



What changed?

Biden bombs Syria, slashes COVID-19 payments, drops \$15 minimum wage



By JEFF MACKLER

March 17, 2021: President Joseph Biden's fealty to U.S. imperialism and its ruling class domestic agenda was demonstrated soon after his Jan. 20 White House arrival. Five days later he sent additional troops to northeastern Syria to fortify U.S. control of that U.S.-beleaguered nation's oil rich and most fertile agricultural region.

On Feb. 25 Biden directed U.S. drones to drop multiple 500-pound bombs on Syria, targeting the Iranian Kataib Hezbollah militia forces that were there to help defend that beleaguered nation from

U.S.-backed attacks and to thwart still-existing ISIS forces intent on entering neighboring Iraq.

The Iranian militia forces were there at the invitation of the Syrian government. Indeed, the combination of Iranian, Lebanese Hezbollah militias and Russian forces that answered Syria's call for help was decisive in defeating the U.S./NATO/Gulf State monarchy's regime change "coalition" war, that including at various times ISIS forces.

The latter were organized, financed, armed and directed by the U.S. military operating out of Turkish military bases



and also by the U.S.'s Gulf State monarchy "coalition" partners, especially Saudi Arabia. When ISIS forces, who slaughtered some 10,000 Syrians in the course of their effort to establish a permanent Caliphate in the region, aimed to overthrow the Bashar al Assad government they were supported with zero hesitation by the U.S. war machine.

By 2015-16 the combination of all these so-called rebels, overwhelmingly from outside Syria, occupied some two-thirds of the country.

They were poised to take the capital city of Damascus itself. 600,000 Syrians died

in the course of this U.S.-instigated horror. Half the nation was driven into external or internal exile. The nation's infrastructure was devastated

Had Syria, a poor and oppressed nation about to become yet another conquered U.S. neo-colonial failed and plundered state, not exercised its right to self-determination and sought aid against the U.S. imperial beast, its fate would have been inevitably sealed. Indeed, virtually every major U.S. corporate media outlet all but predicted the date of its conquest and planned dismemberment. Its President

(continued on page 7)

By LISA LEONARD

Last year, on May 25, Memorial Day, the world watched in horror as George Floyd, an African-American man, was brutally murdered in broad daylight on a street corner in Minneapolis.

A bystander filmed Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, kneeling on Mr. Floyd's neck for over 8 minutes, while he pleaded for air. Three other police officers standing nearby colluded in the murder. And all this because Mr. Floyd allegedly passed a counterfeit \$20 bill at the corner store!

The murder, which gained worldwide attention, exposed racist police brutality in America as never before. On average one unarmed Black man is murdered by police every day.

The capitalist system's "legalized" violence and brutality was created during slavery and then transformed into Jim Crow "legalized" segregation. Today it is manifested in the racist school-to-prison

Security ramps up for George Floyd murder trial



mass incarceration horror wherein the U.S. stands first in the world in the number and percentage of its population

warehoused in increasingly privatized-for-profit prisons at "wages" averaging fifty cents per hour – a virtual return to

slavery. The victims in the majority are Black, Brown, indigenous, other oppressed nationalities and immigrants.

With Floyd's videoed murder millions of people began to understand that what happened to Floyd and to Breonna Taylor, Eric Garner, Treyvon Martin and to thousands of others just like them, was the daily norm not the rare exception.

What began as mass Minneapolis protests and rioting soon became massive anti-racist mobilizations, overwhelmingly peaceful and nationwide.

Millions poured into the streets in some 2,000 U.S. cities accompanied by solidarity protests similarly scoring systemic racism in countries around the world. By the time the protest ebbed several months later the world witnessed the largest protest movement in U.S. history, with esti-

(continued on page 6)

Amazon workers in historic battle for union in deep South

BY KAREN SCHIEVE

Amazon's CEO Jeff Bezos is a very rich man, among the richest in the world. He owns numerous palaces and the Blue Origins rocket launching pad in Texas for private space travel and exploration. Mr. Bezos has become even richer from the profits of Whole Foods, an up-scale grocery chain, and from *The Washington Post* newspaper.

He profited big time from the deadly COVID virus. The price of Amazon's stock jumped to \$3,075 per share over the last several days alone. Its share value increased 75 percent over its price a year ago. The company's value hit \$1.7 trillion. Mr. Bezos's personal wealth hit \$195 billion.

