.

Take it to the streets!

When the COVID health emergency subsides, the working class and its organizations need to take up the urgent need for a massive civil-rights mobilization like those that pushed forward lesbian, gay and bisexual rights in the 1980s and 1990s. These militant, proud manifestations helped to educate the whole working class and created a sea-change in support for gay rights.

Revolutionary socialist Leslie Feinberg, who used Marxism to understand the basis of transgender oppression, suffered serious and ultimately fatal health problems in part due to the lack of respectful and gender-affirming health care.

In the pamphlet "Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come," Feinberg wrote:

"The institutionalized bigotry and oppression we face today have not always existed. They arose with the division of society into exploiter and exploited. Divide-and-conquer tactics have allowed the slave-owners, feudal landlords and corporate ruling classes to keep for themselves the lion's share of wealth created by the laboring class.

"Like racism and all forms of prejudice, bigotry toward transgendered people is a deadly carcinogen. We are pitted against each other in order to keep us from seeing each other as allies.

"Genuine bonds of solidarity can be forged between people who respect each other's differences and are willing to fight their enemy together. We are the class that does the work of the world, and can revolutionize it. We can win true liberation."

In the spirit of Leslie Feinberg, we say: Defending trans youth is a fight for the whole working class! 🗣️

The Social Evolution of Humanity

Marx and Engels were right! By Bob McCubbin

This study of the evolution of humanity focuses on human social/sexual relations and, in particular, the changing social status of women. It offers a selection of scientific evidence that updates and augments the viewpoint expressed in Frederick Engels' masterful work, *'Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.'*

<https://tinyurl.com/vwarcv7>

Wall Street Journal lies about Detroit vaccinations

By Cheryl LaBash

Detroit — The Wall Street Journal proudly admits it is a mouthpiece for capitalism. According to WSJ the private, for-profit sector is the best solution for the problems faced by the earth's human inhabitants.

Thus it is no surprise that an April 3 article about Detroit's COVID-19 vaccination battle would reflect this bias. The article's subhead asserts: "City's mostly Black residents largely aren't using the mass vaccination site at Ford Field, with many finding access difficult." It lies by telling only part of the story.

The common capitalist view of post-bankruptcy Detroit was that this proud, Black, working-class city had been forced into the dominant privatized capitalist model. Virtually every municipal asset was monetized or privatized to satisfy the banks and bondholders.

A Feb. 22 Detroit News article quotes Chief Deputy Financial Officer Tanya Stoudemire confirming that "the pension fund is the lone remaining asset creditors could go after."

The COVID-19 pandemic unmasked the fallacy of the for-profit private sector panacea, especially in its most dominant ideological center, the United States. The warp-speed vaccine rollout continued the indictment of neoliberal capitalism, as each state competed for resources, every county and town had its own testing, masking, education and vaccination responses to the pandemic, with this chaos resulting in unnecessary deaths and hardships.

In Baltimore, for example, people wanting the vaccine signed up at multiple registration sites, and

showed up at vaccination sites at the end of the day hoping to get a left-over vaccine before it expired and was thrown away.

Instead of explaining what Detroit did correctly, the WSJ article presents the city as yet another poster child for the failure of government; in this case the prominent Democratic Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. Its reporter only examines the Michigan state vaccination center at Ford Field, home of the Detroit Lions football team, plus an individual pastor, as though that was the full picture.

This auxiliary regional vaccination center opened just weeks ago, on March 23, but its problems and demographics are used to falsely claim that Detroit's Black population, hard-hit in the early pandemic, is not being served. In fact, Detroit began drive-through mass vaccinations at the TCF Convention Center on January 14.

Coordinated government response

Looking at history, the current post-bankruptcy Detroit city administration would seem to be free market proponents. Mayor Mike Duggan, the first white, suburban mayor since the 1973 election of the widely revered Coleman A. Young, privatized the Detroit Medical Center — home of Detroit Receiving Hospital, formerly Detroit General.

Yet when the pandemic ravaged Detroit at the outset, killing Black elected officials, bus drivers and thousands of our loved ones in the first few months, the city administration organized a centralized response.

First, the administration gave in to a longstanding community cam-

paign opposing shut-offs and demanding affordable water. It restored service to thousands of homes where service was denied for non-payment of unfair bills that were inflated to repay bonds. The city even worked with the Plumbers union to fix failed pipes in some homes.

Mass, centralized COVID-19 testing was organized. When the vaccine became available, mass vaccination began.

Weekly televised reports from the mayor, health officials and community representatives addressed new measures to confront the virus and vaccinate Detroiters. The Detroit COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard provides the numbers and outlines the effort to reach the most vulnerable, the homeless, nursing homes and senior apartments, essential workers, first responders, teachers, Detroit residents and those who work here.

There are "good neighbor" vaccinations for people who drive eligible seniors to vaccination appointments, and \$2 rides for people who need them, including people with disabilities. Senior Saturdays vaccinated 500 people each week at each church designated across the city.

When the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was finally available, a new site opened at the Northwest Activity Center. All appointments are made through a well-staffed central phone number — not multiple websites.

Alongside the city's effort, health plans at Henry Ford Health Systems and Beaumont Hospital also rolled out appointments for their clients, many of them also Detroiters.



Drive-through mass vaccination center at Detroit's TCF Convention Center.

It's definitely not socialism. Yet Detroit does show that coordinated government response is necessary, even in a capitalist system, to begin to successfully confront the pandemic. It rebuffs the Wall Street Journal's narrow article.

Detroit and Michigan elected officials are also aware of Cuba and its healthcare achievements, made with few material resources under a U.S. economic war. But they were constrained by the capitalist norms and fell back on them under the pressure of the crisis. Cuba's life-saving tools that prevented infection and the death of health care workers were not considered.

National Nurses United just revealed that 3,200 health care workers in the U.S. have died of COVID-19.

Beginning last May 5, twelve U.S. City Councils and six labor councils, including the Washington State Labor Council, have passed resolutions calling for cooperation with Cuba to end the pandemic and to end the U.S. blockade. These actions by the Saving Lives Campaign — a joint project of the National Network on Cuba and the Canadian Network on Cuba — represent millions of U.S. residents who stand to benefit from Cuba's excellent medical and pharmaceutical advances.

International solidarity, not sanctions and blockades, are the key to improving lives right here at home. 🇺🇸

Where's our \$15 minimum wage?

By Lev Koufax

On March 11, President Joe Biden signed a "historic" relief bill for the U.S. population. This bill's goal was allegedly to soften the social and economic blow dealt to working people as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act signed into law by Biden totaled \$1.9 trillion. Included were much-needed payments of \$1,400 to many working-class people, weekly payments of \$300 (down from \$600) added to unemployment benefits until September, and supplemental payments for dependent children.

While the stimulus checks were welcome, the CARES Act fell woefully short on many fronts. The most noticeable absence from the stimulus package was the mandatory federal \$15-an-hour minimum wage that Biden promised on the campaign trail.

Politicians often talk about the importance of "bipartisanship." Here was a rare display of it, but not for the better: Eight Democratic senators joined 50 Republicans in voting down a \$15 minimum wage amend-

ment proposed by progressive Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders.

The failure to pass a \$15 federal minimum wage will disproportionately affect the Black community in the South, particularly Black women. Among minimum-wage workers, Black women are disproportionately represented. Many live in

Southern states that are among the least likely to enact a state minimum wage raise. Ironically, it was Black women in the South whose support allowed Joe Biden to become president.

Further diluting the positive effects of the relief, the legislation failed to provide protections against debt collectors seeking to seize stimulus checks. Any private debt collector that has a judgement against an individual can directly garnish their stimulus payment.

There is something appalling about a group of millionaire politicians telling working people they



claim to champion that they don't deserve a pay raise or protections from legal loan sharks amidst a historic pandemic.

Band aid on a broken system

President Biden promised a federal minimum wage raise, \$2,000 stimulus payments and other relief for the working class during his campaign. So far he hasn't followed through.

Biden caved on the minimum wage. Biden caved on \$2,000 payments. Biden caved on protections against debt collectors.

Biden's actions make it clear he has no intention of following through his campaign promises to the communities, mostly Black and Brown people, that made his election a reality.

There's little doubt that Biden fancies himself the reincarnation of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who implemented the New Deal programs during the Great Depression. In more ways than one, FDR was no friend of

the worker or communities of color. It is important we are clear on that.

However, when compared to the New Deal's sweeping programs that lifted millions of workers and farmers from abject poverty in order to save the capitalist system, Biden's pittance plans seem weak at best.

The CARES Act did provide a small level of relief for millions in the U.S. However, more than anything, this relief package serves as an infinitesimally small band aid on a broken system. The last thing working and oppressed people in this country need are more half measures.

When the people demanded a \$15 minimum wage, they meant it. When the people demanded Medicare for all, they meant it. When the people demanded total forgiveness of crushing student debt, they meant it.

The working-class struggle must continue to make these demands in the face of the Biden administration's attempts to frame things as "back to normal." If "normal" means racist police terror, low wages and a bloated military budget, then we want no part of it.

Instead, we must continue to fight for worker power and a true people's mandate. 🇺🇸

Amazon stole the vote! Continue the struggle: Bust racism, not unions

By Sharon Black

The workers' movement owes a tremendous debt to the courage of the majority-Black workers in Bessemer, Ala., who stood up to global supply-chain giant Amazon.

What they have accomplished may not be fully measurable at this point. But what's certain is that their audacity and courage pushed workers' issues at the sweatshop warehouses run by billionaire Jeff Bezos to center stage, along with workers' right to a union.

Did Amazon rig the vote?

Let's not mince words. There was nothing democratic or impartial in the vote. Why?

Every worker can tell you that their boss holds tyrannical power over their lives inside the workplace (and in a larger sense, outside too).

With the exception of discrimination, which in most instances is next to impossible to prove, they can fire you at a whim! They decide who is laid off, who is promoted and who is stuck with the worst jobs.

This gives every capitalist boss incredible advantages.

The only curb on this dictatorial boss power is union representation. And even that depends on the strength of the union — and most importantly, how organized and united the workers are.

In National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) elections for union representation, companies like Amazon can hold "captive meetings."

What are "captive meetings"? The bosses can force workers into lengthy meetings while they are on the clock. These can only be described as indoctrination sessions.

Union representatives are not allowed to be present to refute their lies and half-truths.

Can you imagine the impact, fear and confusion this sews in the minds of workers who depend on their weekly wages to keep themselves and their families afloat?

More often than not, bosses spread rumors, make false promises and tell lies. They tell workers they'll get medical coverage or a raise, or that there will not be layoffs, only to renege on their promises as soon as the workers vote against the union.

Sometimes, bosses engage in even more nefarious tactics.

Amazon corrupts the process

As mail-in voting for union representation began, a mailbox suddenly appeared in front of the Amazon warehouse, inside a tent. Workers were alarmed. They described it as an unmarked unit with individually-locked compartments and a mail slot similar to those in some apartment buildings.

The voting box did not have formal U.S. Postal Service markings. Workers were pushed to bring their ballots to work so that they could vote under the watchful eyes of management.

Documents obtained from a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request show that Amazon, the biggest business client of the USPS, pushed for the box to be installed. Many details are redacted, but one passage



Workers at an Amazon distribution hub in Gage Park, Ill., a Chicago suburb, went on strike April 7 demanding higher wages and changes to brutally long overnight shifts.

alludes to "keys to the box."

A dozen or so ballots trickled in daily. But on Feb. 12, 251 votes suddenly came in. Again on February 17, 350 votes came in. Almost all were "no" votes. It looked suspiciously like a ballot drop.

A More Perfect Union media group describes much of this and outlines the possibility of outright ballot rigging.

Is labor organizing illegal in U.S.?

You might say without exaggeration that getting a union in the U.S. is as close to illegal as you could possibly imagine. The 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, dubbed the "slave labor bill," remains in place with few changes.

It's not the sole reason why the unionized section of the working class has shrunk. But it explains why, under present conditions, traditional unionizing efforts have been rocky at best, and why global sweatshops like Amazon and Walmart have been able to avoid unions.

It should be noted that Taft-Hartley was passed following World War II. The war had been used to dampen workers' struggles, but when it ended the pent-up anger and resistance resulted in massive strike waves.

U.S. imperialism emerged from that war triumphant. The world was redivided amongst the imperialist powers, with Wall Street the top dog.

With the post-war strengthening of the U.S. capitalist economy, the drive towards eroding workers' rights that had been won in the 1930s increased. This laid the basis for what was called the McCarthy period or Red Scare, which consisted of the brutal suppression of the socialist and communist movement that had led the industrial union organizing drives and working-class victories in the 1930s.

It's important to note that Southern Dixiecrats (Democrats who championed Jim Crow racism) played a major role in passing Taft-Hartley.

The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) labor federation had announced its intention to organize the South. The belief was that if unions succeeded there, it would set the stage for ending Jim Crow. In 1947, Black people in the South were still effectively denied the right to vote.

The struggle for Black voting rights continues today.

Fight for Black and Brown liberation

The struggle in Bessemer is taking place in the cradle of the civil-rights movement. It is led by Black workers, many of them women.

The Bessemer Amazon workers' struggle cannot be separated from the political struggle for Black and Brown freedom — including the recent Black Lives Matter uprising, and the fight, albeit in the electoral arena, to unseat Trump, who is roundly credited as a leader of the white supremacist movement.

It is in nearby Georgia that reactionaries were finally unseated by Black representatives, and at the same time, a counter-offensive by racist forces to smash voting rights has unfolded.

The impact of the massive uprising to demand an end to racist violence and police terror has resounded inside the workers' movement. Before George Floyd's murder, the cases of Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia and Breanna Taylor in Kentucky swept the country.

It's worth noting that a recent strike at 7 Up in Michigan was largely fought around the issue of eliminating a two-tier wage system that divided Black and white workers, with the most oppressed on the bottom rung. It was consciously recognized by the union as a fight against racism.

Clearly, fighting racism and white supremacy is a workers' issue.

Bessemer struggle continues

This is not the time to rest!

The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU), which seeks to represent the Bessemer

Amazon workers, has filed unfair labor practice charges against Amazon and is insisting on a new election.

Clearly, the battle will be uphill. It could take months, and reprisals and layoffs are a continuing threat. But whether they win, lose or draw, the battle continues!

There will be time to critique the tactics of the mainstream union movement, but right now it is most important to continue our support for the workers.

Stand with the workers to demand: Bust racism, not unions! Demand no retaliation!

- Join the upcoming "Workers School" called by the Southern Workers Assembly. Its aim is to build a rank-and-file-led Southern workers' movement. It begins April 18. You can register here: [Tinyurl.com/u362uua5](https://tinyurl.com/u362uua5)
- The Support Amazon Workers network is calling on President Joe Biden to use his executive powers to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act. It's important that the Biden administration feels the heat.
- The network is also calling for the issue of the Amazon workers to be front and center on May Day — International Workers' Day. Build May Day!

It's not just the struggle at Amazon — the movement for workers' rights is heating up everywhere.

Over 1,000 coal miners in Alabama continue their strike. Teamsters at Marathon Petroleum in Minnesota continue to resist a lockout. And in Los Angeles, the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, United Workers Assembly, Southern Christian Leadership Conference LA, and United Food and Commercial Workers have formed an alliance to fight Kroger's planned closing of groceries in the heart of Black and Brown communities to thwart hero pay for essential workers.

Sharon Black is a former Amazon worker who wrote the series "An Amazon Worker Tells All" for *Struggle-La Lucha*, now collected in a free pamphlet pamphlet at [Tinyurl.com/p6bt2y4z](https://tinyurl.com/p6bt2y4z). Black spearheaded a campaign to unionize food servers, was a General Motors assembly worker, and later worked for over a decade in a Baltimore food-processing plant. Black also served as an elected UFCW shop steward. [@](#)



New booklet:

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AN AMAZON.COM BALTIMORE WAREHOUSE WORKER

Chauvin witness David Fowler: medical expert or racist liar?

By Lev Koufax

As the trial of killer cop Derek Chauvin wound to a close, the defense called its final and star witness: forensic pathologist Dr. David Fowler. The defense hoped that Fowler's testimony would serve as a foil to the avalanche of medical and scientific evidence put forward by the prosecution.

Fowler testified April 14 that George Floyd's death should be classified as undetermined due to underlying health conditions. He claimed that Chauvin's knee on Floyd's neck "was not a significant factor in his death."

Chauvin's attorney, Eric Nelson, framed Fowler's testimony carefully to shift the blame for Floyd's death onto the victim's heart disease and alleged drug use. Some commentators referred to this strategy as "everything but the knee on the neck."