So just how much does Jeff Bezos pay the people whose labor and effort made him a multi-billionaire? Well, just enough so that they have to keep coming back every day. He pays his Amazon warehouse workers in Bessemer, Alabama \$15.30 an hour! And apparently those workers also have some dental and medical insurance. Not bad you say for a southern state?

Importance of Amazon union drive

There are zero unionized Amazon warehouses (Amazon calls them fulfillment centers) in the United States today. Of the 110 active warehouses, with many more planned, none are union.

Thus, the present Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU) scheduled March 30 collective bargaining election results have gained the attention of union activists across the country.

As we go to press Amazon's 6,000 workers at the Bessemer warehouse, a majority Black and women, are engaged in a critical union organizing struggle that has won the solidarity of thousands of union and political activists who have mobilized in over 50 cities at Amazon-owned facilities, like Whole Foods stores, to score this mega corporation anti-union policies.

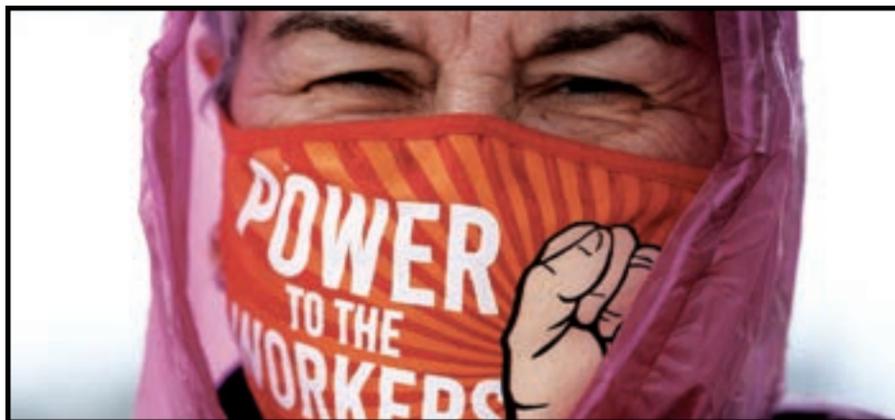
Without a union, Amazon workers have been subjected to an unbelievable "speed-up" regimen. Amazon keeps track of every worker, and every single second that worker is not working. If someone is in a restroom for four minutes, for example, that time is included in their individual TOT (Time Off Task) record. If one's TOT is deemed too high, termination proceedings are expected to follow.

And too bad if a worker needs to run to the restroom because its location is too distant to get to at a normal walking pace. If a restroom is "out-of-order" so that a worker must seek another location, too bad; they are punished with additional TOT. Fear of hitting a "too high" TOT number is immense. Some workers bring their own bottles or pails to use to relieve themselves. Others don't drink water until the very end of the day. While Amazon claims to have lengthened its allowed break times and to be more lenient with TOTs, workers report that nothing of the kind has been implemented.

20,000 workers with COVID-19

The median household income in Bessemer is \$30,000. One in four people living there are at or below the poverty line. The RWDSU and its president, Stuart Applebaum, a Black man, see the union's recognition drive at Bessemer as an integral part of the civil rights movement, if not a prelude to follow-up drives at other major warehouse facilities.

Applebaum's organizers are largely Black, many of whom have worked or are working in poultry warehouses across the South.



Treating workers with respect, a simple notion, has been central to the union's appeal.

Amazon's warehouses have double the standard rate of serious injuries in the wholesale industry. Amazon has been silent on the COVID crisis, consistently resisting worker requests for basic safety and protective gear as well as for information regarding how many of their co-workers have contracted the disease.

When word got back that Amazon had hidden the fact that 20,000 of their co-workers, as of October 2020, had contracted COVID, workers at several facilities walked off the job in protest. They were immediately fired.

Amazon's union busting

Amazon has gone to lengths to avoid being unionized, spending \$millions on the notorious Morgan Lewis outfit, among the top union-busting law firms in the U.S.

Morgan Lewis was retained by former President Donald Trump as tax counsel for the Trump Organization, holding that post since 2015. Representing some 75 percent of Fortune's top 100 organizations, this firm specializes in fighting workers' efforts to win sick, injury and back pay for company anti-worker policies. Morgan Lewis assisted Amazon in establishing a new website called "Do It Without Dues," that it employs to regularly email its workers with company anti-union propaganda.