There's something particularly in-

sidious about blaming a police murder on the victim of racist violence.

Who is Dr. David Fowler? His main credential as an expert witness is his 19 years as Maryland's chief medical examiner. There are several aspects of Fowler's career that need to be brought into the spotlight and examined.

Product of apartheid

A part of Fowler's background that jumps out immediately is where he received his training to be a physician.

In 1983, David Fowler graduated from the University of Cape Town and began his career in what was then racist apartheid South Africa. Fowler established himself as a forensic physician in a country where 75% percent of the population, Black people, were denied the most basic human rights.

In 1991, less than a year after apartheid rule started to crumble, Fowler moved to Baltimore to take a job in the Maryland Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. He was promoted to deputy chief medical examiner in 1998 and then chief medical examiner in 2002.

Fowler's near-immediate departure from South Africa in the wake of Nelson Mandela's release from prison and his relocation to a U.S. city with a significant Black community and history of racist police abuse paints a disturbing picture.

This picture becomes even more disturbing when put in the context of his recent outrageously inaccurate and pro-police testimony in Derek Chau-

vin's trial.

During his 19-year career as the Maryland chief medical examiner, Fowler consistently rubber-stamped case theories promoted by the police and state's attorney. Fowler also consistently absolved the cops of liability when it came to police murders of Black people.

To this end, Fowler and his deputy, Pamela Southall, are subjects of an ACLU lawsuit that alleges that both physicians were willing participants in a coverup aimed at absolving the police for the murder of a 19-year-old Black teenager, Anton Black.

Anton Black coverup

Black died in 2018 after being chased, assaulted and beaten by a group of six men that included a local chief of police, two off-duty police officers, a firefighter and two civilians wearing Confederate flag imagery.

This lynch mob used the full weight of their six bodies to pin Anton Black in a prone position on the ground, killing him. In many ways, Black's death mirrors George Floyd's.

More than four months after Black's death, Fowler finally released his autopsy report. Fowler declared the cause of death an "accident."

The justification given for his conclusion was very similar to Fowler's testimony in Chauvin's trial. He attributed Black's death to a "sudden cardiac death" due to an underlying heart condition.

Anything but the knee on the neck...

Fowler's conclusions in both cases — attributing the deaths of Black men to anything but racist police violence — are so outrageous and

against common sense that they can't be called medical opinions. In reality, they are politicized conclusions that directly serve to protect the ability of the police to wage war on working class and oppressed communities.

Who better to do that than a doctor educated and trained in apartheid South Africa?

They were murdered

Neither George Floyd nor Anton Black died from underlying health conditions. They were murdered by a brutal and racist police system. Fowler and Chauvin's defense team would ask the public to pull the wool over their own eyes and choose to accept racist police terror.

Fowler's testimony and Chauvin's trial generally represent a battle between the narrative of the ruling class and the reality of racist oppression in the U.S. The wealthy and the powerful want people to continue to accept police brutality as necessary and beneficial to society.

The deaths of George Floyd and Anton Black, and the efforts to prevent their killers from being brought to justice, make it clear what is at stake in this trial and in the struggles to come. It's racist police terror or Black liberation. It's ruling-class false narratives or working-class truth.

Because the stakes are so high, racist liars like Fowler, passed off as "medical experts," must be challenged at every turn.

The people won't have the wool pulled over their eyes this time. Justice for George Floyd! Justice for Anton Black! Community control of the police now! 📌

In Baltimore, Peoples Power Assembly and West Wednesdays will hold a united emergency response to the Derek Chauvin verdict regardless of the outcome. Gathering at 2011 N. Charles St. for march and car caravan.

- If the verdict is announced any time before 4 pm, gather at 6 pm;
- If the verdict is announced late in the evening, we will gather the next day at 6 pm;
- If the verdict is late on Friday or over the weekend, we will gather at 12 noon on Saturday or Sunday.

Sign up here: tinyurl.com/4zhh2h6k

Five days of protests for Daunte Wright

By Ameera Khan

Brooklyn Center, Minn. — As of April 15, there have been five days and nights of protests, vigils, press conferences, city council scrambling, firings and resignations — as well as outright battles between protesters and the law enforcement bodies from around the state that converged here after the killing of 20-year-old Daunte Wright.

The community actions by local grassroots movements have continued to pour out after the murder of Wright by former Brooklyn Center Police Department Officer Kim Potter, with some small victories.

On Sunday, April 11, Daunte Wright was pulled over by Officer Kim Potter for an expired license plate. Daunte then called his mother asking for insurance information. Then the officer comes and orders Daunte to hang up the call and to get out of the car. Daunte asks, "For what?" and the officer responds "I'll tell you when you get out of the car."

Officer Kim Potter, accompanied by two other officers, then attempted to handcuff him. Their reason was due to his hanging an air freshener in the rearview mirror of his car.

Daunte understandably panics and tries to get back in the car. Potter then yells, "Taser, taser, taser!" and pulls out a handgun and shoots him dead.

This brutality sparked more protests, bringing hundreds of people from across the Twin Cities area to protest that night, the next four days, and into the foreseeable future.

While the people forced the Brooklyn Center police to stand down (the city of Brooklyn Center ordered them to not overtly fight the protesters), the state forces were poised to squelch the people's rights to assembly and speech.

The so-called Operation Safety Net, put in place by the government to prepare against the people's rage over the trial of Derek Chauvin for the murder of George Floyd, was implemented early in the wake of Wright's murder. On April 12, Governor Tim Walz declared a 7 p.m. curfew in the Twin Cities metro area.

The city of Minneapolis declared their bought-and-paid-for groups "Street Navigators" specifically exempt from the curfew; some of members of those groups actively disrupted speakers at protests. Also, hundreds of forces — ranging from



the National Guard to Minnesota State Patrol, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), county sheriffs, and on down to neighboring police departments — stood in formation against protesters. These authorities have been relentless in repressing the natural and righteous outrage of the protesters.

Despite the obstacles thrown by the Twin Cities' governments towards the grassroots activists, such as imposing curfews and calling the Minnesota National Guard, there have already been some victories in pursuit of justice. On April 14, after pressure from multiple grassroots

community activists and organizations, as well as from media coverage from across the world, Officer Kim Potter was charged with second-degree manslaughter, although activists are calling for the charges to be increased.

In addition, the pressure has forced the dismissal of former Brooklyn Center City Manager Curt Boganey, and the resignation of former Chief of Police Tim Gannon.

At the legislative level, bills written and pushed by anti-police crimes groups under the umbrella Minnesota Justice Coalition were given hearings this week, after months of being denied.

This murder occurs in the wake of the first trial of former Police Officer Derek Chauvin, the cop who murdered George Floyd in May 2020. Local activists point out that the repeated offences from the multiple police departments across the Twin Cities area indicate a larger problem with the police departments themselves.

The Twin Cities Coalition for Justice for Jamar, or TCCJ4J, is one of the grassroots organizations which has been actively fighting for communi-

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Urgent call to action: Mumia Abu-Jamal to have heart surgery

By International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal

April 14, 2021, 6:01 p.m. — We have learned that Mumia Abu-Jamal, the world renowned veteran Black Panther, political prisoner and radio journalist, had heart pain over the weekend. He was rushed to the hospital, and is expected to undergo heart surgery tomorrow, April 15, 2021.

We demand that:

1. Before surgery, Mumia be allowed to call his wife, Wadiya Jamal; his longtime supporter Pam Africa; his chosen doctor, Dr. Ricardo Alvarez; and his spiritual advisor, Mark Taylor;
2. Mumia not be shackled to his hospital bed, as is the rule in Pennsylvania and across the United States;
3. Immediate release of this innocent man from prison.

We need not look far to see the mortal danger that the shackling of a patient represents: our dear ancestor, political prisoner Romaine “Chip” Fitzgerald, was chained and shackled to his hospital bed in his last days — while he was hardly conscious — and before making his final transition, just over two weeks ago on March 28, after 52 years in prison.

According to Dr. Ricardo Alvarez, Mumia’s chosen doctor, “Any evidence of shackling will be seen as a deliberate harm to Mumia and a perpetuation of the court-documented trauma he has already suffered.” Loud and clear are the echoes of slavery, which — as Eric Williams shows in “Capitalism and Slavery” — for the first time in human history produced the global distribution and mass use of handcuffs, shackles and fetters to bring enslaved Africans to heel.