Stressing the fact that Amazon's starting wage is \$15.30, more than double the \$7.25 federal minimum wage, the company counsels workers that they do not need a union, not to mention pay union dues, because Amazon also provides competitive base wages, a "Career Choice" program, company paid

short and long-term disability coverage, vacation and personal time off, and paid maternal and parental leave, etc., etc.

All this of course, leaving aside company hype and exaggeration, is yours for the taking, Amazon asserts, neglecting to mention that its TOT requirements essentially turn human beings into slaves on the warehouse floor.

Darryl Richardson applied to Amazon after the auto parts store where he worked for \$23.15 per hour closed. Richardson, according to *The Guardian* newspaper, was at first excited about working for Amazon. "I thought it would be a nice facility that would treat you right," he said. Five months later he was convinced otherwise. "There is no concern for safety," he stated, "or being forced to work four and a half hours without a break or being fired for too many TOTs or for any other reason."

Richardson, an Amazon "picker," complained about the fast, unrelenting pace of work and about seeing co-workers terminated for falling behind Amazon's production quotas regardless of the amount of TOT's he has accumulated. He is expected to pick, categorize and transport 315 items per hour, or five items a minute. "You're running at a consistent fast pace", Richardson explained, "You ain't got time to look around... You get treated like a number. You don't get treated like a person. They work you like a robot."

Return to class struggle unionism?

The RWDSU's union drive in the "right-to-work" state of Alabama may well prove to be a decisive turning point for working people in the months and years ahead. As with the "red state" teacher strikes of a few years ago, a victory at Bessemer can serve to open the door to a return to the militant class struggle trade

unionism of decades past wherein fighting and democratic unions combined basic collective bargaining and worker rights' issues with broader working class solidarity.

The example of a successful Black-led fightback against one of the nation's most powerful corporations might well provide the impetus for a critical break from the bureaucratic and class collaborationist policies that have today reduced today's trade union movement to its lowest state in over century.

When the most oppressed exercise their collective power at the point of production and win, the times will indeed be propitious for future wins.

Solidarity with the Amazon workers at Bessemer!

WHERE TO FIND US

Brunswick, MAINE
mainesocialistaction@yahoo.com

Buffalo, NEW YORK
wnysocialist@gmail.com

Central NEW JERSEY
prime1918@aol.com
(609) 954-1872

Chicago, ILLINOIS
P.O. Box 578428
chisocialistaction@yahoo.com

Detroit, MICHIGAN
kfmiforsa@hotmail.com

Kansas City, MISSOURI
kcsa@workernet.com
(816) 221-3638

Lexington, KENTUCKY
actionlexky@gmail.com

Louisville, KENTUCKY
rozjb51@gmail.com

Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN
TCSocialistAction@gmail.com

New York City
(212) 781-5157

Salem, OREGON
ANNMONTAGUE@COMCAST.NET
(503) 910-5988
Gary1917@aol.com
(971) 312-7369

Bay Area, CALIFORNIA
P.O. Box 10328 Oakland, CA 94610
socialistaction@lmi.net
(510) 268-9429

North Bay, CALIFORNIA
socialistactionbayarea@gmail.com

Nashville, Tennessee
NathanKing17@yahoo.com

Socialist Action Canada
socialistactioncanada@gmail.com
http://www.socialistaction.ca
(647) 986-1917

Join Socialist Action!

Socialist Action is a national organization of activists committed to the emancipation of workers and the oppressed. We strive to revitalize the antiwar, environmental, labor, anti-racist, feminist, student, and other social movements with a mass-action perspective. Recognizing the divisions that exist on the left and within the workers' movement, we seek to form united front type organizations around specific issues where a wide range of groups have agreement. In this way we seek to maximize our impact and demonstrate the power and effectiveness of mass action.

In the process we hope to bring activists together from different backgrounds into a revolutionary workers' party that can successfully challenge the wealthy elite – whose profit-based system is driving down living standards and threatens all life on this planet.

We are active partisans of the working class and believe in the need for independent working-class politics – not alliances with the bosses' parties. That is why we call for workers in the U.S. to break from the Democratic and Republican parties to build a labor party based on democratic fighting trade unions in alliance with the oppressed and exploited.

We support the struggle of those who are specially oppressed under capitalism – women, LGBTQI people, national minorities, etc. We support the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities, including Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans. We are internationalists, and hold that workers of one country have more in common with workers of another than with their own nation's capitalist class. We seek to link struggles across national boundaries, and to build an international revolutionary movement that will facilitate the sharing of experiences and political lessons. We maintain fraternal relations with the Fourth International.

Socialist Action believes that the capitalist state and its institutions are instruments of the ruling class, and that therefore they cannot be used as tools of the working class but have to be abolished and replaced with institutions of direct working class rule. That is why we fight for revolution. When we fight for specific reforms, we do so with the understanding that in the final analysis real social change can only come about with the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of a workers' government and the fight for socialism. Our ultimate goal is a truly democratic, environmentally sustainable, and egalitarian society organized to satisfy human needs rather than corporate greed. We invite you to join us in the struggle to make the world a better place!

For info about Socialist Action and how to join contact: Socialist Action National Office, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA, 94610 or call (510) 268-9429, socialistactionnews@lmi.net

Socialist Action newspaper editorial office: socialist action news@yahoo.co. Website: www.socialistaction.org.

SOCIALIST ACTION Closing news date: March 17, 2021

Editor: Nick Baker Canada Editor: Barry Weisleder

Socialist Action (ISSN) 0747-4237 is published monthly by Socialist Action Publishing Association, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610.
Postmaster: Send address changes to: Socialist Action, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610. RATES: For one year (12 issues, (1st class mail)) U.S., Canada, Mexico
 \$20. All other countries \$30. Money orders and checks should be in U.S. dollars.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of Socialist Action. These are expressed in editorials.

BY DAVE LINDORFF

Mumia Abu-Jamal, imprisoned 40 years, has COVID-19

Internationally renowned U.S. political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal has reported to friends and family on the outside that he has contracted Covid-19 in the Pennsylvania prison where he is incarcerated, and says he is having difficulty breathing. His life is in immediate danger and he is in urgent need of hospital care.

This latest outrage was sadly predictable. Prisons across the U.S. have for years been allowing serious illness to serve as a form of “silent execution” of prisoners. Many prisoners in the system, guilty or not, are serving unfairly punitive terms that keep them confined into old age — meaning they are particularly vulnerable to potentially fatal illnesses, whether that is flu, cancer, hepatitis, pneumonia or now Covid-19.

Noted journalist and political activist Abu-Jamal, now 66 years old and entering his 40th year in prison, is serving a life sentence without possibility of parole following his 1982 conviction of murder of a white police officer.

As I have written in my book on his case, *Killing Time*, his conviction followed a trial that featured coached and lying prosecution witnesses (including police officers), prosecutorial misconduct, withheld exculpatory evidence, racial bias in jury selection and a racist pro-prosecution judge overheard saying at the start of the trial that he would “help fry the nigger.”

His appeal process was just as badly corrupted. Significantly, it was fatally tainted by the refusal of a former Philadelphia DA, Ron Castille, who during his tenure oversaw the legal effort to defeat Mumia’s appeals, to recuse himself later when, as a state supreme court justice he ruled on those same appeals he had overseen.

The entire legal process in Abu-Jamal’s case has been a grotesque atrocity and an epic scandal.

Already suffering from cirrhosis of the



Heather Khalifa/Philadelphia Inquirer

liver because, like virtually all prisoners in American jails, Mumia was, until a federal court ordered it, denied timely access to medication known to be 95% effective in treating the Hepatitis C virus endemic in U.S. prisons. This was done by prison officials who were well aware that the disease, if left untreated, usually leads predictably to cirrhosis, then to liver cancer and eventually to death.

In Mumia’s case, legal challenges by state attorneys for the prison system intentionally delayed that court order until his disease had already advanced to cirrhosis of his liver.

Now Mumia has predictably contracted Covid-19. I say predictably again because U.S. prisons, overcrowded and impossible to maintain safe self-distancing, are known to be breeding grounds for epidemic disease, and yet have not been declared priority locations for early access to the vaccines that protect against the spread of this deadly virus that has already killed half a million Americans.