Dr. Alvarez continues: “There is significant evidence, both legal and medical, that Mumia has suffered severe harm because medical, legal, law enforcement and judicial professionals have not met proper standards. Mumia has been recently hospitalized for COVID and congestive heart failure and he already suffers from hypertension as well as liver cirrhosis and diabetes, both induced by court-documented medical neglect. Freedom is the only treatment.”

Please call the following offices to make these demands: that Mumia be immediately allowed to call his wife, Pam Africa, his doctor and spiritual advisor; that he not be shackled to his hospital bed; and that he be immediately released.

John Wetzel, head of Penn. Dept. of Corrections 717-728-2573



Rally for Mumia Abu-Jamal in New York, April 10. SLL PHOTO: STEPHEN MILLIES

Christopher Oppman, dep. sec. for admin., oversees healthcare for Penn. DOC 717-728-4122 or 717-728-2573 ext. 5

SCI Mahanoy Superintendent 570-773-2058
Tom Wolf, governor of Pennsylvania 717-787-2500 ext. 3

In cities across U.S.: All out April 24 for Mumia

Continued from page 1

up a poster, a handmade flyer or message, wear a T-shirt or a button expressing support for Mumia’s release and full, proper medical care. Post photos on social media.

There are many ways to show our love, support and solidarity with the movement to free Mumia and all political prisoners. Put up stickers or flyers in your neighborhood. Write a letter or email to local media. Share information with friends, family and co-workers. Join the social media blast leading up to April 24, Mumia’s 67th birthday.

You can also show support by sending revolutionary birthday greetings to Mumia. Write to Mumia individually or have everyone in your group sign a card collectively and mail it to:

Mumia Abu-Jamal
Smart Communications/PADOC
Mumia Abu-Jamal AM 8335
SCI Mahanoy
PO Box 33028
St. Petersburg, FL 33733
(Mumia is imprisoned in Pennsyl-

vania, but the prison’s mail is processed in Florida.)

The overall goal of the movement is for the permanent release of Mumia Abu-Jamal and all prisoners, especially those over 50 years old, who have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been exposed to COVID-19, with pre-existing medical conditions that place them at high risk of dying if infected.

Free them all! 📧

in Minnesota



A demonstrator protesting the fatal police shooting of Daunte Wright on April 11 in Brooklyn Center, Minn.

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ty control of police since the police murder of Jamar Clark in November 2015. They just launched a petition drive to change the Minneapolis city charter so the community can exert some control over choosing the chief of police and holding officers with cases of brutality accountable — a Civilian Police Accountability Commission, or CPAC for short.

Besides keeping up the fight for justice for Daunte Wright, the Minnesota Justice Coalition and dozens of other groups will protest in downtown Minneapolis on April 19 at 5 p.m. That is when closing arguments in the Derek Chauvin trial are expected to be over, and the case for the murder of George Floyd goes to the jury.

Source: FightBack! News

Police killings = modern day lynchings

Continued from page 1

inmates with shattered bones, eye sockets and teeth.”

In addition, the sheriffs ran a drug-smuggling operation in and out of the prison — all in coordination with and to the benefit of white supremacist gangs. This was a systemic culture of behavior that undoubtedly existed far longer than when it was exposed in 2008.

No more shell games

Some in the movement advocate incremental change of policing. They want there to be a partnership with the police and politicians. As a member of the Socialist Unity Party’s Black Caucus, I can say we oppose that approach.

Minneapolis again shows that this is a diversion from what is needed. We will never change the situation in this country by being content with taking some funds from police departments, which would be non-enforceable and non-transparent.

The City of Los Angeles got away with a shell game where the \$110 million that was promised to be taken from the cops was given back through a budgetary process. This money shuffle was still lauded by some in the incremental movement for change, who should have known better.

After George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, the politicians there said they understood that the police

department needed to be “dismantled.” But then they changed their minds. It’s clear that in Minneapolis today, as long as these cops are allowed to continue carrying their guns and are not replaced, they will continue to kill our children.

We don’t need reforms that are sensitive to the sensibilities of the Democratic Party. We can’t leave the battle up to the politicians, so they can manufacture more childlike excuses for allowing the pandemic of racist murders to go unchecked. We need qualitative changes that are possible only through militant actions by the community and the movement, independent of the police and political puppets.

The call for the abolishment of police departments and their replacement by community entities is already popular, especially among the communities most threatened by the police. It will never be popular with the ruling class — they must be forced to accept it.

Until then, as things stand today in this country, I’m going to have to worry about my Black son’s life every time he drives a car, for as long as he is alive. Every time he goes out to shop or visit friends, as long as he is on the streets, there’s a chance he will be stopped by police. And I will worry as long as I live in this country. There is not a single day that I can escape the thoughts behind that fear. 📧

Maryland public-sector workers, forced back into line of fire, fight back

By Bayani

Though there's no end to the pandemic in sight, including new mutations being confirmed at the University of Maryland College Park campus, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan ordered public-sector workers back to work.

Of course, most public-sector workers, essential or non-essential, did not have the luxury of working from home. Many public-sector workers in Maryland — teachers, custodians, sanitation workers, government employees, to name some — have been in the line of fire since the very first COVID-19 shutdowns.

For much of that time, they've had to work in unsanitary conditions, hostile work environments, and without hazard pay or employer-provided PPE.

When we fight, we win!

A victory for Baltimore City teachers

Governor Hogan originally ordered the reopening of schools for the middle of February. In response, the Baltimore Teachers Union, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers-Maryland, held a massive online meeting of over 2,000 participants, followed by a 300-vehicle car caravan.

On their widely-circulated petition, the union demanded that:

- City schools staff be fully vaccinated before returning to their facilities (including both doses and waiting period to reach full efficacy);
- Ventilation upgrade work be completed before any students or staff are brought back into their facilities;
- Minimum public health metrics be met for at least a week (positivity rate and case rate) before expanding in-person programming;
- A robust, reliable and proactive testing program for staff and students, both symptomatic and asymptomatic, before expanding in-person programming.

"It's been a team effort as we continue to work for a safe reopening plan," said Diana Desierto, a speech pathologist for Baltimore City Public Schools and chair for the BTU's International Committee.

"The recent victories led by student group SOMOS pressured Comcast to increase internet speed for certain packages, a 300-plus car rally led by BTU members and parents, as well as students organizing a strike, forced the school district to delay in-person learning by two weeks.

"We are not finished yet, as we hope that more safety measures are put in place before we all return."

The union forced the governor's hand. But this only delayed the schools' reopening by two weeks.

On March 19, the BTU tweeted a COVID-19 update, indicating a sudden jump in positive cases.

Uniting to fight for protections

Nearly every union in Maryland (including several locals each of the Service Employees International Union, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Em-



PHOTO: ANNETTE LICITRA/BTU

Baltimore Teachers Union car caravan against unsafe school reopenings.

ployees, and American Federation of Teachers), an impressive number of community organizations, and even some Maryland state agencies formed a coalition called Protect Maryland Workers to push for the passage of the Maryland Essential Workers Act through the Maryland General Assembly.

This bill would give workers in Maryland the right to refuse unsafe work conditions, a guarantee of employer-provided PPE, \$3 per hour hazard pay for essential employees, and universal health and bereavement leave.

On March 18, the coalition hosted a virtual Remembrance Ceremony with moving testimony from community leaders and public sector employees all over Maryland about the people they lost to COVID-19 and the conditions they faced on the front line.

At the time of writing, the Maryland Essential Workers Act has been referred to committee in both the Maryland House and Senate.

Baltimore County Library Employees fight for a union

Almost a year before the initial COVID-19 lockdowns, the Baltimore County Library Employees quietly began working with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW) to start fighting for a union and collective bargaining. A few members of the Peoples Power Assembly were involved from the beginning.

"I worked for the Baltimore County Public Library for 10 years, and over that course of time I occupied positions on both the circulation and librarian side of things before I voluntarily left to pursue my education," said Matt Ross, a BCPL worker at the time the union campaign started. "I think a union will be important for current employees, many of whom I am still very close with, because oftentimes there were changes made to positions by management, without the input of the employees."

Ross explained: "The most recent change that was really aggravating was how they changed the way a portion of our paid time off accrued, which resulted in a net decrease in time off. It wasn't necessarily a big portion of time that was lost, but it was the principle of the whole thing."

"We, the employees, were losing out because of a decision made by the administration. It was part of a continuing trend of this kind of behavior and I think it really needs to change."