This denial of vaccination to a captive



Recent photo of Mumia shows deterioration of health while in prison.

population of 2.3 million people is nothing short of a crime against humanity. It is a crime made all the more outrageous because, thanks to the excessive sentences so common in this vindictive, racist, classist and deliberately cruel society, many U.S. prison inmates are old.

The Bureau of Prisons reports that 20% of its prisoners, for example, are over 50.

State prisons may be even worse, with many of them routinely sentencing felons to as much as 40 years, or, in the case of rapes and murders, life without parole.

Compare that to most civilized nations which limit sentences to 10-12 years even for the most serious of crimes. Given the current pandemic medical crisis facing the U.S. and the world, the U.S. and all 50 states should *immediately* order the release of all older prisoners over the age of 50 unless a solid case can be made in individual instances that some older prisoner poses a grave risk of committing a violent act if released.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is not such a prisoner, having been a non-violent model prisoner for his entire 40 years of incarceration.

Free Mumia and all older inmates in Pennsylvania’s prisons immediately!

Dave Lindorff is the author of “Killing Time: An Investigation into the Death Row Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal” (Common Courage Press, 2003)

By Bro. Zayid Muhammad

Imagine all NNPA* Black newspapers, for example, carrying regularly featured articles as a matter of priority on all of the evidence suppressed in Mumia’s case. * [An association of 200 African-American community newspapers. Editor]

Imagine Black clergy rallying at major news sites condemning the white-out and/or the demonization of Mumia through their media entities.

Imagine Black elected officials from Philadelphia and from all over the country rallying to denounce the continued ordeal of this man.

Imagine surviving ’60s icons conducting civil disobedience at the governor’s office and the DA’s office in Philadelphia with an eager throng of two generations of action-hungry activists looking to bumrush it, en masse if it didn’t yield results.

Even though Mumia has survived two execution dates, 30 years on death row and several recent dangerous medical challenges, thankfully with the force of a multiracial international campaign at his back and our ancestors, this hasn’t happened yet. It’s time to ask ‘why?’

As this goes to press, Mumia is in a prison infirmary dangling on a tightrope of both COVID-19 and congestive heart failure, a most deadly medical cocktail!

COVID-19 is most dangerous when it attacks the lungs, creates fluid in the lungs and then triggers fatal blood clots. Congestive heart failure, similarly speaking, creates fluid in the lungs, weakens the heart muscle and the kidneys. These two together are extremely deadly.

Not to mention Mumia’s Hep-C weakened liver and skin. Remember that?

Mumia needs to be hospitalized at minimum and truly needs to be released!

If ever there was a time to step forward for Mumia, it is now!

The most tragic dimensions surrounding

It’s now freedom or death for Mumia!



Mumia’s current ordeal is that there is now so much ample evidence of his innocence, so much ample evidence of both prosecutorial and judicial misconduct to free him if he can just be allowed to get it in on an appeal and that evidence on the court record.

In spite of Mumia clearly being on the verge of objectively vindicating himself, he can tragically die in prison if not enough of us turn it up now!

Wait! What about Philly’s highly prized progressive DA Larry Krasner? Hasn’t he moved to overturn more than a dozen bad convictions rooted in deep-seated Philly racism and corruption? Yes, but not for Mumia.

Even though his office ‘found’ six boxes

of missing evidence in his case, which includes a letter from a star prosecution witness, Robert Chobert, seeking payment for his testimony, reeking of prosecutorial misconduct and granting Mumia a new trial, Krasner, up for re-election, went into court last month and said that no new appellate relief for Mumia ought to be granted because his trial and conviction were sound.

From presiding Judge Sabo, vowing to help ‘fry the nigger,’ to suppressed eyewitness testimony that was not paid for by anyone totally contradicting Chobert’s perjured testimony, to the illegal exclusion of Black jurors from the trial, to Sabo having Veronica Jones arrested on the stand for telling the truth on how she

was coerced to testify against Mumia, to their being clear evidence of another person being the actual killer of Officer Daniel Faulkner and a whole lot more, Krasner showed his true ‘white’ color and is now seeking to block Mumia’s real chance at justice and freedom at a time when it can genuinely cost him his life.

The time is now to turn it up and free this incredible human being who has become a breathing living gracious symbol of human solidarity like few others in the last several decades.