As soon as the first COVID-19

lockdowns began, BCPL employees kicked it into high gear, understanding how important their libraries are to their communities. Now, in the 2020-21 Maryland legislative session, the bill for their right to collective bargaining is on the floor.

The BCPL Board of Directors, despite promising the workers they would do nothing to stand in the way of the collective bargaining bill, launched a union-busting campaign as soon as the bill hit the General Assembly.

They hired anti-union lobbyists who spread a rumor among Baltimore County parents that "the union would prevent the library from opening." These parents then took to highly-populated Facebook groups to spread this blatant lie so that others would contact their Maryland representatives and urge them to vote "no" on the collective bargaining bill.

The Peoples Power Assembly rang the alarm on social media, urging Maryland constituents to contact their representatives to alert them to this union-busting campaign and pressure them to vote "yes" for the BCPL union.

Ex-BCPL worker Ross added: "Seeing BCPL talk publicly about their employees' right to collective bargaining, then finding out they had hired a lobbying firm from Washington, D.C., to challenge the bill, was not surprising. They have a pattern of saying one thing and doing another."

"They talk about supporting progress, being anti-racist, being for equality, and how librarians pride

themselves on being institutions of democracy. Yet when the employees want a more democratic relationship with their employer, they hire a lobbying firm to fight them in the General Assembly."

At this time, the collective bargaining bill has been passed by the Baltimore County delegations in both the House and Senate, crossed chambers, and is working through committees. The House and Senate versions must be reconciled and passed before going to the governor.

Organizer Bridget Fitzgerald added: "We're looking forward to seeing this bill passed, successfully going through the election process, then helping BCPL employees negotiate a contract that protects the best things about their jobs and gives them a voice in improvements."

Blatant COVID violations by the MTA

A Maryland Transit Administration superintendent forced a worker to come into work despite living with his wife, son and grandson, who all tested positive for COVID-19. When this worker provided a doctor's note recommending that he stay quarantined for ten days, the superintendent said that he didn't care — report to work or lose your job.

Another worker, who was in the hospital with COVID-19, struggling to breathe, kept receiving calls from the same superintendent, demanding to know when she would return to work. When she recovered and returned to work, this superintendent retaliated by changing her schedule to the most inconvenient shifts.

Because some of these instances are in process of either being grieved or pursued in the State Labor Relations Board, specific details cannot be released.

Without revealing too much — in response, the MTA workers are getting organized.

A lesson for workers: Fight, fight, fight!

The recurring theme in these struggles is that the organized fight-back is key. It's also crucial to note that despite decades of union-busting, labor struggles are popping up everywhere. Workers everywhere are recognizing the absolute necessity to get organized and fight for their survival. 📌

Free Turkish political prisoner Ali Osman Köse

By Anti-Imperialist Front

Freedom for Ali Osman Köse, who resisted for 37 years against violence and torture of fascism in Turkey!

Ali Osman Köse is a political prisoner who fights for the freedom of the people of Turkey. He was imprisoned in the struggle for an independent, democratic and socialist country and has spent 37 years of his 65 years of life in captivity. His first period of imprisonment began on Sept. 12, 1980, during the junta backed by the USA.

He lived through many repressive operations in the Turkish prisons,

the most significant one being the "Return to Life Operation" which took place on Dec. 19-22, 2000, conducted against the political prisoners and the great resistance isolation regime that resulted in the massacre of 28 political prisoners.

Ali Osman Köse has been in F-Type isolation cells since 2000. This imprisonment regime has ruined his health further and he got to the point where he could not be left alone. The independent medical opinion confirms that he cannot stand up without holding onto something or being helped by someone. He cannot

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Gilda Chacon Bravo, Cuban labor leader, ipresente!

By Cheryl LaBash

April 9 — We just received the sad news just that a dear friend of workers in the U.S. and around the world has died. Gilda Chacon Bravo served for many years in the International Department of the Cuban Workers' Central Union (Central de Trabajadores de Cuba) and the World Federation of Trade Unions.

Workers who traveled from all parts of the globe to celebrate May Day in Havana met Gilda in the hallways of the Convention Center at the May 2 International Solidarity Conferences. She often attended the U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange Conferences in Tijuana, Mexico.

In spring 2011, the U.S. labor movement vibrated with the massive upsurge in Wisconsin to defend workers' rights. Although CTC representatives couldn't directly get visas to tour the U.S., Gilda also represented the WFTU. Together with Pipino Cuevas Velazques of the

Sindicato Mexicano De Electricistas — the Mexican Electrical Workers' Union — she traveled to Los Angeles, San Diego, Pittsburgh, Detroit and other cities.

In Madison, Wis., she met with Voces de la Frontera, organizers for immigrant rights. In Washington, D.C., the AFL-CIO International Department met with her.

Arriving by car in Baltimore from New York shocked her. She intently videoed real-life conditions of life under U.S. capitalism as she traveled. Gilda intended to share these hard images with her son and other Cuban youth bombarded by the false glitter of capitalist life.

In addition to her role as a Cuban union leader, Gilda was also an elected representative from her neighborhood in Havana.

We remember Gilda Chacon Bravo with much love and respect, as a strong, capable leader — a revolutionary Cuban woman. 📺



Gilda Chacon Bravo (left) and Gloria Verdieu (second from the left) at a workers' conference in 2011.

SLL PHOTO

Gilda Chacon Bravo (center).



Ramsey Clark, enemy of imperialist war and racist oppression

By John Parker

On April 9, a dear friend and inspiration of mine died: former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark. I traveled with him to many targets of U.S. imperialism and met heads of state. He had the clout to go anywhere and didn't mind being vilified by the corporate media that slavishly toed the line of the U.S. State Department, impugning his integrity simply because he refused to go along with the lies of U.S. imperialism when they wanted to go to war, either overtly or covertly, against countries that insisted on their sovereignty and their orientation toward various aspects of socialism.

Clark was, and will be remembered throughout human history as, a person of principle. He turned his back on his privilege and connections to the ruling class. He turned his back on Johnson's cabinet position and instead put his body in harm's way



Ramsey Clark, right, and John Parker, left, with a Sudanese doctor at the site of the El Shifa pharmaceutical factory, destroyed by a U.S. cruise missile attack ordered by Bill Clinton in 1998. Some called it a "wag-the-dog" bombing — an action meant to deflect attention from political troubles — as it happened one week after Clinton's statement on national TV that he had engaged in an "improper physical relationship" with Monica Lewinsky. The plant provided 50% of Sudan's medicines and all of the country's anti-malaria drugs. In 2001, Germany's ambassador to Sudan reported that there had been "several tens of thousands of deaths of Sudanese civilians" caused by a medicine shortage.

to stop the U.S. war drive, whether in Sudan or Vietnam, Syria or Iraq, or anywhere he felt he could use his status to stop his country, which he often quoted Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as saying, is the greatest purveyor

of violence today. And he wanted to save children's lives.

He assisted and led legal battles that were instrumental in helping to expose and hamper the FBI, CIA and State Department in their attacks

against the democratic rights of workers and oppressed people here and abroad. And he still remained approachable, comforting and gentle to me and anyone he deemed as working for the good of the planet. On our trips, in spite of his notoriety, he refused to fly first class and carried with him only one outfit: a modest jacket and tie with pants to match.

I gave him a call four weeks ago — probably one of the best decisions I've made in life. I needed to ask about an endorsement for an anti-imperialist webinar, but mainly wanted to touch base and make sure he knew how important and loved he was to our movement even at 93 years old. He mainly wanted to talk about the right-wing riot at the Capitol, so I didn't bring up the endorsement request, and just enjoyed hearing his reflections on it. When the call ended, I made damn sure he knew how important he was to all of us in the movement and to human history.

Ramsey Clark, presente! 📺

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even walk alone, nor can he wash his clothes, nor can he shower, nor can he eat.

Although his health has deteriorated under conditions of isolation and he was unable to walk, the Forensic Medicine Institute reported that he could remain in prison. Even though there is a 9-cm cancerous mass in his kidney and immediate treatment is being deliberately prevented.

In addition to all these very serious problems, he has problems with memory which results in not remembering when to take his medications. He has hearing, vision and blood pressure problems. That's why he needs constant help. The prison environment further aggravates his condition. That is why we demand

his immediate release due to his deteriorated health conditions.

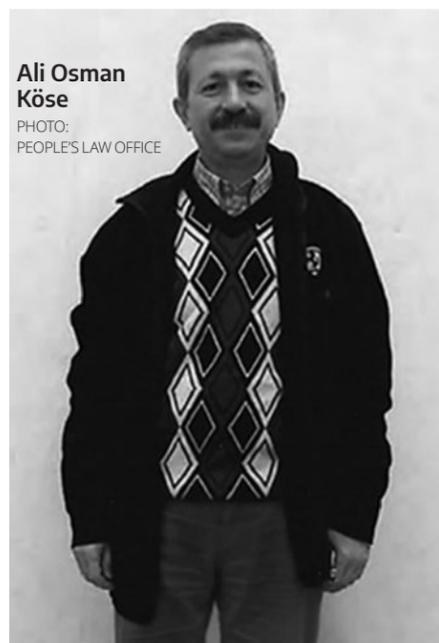
Freedom for Ali Osman Köse!

Ali Osman Köse must be released due to his health conditions!

International solidarity is the power of the people!

Protest and calls for his immediate release can be sent to the following:

- Ministry of Justice
Fax +90 312 419 33 70
Tel +90 312 417 77 70
Email info@adalet.gov.tr
- Tekirdag Prison
Tel +90 850 222 07 24
Email abbttekirdag.2fcik@adalet.gov.tr
- Tekirdag Namik Kemal University Hospital
Tel +90 282 250 50 00
- Forensic Medicine Institute
Tel +90 212 454 1500
Email atk@adalet.gov.tr 📺



Ali Osman Köse

PHOTO: PEOPLE'S LAW OFFICE

From Donbass to Chicago: Stop the U.S. war on children

By Greg Butterfield

The U.S. government is once again pushing the world to the brink of war. Just a few months ago, Donald Trump pushed us to the brink of war with Iran. Now Joe Biden is risking a war with Russia. We say no! People in this country need universal health care and vaccine equality. We need to cancel rent. We need to end racist police killings and anti-Asian violence. We don't need another war.

On April 3, 5-year-old Vladik Shikhov was killed by a Ukrainian military drone in the independent republic of Donetsk in eastern Europe. Why does that matter to us in the United States? Because for the last seven years the U.S. government has used Ukraine to fight a proxy war against the people of Donetsk and Lugansk. It's all about expanding NATO's military power to the border of Russia. At least 14,000 people have died in that war, and most people here don't even know about it. But the government we pay taxes to is responsible.

When I think of little Vladik being blown up by a drone strike, I also think of Adam Toledo, the 13-year-old boy killed by Chicago Police March 29. I think of the children in Flint, Mich., poisoned by lead in their drinking water, and the thousands of migrant children in cages at



Protesters demand justice for Adam Toledo, a 13-year-old gunned down by Chicago police. Body camera footage released April 15 showed Adam had his hands up and was unarmed when he was shot, refuting police lies.

the U.S.-Mexico border — first under Trump, and still today! I think of the kids as young as 2 months old deported back to Haiti under the Biden administration while that country is in turmoil because of decades and centuries of racist U.S. policy. I think of the kids in Yemen and Palestine who are dying in other U.S. proxy wars.

The U.S. system, the capitalist system, is waging war on children all over the world and in our own streets. Why? For profits. To protect

the loot of Wall Street and Big Oil and the landlords.

Why was Vladik Shikhov killed in Donetsk? Why is Washington sending money and weapons to a Ukrainian government infested with neo-Nazis? Because the government of Ukraine, the one the U.S. helped to install in 2014, is selling off the country to U.S. and European businesses. They are selling off the land, the factories, and the skilled labor of Ukrainian workers at rock-bottom prices.



And something else: Trump and now Biden are desperate to stop the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline that would allow Russia to sell gas directly to Germany and other countries in Europe. Big Oil doesn't want that. Trump's friends in the fracking industry don't want that. Biden's pals at the big banks don't want that.

Trying to provoke an armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia is a means to an end to keep oil and gas profits under U.S. control. And they don't care how many children, or seniors, or mothers and fathers, or soldiers on either side die.

We're taking to the streets to share this information that's been hidden from the public in the U.S. We want workers to think about it, research it, ask questions. Is war with Russia, is killing civilians on the other side of the world, really in our interests? Or is it in the interests of the same wealthy class that thrives on racism, bigotry and inequality right here — like the Amazon bosses that sabotaged the union election in Bessemer, Ala.?

Let's build a movement to stop the U.S. war on children — not just in Donetsk and Lugansk, but everywhere. 📌

Stop Kroger's grocery shut-downs: 'It's all about greed'

Continued from page 1

also planning an action against the closures at another location.

The SCLC got in touch with the Tubman Center organizers, whom they had worked with previously. Both organizations were excited about the possibility of working together and bringing in other community groups.

At a planning meeting, the Tubman Center and SCLC were able to form a powerful coalition with the Baptist Ministers Conference of Southern California and local neighborhood organizations, the Families of Park Mesa Heights, Hyde Park Organizational Partnership for Empowerment and Harvard Boulevard Block Club, along with Unión del Barrio, Ground Game LA, Socialist Unity Party, LA Black Worker Center and United Workers Assembly.

The coalition also included a very powerful ally — UFCW Local 770 — and it was this labor/community partnership that was able to secure the jobs of the workers at the store with just the threat of a demonstration.

Ludmila Blanco, staffer at the union, told coalition members at a subsequent virtual planning meeting that management at the Ralphs said, a day before the demonstration, that even if the store closes the workers would be transferred and not lose their jobs. Previously they were scheduled for layoffs. A partial victory, and also a testament to the power of working-class unity.

SCLC organizer Alison Featherstone told the growing crowd at the beginning of the April 3 rally at



SLL PHOTO: SCOTT SCHEFFER

Ralphs: "We are so glad to be able to help bring all of these organizations together. We need to keep the momentum going to keep the store open and save the jobs of the 80 workers here."

As to what the store managers were doing while the rally was taking place, Joe Crosby told SLL, "During the demonstration my brother told me the bosses were looking out the windows scared as hell."

Another action was held on April 8 at a Food 4 Less scheduled for closure in East Hollywood, where a majority Latinx community will be affected. At this rally, organized by the union, managers didn't have to look out the windows: Union members and the coalition of community organizations marched through the store, chanting "Save our store!", right to the manager's office.

As with the previous action, shoppers were shocked to hear the news of the closure and expressed the hardship that this would place on their families during the pandemic.

Expanding food deserts

Closing these supermarkets will leave working-class communities,

especially Black and Brown communities, with even less access to quality, fresh, affordable food, exacerbating the epidemic of "food deserts" littered with mostly unhealthy fast food and more expensive smaller grocery stores.

Given their importance to the community, many are asking what right Kroger has to take away these stores in the first place. "If the politicians were serious, they would consider using the law of Eminent Domain to keep these stores running and in the community," said a speaker at the Ralphs rally.

Although Kroger's chains here are frequented by the community and often packed, Kroger argues that the stores they are shutting down are now unprofitable. This, of course, ignores the \$2.6 billion in profit Kroger made just since the beginning of the pandemic — the equivalent of two Fortune 500 companies — and the fact that the \$5 wage increase they blame is only temporary, lasting a few months.

As one protest sign said: "What's \$2.6 Billion minus \$5?"

But even if Kroger's specious claims were true, some believe that profit should not negate the more important needs of the community.

Pastor William D Smart, co-chair of the Ralphs rally and president of the SCLC in Los Angeles, declared, "This store, slated to be closed, would create a food desert in this area."

"They are lying about this store not being profitable. The people need this store, the community needs this store. Where do they go

for food? People have to eat. They are disrespecting our community when they say they want to close this store. South LA needs every single grocery store."

Rebecka Jackson, co-chair of the Ralphs protest and organizer for the Harriet Tubman Center, said: "In Cuba profits are never a consideration in ensuring essential services are accessible to all. The genocidal U.S. government should take a lesson from the revolutionary people's government of Cuba. Access to fresh food is a human right and all workers should be provided for equally."

The issues of profitability versus people's needs, whether the arguments by the large monopoly grocery chains are true or false, and the right of communities to take over services that are vital to the survival of the community, will undoubtedly keep coming up.

One thing is certain: The centralization and technology involved in the ability to provide fresh and plentiful food at a relatively low cost to communities is desirable and was a step forward in humanity's ability to feed itself. The only problem is who owns the technology, the fulfillment and distribution centers.