Let us all press Pennsylvania’s other liberal ‘fox’ Gov. Tom Wolf to have Mumia and all aging prisoners who pose no risk to society released to help address this insidious pandemic. Over 100 people have died from COVID-19 in Pennsylvania prisons; all over 50 and with pre-existing conditions.

Let’s press Mumia’s overseers, John Wetzel head of Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and Bernadette Mason superintendent of Mahanoy Prison, to get Mumia properly hospitalized.

Press DA Krasner to address his now dangerous wrong and go back into court and encourage a conviction reversal and a new trial for Mumia as he has done for others.

The time is now!
Seize The Time!
Free Mumia Abu Jamal!
Contact: Gov. Tom Wolf 717-787-2500
Sec’y Dept of Corrections John Wetzel 717-728-2573

Supt. of Mahanoy Corrections Institution Bernadette Mason 570-773-2158
DA Larry Krasner 267-456-1000
To support Mumia locally 212 -330-8029
In Philadelphia, 215-724-1618

-March 11, 2021

Zayid Muhammad is a jazz poet, stage actor and well-known “cub” of the N.Y. chapter of the Black Panther Party.

The capitalist criminality of fracked gas

By James Fortin

Slick salespeople and evil-doers know that if you keep uttering the same lie that eventually enough people will believe it. So it is with the statement that the use of natural gas is a bridge to a clean, renewable energy future.

Exxon Mobil, fifty years ago, was the first to obscure and lie about the dangers that fossil fuels pose to the climate. But such criminal “traditions” carries on to this day. Pittsburg EQT, the largest supplier of U.S. gas, pumping about 4 billion cubic feet a day, says on its website as of this writing: “Clean burning natural gas is an important part of our country’s energy mix, and we are proud to be a major producer of natural gas and even prouder to produce it in an environmentally responsible manner.” Whatever the claim, the record on natural gas says otherwise, overwhelmingly.

Fracking becomes acceptable

In a 2010 study conducted by Massachusetts Institute of Technology, economists predicted that the rapidly expanding domestic natural gas market – successful due to the new science of hydraulic fracturing – would produce a source of energy that quickly diminished the use of coal-fired power plants because it was cheaper.

They warned that the cheaper-than-coal fossil fuel natural gas had the potential to push aside investments in developing renewable energy such as solar and wind, as well as carbon capture and storage. It also was the beginning of the notion of a “transition” fossil fuel.

The giddiness over natural gas by some was evident. Ray Orbach, a former director of the Office of Science at the Department of Energy opined at the time that the economic advantage of natural gas was “a very healthy competition” and “a blessing” since it would drive out coal, the most polluting source of greenhouse gases.

Fracking spread widely across the country mostly unopposed with the holy grail of a “bridge” in reality becoming a defensive wall employed by the fossil fuel industry ever since. The emerging dominance of natural gas over coal also had another effect – creation of gas-related infrastructure to include pipelines, power plants, and home heating appliances. That effectively locked natural gas into the energy system for decades. After all, who among us needed to worry about emissions any longer as there now was a plan on getting us to a carbon-free world.

It was the *lower cost* of natural gas that retired dirty coal from power generation, not lofty stated principles or aspirations of the fossil fuel industry. But with fracking as the method to extract gas from bedrock, came an avalanche of dangerous, anti-climate consequences. And now with renewable solar and wind power producing cheaper electricity than gas, the shoe has been placed on the other foot, and the fracked gas operatives are denying and stalling.

The destructive impact of fracking

Although the precise number is difficult to pin down, there are estimated to be more than 1.1 million unconventionally drilled (aka fracked) oil and gas wells in the U.S. As the number has grown, so have the health and environmental effects. None are good.

Fracking operators have avoided disclosure of the chemicals used in their extraction process. Numerous studies though have confirmed evidence of cancer-causing chemicals such as benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene contaminating groundwater in the area of the wells, and populations in the vicinity of wells experiencing disproportionate occurrences of respiratory, nervous, and immune system problems. A wide assortment of



lesser impacts such as headaches, eye irritation, and dizziness have been found as well.

In one Texas location a study performed between 2012 and 2015 demonstrated that babies born to mothers who lived within 5 miles of natural gas flaring during that time frame were 50 percent more likely to be premature. In other areas excessive nausea, fatigue and cancer have been attributed to exposure to radioactive materials extracted from the fracked bedrock together with the natural gas.