It's clear here in South Central, anyway, that the community believes that the store, with all its infrastructure, belongs to them — as do the union jobs and hazard pay. It's the workers there who made those profits for Kroger and it's the community that paid for that store many times over with their purchases. So why not? 📌

Justice for Vladik! No U.S.-Ukraine war on Donbass and Russia

STOP PROVOCATIONS • STOP DRONE STRIKES ON CIVILIANS • STOP KILLING CHILDREN!

The right-wing government of Ukraine, supported by the U.S., has been at war with the people of the independent Donetsk and Lugansk republics in the Donbass region of eastern Europe for 7 years. More than 14,000 people have been killed, according to the United Nations. The people of Donetsk and Lugansk live under a blockade by Ukraine and its Western allies. Workers in Ukraine suffer repression, joblessness and price hikes while their government sells off the country to Wall Street.

On April 3, a Ukrainian military drone strike killed 5-year-old Vladik Shikhov and wounded his 66-year-old grandmother in Aleksandrovskeye, Donetsk. On April 4, another Ukrainian drone strike wounded a civilian in Nikolaevka, Lugansk. On March 22, a 71-year-old pensioner was killed by sniper fire near the capital of Donetsk. Many members of the anti-fascist People's Militia have also been killed while defending residents.

Since January, Ukraine has been building up its military forces on the front line of the conflict. It uses prohibited weapons, targets civilians, schools and homes in violation of international law and regional ceasefire agreements. Battalions of troops affiliated with neo-Nazi groups have been sent to the region, replacing regular Ukrainian Army troops. But the Ukrainian and U.S. governments and mainstream media blame Donetsk and Lugansk for taking steps to defend themselves, and threaten Russia for pledging to protect the



The funeral of 5-year-old Vladik Shikhov, killed by a Ukrainian military drone on April 3.

people there if Ukraine invades.

The Biden administration, as the Trump administration did before it, wants to stop the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project that would allow Germany and other Western European countries to purchase Russian gas. Children, elders and other civilians in Donetsk and Lugansk are considered expendable targets by Kiev and Washington as they try to provoke a crisis to give them an excuse to further NATO military expansion and punish Russia.

In recent days, the U.S. and NATO have been warning of a Russian military buildup near the Ukrainian border, but never mention that one of the largest U.S. Army-led military exercises in decades has begun and will run until June: Defender Europe

2021, with 28,000 troops from 27 countries operating in a dozen countries from the Balkans to the Black Sea. This is where the real danger of war is coming from.

We say no! People in the U.S. don't want war with Russia to protect the profits of Big Oil and U.S. banks. We don't want the U.S. proxy regime in Ukraine to kill our sisters and brothers in Donetsk and Lugansk. We don't want U.S. troops to be sent to fight and die in another needless conflict. We need an end to racist police brutality and anti-Asian violence. We need money for jobs, housing, healthcare and schools, not war.

End U.S. aid to the Kiev regime!
End all U.S. wars and sanctions! Shut down NATO and bring the troops home!

Initiated by Solidarity with Novorossiia & Antifascist in Ukraine

Endorsers (list in formation):

Individuals: Jose Maria Sison, Chairperson Emeritus of the International League of Peoples' Struggle*; Phil Wilayto, Coordinator, Odessa Solidarity Campaign; Berta Joubert-Ceci, Coordinator, International Tribunal on U.S. Crimes against Puerto Rico; William Camacaro, Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle; Sharon Black, Peoples Power Assembly; John Parker, Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, Los Angeles; Joe Lombardo, National Co-Chair, United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC)*; Professor Vijay Singh, editor, Revolutionary Democracy journal, New Delhi (India); Bridget Dunne, Solidarity with the Anti-Fascist Resistance in Ukraine (UK); Theo Russell, International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity (UK); Andy Brooks, General Secretary, New Communist Party of Britain; Gedrius Grabauskas, Chairperson, Lithuanian Socialist Front; Donatas Shultsas, Chairperson, Lithuanian Union on Human Rights; Heinrich Bucker, Coop-Anti-War-Café Berlin; Panagiotis Papadomanolakis, Editor, GuernicaEu (Greece); Gerry Downing, Socialist Fight (UK)

Organizations: Anti-Imperialist Front; Socialist Unity Party (U.S.); Struggle-La Lucha newspaper; Borotba (Ukraine-Donbass); Communist Party of the Donetsk People's Republic; Union of Political Emigrants and Political Prisoners of Ukraine; Women In Struggle-Mujeres En Lucha; Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network; Workers Voice Socialist Movement (U.S.); International Action Center; No Pasarán Hamburg (Germany); Anti-NATO Group Berlin-Brandenburg (Germany); "Frente Unido América Coordinamento Ucraina Antifascista (Italy); Latina" Berlin (Germany); Communist Revolution Action - KED (Greece); Liaison Committee for the Fourth International (LCFI); Frente Comunista dos Trabalhadores (Brazil); Tendencia Militante Bolchevique (Argentina); Socialist Workers League (U.S.); Trotskyist Faction/Consistent Democrats (UK); Socialist Solidarity Party of Bangladesh; Molotov Club

*For I.D. only

New York protest demands U.S. out of Ukraine

By Struggle-La Lucha
New York bureau

"Stop the bombing, stop the war, hands off Donbass! USA, CIA out of Ukraine!"

On April 10, anti-war activists rallied at the U.S. Armed Forces Recruiting Center in New York's Times Square to demand justice for 5-year-old Vladik Shikhov, killed April 3 by a Ukrainian drone strike on his Donetsk village. They called for an end to the U.S.-NATO war buildup against the Donbass republics and Russia.

Protesters chanted, held signs and passed out informational leaflets to people passing by on this warm spring day. Next to the U.S. military site, they displayed a large banner that read: "From Donbass to Palestine, from Chicago to the U.S.-Mexico border: Stop the U.S. war on children!"

It was a modest first step toward building a movement to challenge the next imperialist war and educate workers in the U.S. about a critical conflict that has been systematically hidden from them.

"President Joe Biden has a long history of supporting the far-right government in Kiev, dating back to his term as vice president and the 2014 U.S.-backed coup that over-

threw the legally elected government of Ukraine," said Greg Butterfield, coordinator of Solidarity with Novorossiia & Antifascists in Ukraine.

"Biden, like Donald Trump before him, is acting on behalf of Wall Street and U.S. Big Energy companies that are determined to stop the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project from bringing Russian gas to Western Europe.

"Washington considers Donbass civilians, like 5-year-old Vladik, expendable. We do not," Butterfield said. "We don't believe that poor and working people in the U.S. would support risking war with Russia for Wall Street profits if they were informed of the facts."

The New York emergency protest has inspired the Anti-Imperialist Front and other groups to call for an international day of solidarity with

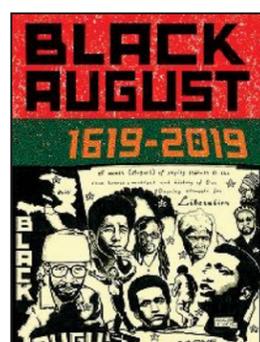


SLL PHOTO: GREG BUTTERFIELD

Donbass on Saturday, April 17.

The call to action, "No U.S.-Ukraine war on Donbass and Russia," has

been endorsed, shared and translated by groups in several countries, and is being used as an organizing tool.



'BLACK AUGUST 1619-2019'

commemorates 400 years of Black freedom struggle

This book examines the construction of a racial capitalist venture — slavery — where the histories of African, Native and working people overlapped.

- ➔ Especially celebrates the legacy and accomplishments of Black women.
- ➔ The book is dedicated to Black, Brown, oppressed, and poor people who have been imprisoned and killed by the U.S. criminal justice system.

Historical series by M. Matsemela-Ali Odom • Contributions by Gloria Verdieu
 • Carl Muhammad • Zola Fish • Mary Lou Finley • Dennis Childs • Eusi Kwayana • Mumia Abu-Jamal
 • Curtis Howard • Poem by Sylvia Cameron Telafaro

<https://tinyurl.com/vn3qvn5>

¿Por qué está tan deteriorado el capitalismo estadounidense?

Por Stephen Millies

Millones de personas en Texas perdieron la calefacción, las luces y el agua hace dos meses durante una tormenta de invierno. Las empresas de servicios públicos del estado, ávidas de ganancias, no querían gastar dinero preparando bombas de gas natural y otros equipos para el invierno. Más de 100 personas murieron a causa de la codicia capitalista.

La tragedia de Texas es solo el último ejemplo de que el capitalismo estadounidense no puede mantener su planta física, que se llama infraestructura. Esto incluye servicios públicos, carreteras, ferrocarriles, aeropuertos, edificios escolares y, no menos importante, viviendas, instalaciones de salud y hospitales.

El presidente Biden y el vicepresidente Harris han propuesto un "Programa de empleo estadounidense" de 2,25 billones de dólares para solucionar algunos de estos problemas. Se podrían crear millones de puestos de trabajo. Eso suena como mucho dinero, pero los fondos se gastarán durante ocho o hasta diez años.

Eso es alrededor de \$280 mil millones al año, o un poco más de un tercio del presupuesto oficial del Pentágono. Es modesto en comparación con el costo de por vida de \$1.6 billones de los aviones de combate F-35 de la Fuerza Aérea de EE. UU.

Sin embargo, la Cámara de Comercio de Estados Unidos atacó el plan de la Casa Blanca. Al escribir en el reaccionario National Review, David Harsanyi afirma: "Nuestra infraestructura no se está desmoronando".

Dígaselo a los niños de Flint, Michigan, que fueron envenenados con plomo por el agua que bebieron. Trece personas murieron cuando el puente I-35W colapsó en Minneapolis en 2007. Más de 45,000 puentes se consideran estructuralmente deficientes en los Estados Unidos.

Ocho personas murieron en El Barrio (East Harlem) de la ciudad de Nueva York en 2014 debido a una explosión de gas natural. Una tubería de gas cercana databa de 1887, pero la utilidad ConEd era demasiado barata para reemplazarla.

Este escritor trabajó como despachador de trenes en Amtrak. Cada vez que el Portal Bridge de 111 años que cruza el río Hackensack en Nueva Jersey se abría al tráfico de botes, teníamos la esperanza de que volviera a cerrarse de manera segura. Doscientos mil pasajeros lo utili-



Colapso del puente I-35W en Minneapolis, 2007.

zan diariamente para entrar y salir de la ciudad de Nueva York.

Se necesita más

Como señaló la representante Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, el verdadero problema con el plan de la Casa Blanca es que no es lo suficientemente grande. Fue el Green New Deal defendido por AOC y otras congresistas de color en "The Squad" lo que allanó el camino para cualquier propuesta de infraestructura.

"Reconstruir mejor", como lo llama Biden, tiene que incluir la lucha contra el racismo tóxico. Las refinerías de petróleo y las plantas químicas a menudo se construyen junto a las comunidades pobres. La planta de fertilizantes de fosfato abandonada cerca de Tampa, Florida, cuyo estanque amenazaba con una inundación catastrófica, es solo uno de los cientos de sitios peligrosamente contaminados.

La autopista Cross Bronx desplazó a miles de familias de Nueva York, mientras que la contaminación del aire de camiones y automóviles creó una epidemia de asma. La autopista I-43 atravesó la comunidad negra de Milwaukee, destruyendo cientos de hogares.

El American Jobs Program propone gastar \$85 mil millones en transporte público y \$80 mil millones en ferrocarriles de pasajeros y carga. Millones de trabajadores, estudiantes y personas mayores necesitan un mejor tránsito.

Big Oil, General Motors y Firestone conspiraron para deshacerse de los sistemas de tranvías de costa a costa. Las vías del Key System que conectan San Francisco y Oakland,

California, fueron arrancadas del Bay Bridge en 1958. El último servicio de pasajeros en Pacific Electric, que una vez tuvo 700 millas de vías que daban servicio al área de Los Ángeles, fue en 1961.

La China socialista construyó 23 nuevos sistemas de metro entre 2009 y 2019. La República Popular tiene más trenes de alta velocidad que el resto del mundo.

Los \$165 mil millones propuestos para el tránsito y el ferrocarril en los EE. UU. durante ocho años es una fracción de lo que gasta China. Solo en 2018, China invirtió \$117 mil millones solo en ferrocarriles.

Eso no impide que los derechistas ataquen el plan Biden-Harris como extravagante. Se sienten particularmente enojados por gastar \$400 mil millones durante ocho años en atención domiciliar y comunitaria para personas mayores y personas con discapacidades.

Esta es probablemente la parte más progresiva del Programa de Empleo Estadounidense. Exige salarios y beneficios más altos para los trabajadores de atención domiciliar mal pagados.

Los oponentes afirman que esto no es "infraestructura". Ayudar a millones de personas es tan importante como verter hormigón.

La WPA y el ejemplo socialista

Hay mucho mejor tránsito masivo y muchos más trenes de pasajeros en la Europa occidental capitalista y Japón. Mientras tanto, en los Estados Unidos, el gasto en infraestructura como porcentaje de la economía total se ha reducido a la mitad desde la década de 1960.

¿Por qué esto es así? La clase multimillonaria de Estados Unidos no ve ningún beneficio individual en tal inversión. Wall Street, así como los bancos británicos, dependen en cambio de una transfusión de sangre inversa de las ganancias robadas de África, Asia y América Latina.

Las empresas de servicios públicos se negaron incluso a actualizar la red eléctrica, que es absoluta-

mente necesaria para la producción capitalista. El estado capitalista, a través del programa de estímulo del presidente Obama, tuvo que gastar miles de millones en él. Más miles de millones están programados bajo el plan Biden-Harris.

Lenin, el líder de la revolución bolchevique de 1917, llamó a esto el "parasitismo y decadencia del capitalismo" en su folleto de 1916, "El imperialismo, la etapa más alta del capitalismo". Los monopolios son como los propietarios en su falta de voluntad para gastar dinero en mejorar su propiedad.

¿Para qué gastarán, los propietarios de los barrios marginales, dinero en arreglar condiciones peligrosas o deshacerse de las ratas mientras puedan seguir cobrando rentas elevadas? La ciudad de Nueva York tuvo que aprobar las leyes locales 10/80 y 11/98 para obligar a los propietarios a arreglar sus fachadas después de que Grace Gold muriera por la caída de escombros en 1979.

La gente todavía usa y disfruta de cientos de puentes bien construidos y atractivos parques construidos bajo la Administración de Progreso de Obras durante la década de 1930. La WPA empleó a millones de trabajadores durante la Gran Depresión.

La administración de Roosevelt se vio obligada a establecer la WPA debido a la lucha de la clase trabajadora. El Partido Comunista organizó consejos de desempleo y luchó contra los desalojos. Millones de trabajadores se unieron a sindicatos y crearon el Congreso de Organizaciones Industriales, el poderoso CIO.

Otro factor importante fue el ejemplo de los planes económicos socialistas quinquenales en la Unión Soviética. Estos planes abolieron el desempleo y permitieron a la Unión Soviética derrotar a Hitler.

Es el movimiento Black Lives Matter, con más de 20 millones de personas que exigen justicia para George Floyd y todas las demás víctimas de asesinatos policiales, lo que está impulsando cualquier cambio social en los Estados Unidos. También lo son las campañas para brindar salarios, beneficios y protección sindicales a los empleados de Amazon y a millones de otros trabajadores.

El ejemplo de la China socialista que duplicó su economía desde 2008 durante la mayor crisis económica capitalista desde la década de 1930 también puso la infraestructura en la agenda política. El presidente Biden señaló el éxito de China como un argumento para aprobar el plan de su administración.

Necesitamos un programa de empleo masivo que construya lo que necesitamos. No mezcle eso con ataques venenosos contra los asiáticos y la campaña de guerra contra la República Popular China.

China tiene lo que necesitamos: una revolución socialista que abolirá el terror policial y la pobreza. 🇺🇸

Manny Mayí remembered

Continued from page 2

power structure refused to conduct any real prosecution or even investigation of those who lynched him.

Police protected the perpetrators. Cops refused to let witnesses ride in police cars to find the killers.

One alleged killer was allowed to join the police department. The late Queens District Attorney Richard Brown postponed court proceedings 47 times.

Justice Committee founder Richie Perez, who died in 2004, fought

tirelessly to secure justice for Manny Mayí. Martha Laureano Perez, a leader of the Justice Committee and wife of Richie Perez, told the media how the Queens County DA's office has refused to even include Manuel Mayí on its "cold case" webpage.

It took over 30 years to convict the assassin of Mississippi NAACP leader Medgar Evers. The power of the people – seen in the 26 million people who declared "Black Lives Matter" following the murder of George Floyd – will secure justice for Manny Mayí. 🇺🇸

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