In another location the fossil fuel industry has made Washington County of southwestern Pennsylvania the mother lode of that state’s fracked gas. Living in the county that has 1600 fracked wells and surrounded by a half dozen nearby, the members of the Bower-Bjornson family living there also have experienced what many others in their community have suffered.

In reporting by Environmental Health News during the summer of 2019 one of the family’s children, a 13-year-old boy, was found to have *eleven* chemicals in his urine known to cause respiratory and gastrointestinal ailments as well as organ damage, reproductive problems, and increased cancer risk. The very same chemicals are common to gasoline, pesticides, industrial solvents, glue, varnishes, industrial waste, and tobacco smoke – a deadly elixir also prevalent in emissions from fracked wells.

The Union of Concerned Scientist published an exhaustive 475-page summary in 2020 of over 1500 scientific studies regarding the risks and harms of fracking. Among its main conclusions the report stated that “the vast body of scientific studies now published on hydraulic fracturing... confirms that the climate and public health risks from fracking are real and the range of environmental harms wide. Our examination uncovered no evidence that fracking can be practiced in a manner that does not threaten human health directly and without imperiling climate stability upon which public health depends.”

Our environment is being fracked

The attack on public health is part and parcel of the assault on the environment. With the development of fracking technology came the exploitation of shale geological formations where 75 percent of U.S. gas now originates, now found

A poisonous mix of patently secret chemicals and massive amounts of water, under enormous pressure, are blasted into the fissures created thousands of feet below the surface. The deadly concoction

– presently with *each well consuming over 14.3 million gallons of water on average* – is pumped out and stored for treatment and further use. The fracked gas now being produced releases into the atmosphere carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, carbon monoxide and methane, a greenhouse gas 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide, alone.

Side effects (have that read “cost of doing business”) include earthquakes, billions of gallons of water poisoned beyond repair, and despoilment of grasslands and forest.

In the same vein as the travails experienced by the Bower-Bjornson family are the disturbed lives of those in the household of Bryan Latkanich, also from Washington County. Having leased his farm in 2010 to fracking, Latkanich ended up with 2 wells 400 feet from his home.

Over the course of 10 years *his* well became contaminated, the foundation of his home was damaged, drilling wastewater was secretly and illegally dumped on his land, and his 2-year-old son experienced a host of abnormal health symptoms. Of course, Chevron Oil, the well operator, denied all responsibility for his problems. And to be expected, state agencies have been ineffectual in providing any recourse or solutions.

Bryan Latkanich summed it up. “I was a total cheerleader for this industry at the beginning... Now I just want to make sure no one else makes the same mistake I did. This has ruined my health and my kid’s health and destroyed my farm. It has ruined my life.” Everywhere natural gas goes so does poisonous water, polluted air, and contaminated soil.

To state that fracking is an environmental nightmare is grossly inadequate. The Union of Concerned Scientists study concluded: “The rapidly expanding body of evidence compiled here is massive, troubling, and cries out for decisive action. Across a wide range of parameters, the data continue to reveal a plethora of recurring problems that cannot be sufficiently averted through regulatory frameworks.

The risks and harms of fracking are inherent to its operation. The only method of mitigating its grave threats to public health and the climate is a complete and comprehensive ban on fracking. Indeed, a fracking phase-out is a requirement of any meaningful plan to prevent catastrophic climate change.”

Unlike Pittsburgh’s EQT quoted above, Exxon Mobil, the second-largest U.S. producer of natural gas with a history of hiding the effects of fossil fuels on cli-

mate change, has refrained from offering glowing comments about its fracked gas production. Instead, it simply wants to stall.

The CEO of Exxon Mobil, Darren Woods, earlier this month stated his company at most would “try” to set a net-zero carbon emissions goal but not just yet. “We are supportive of that ambition and our goal is to help society to achieve it... It’s an evolving conversation that I find very helpful to think through what needs to happen.” More double talk while the methane gas continues to flare.

Peter Krull, the CEO of an investment firm specializing in sustainability, commented: “Woods and Exxon Mobile continue to live in a fairy-tale world of inaction while California burns and Texas freezes.” Spending serious dollars to fight climate change is not in Exxon’s budget. Spending \$19 billion in 2021 for fossil fuel exploration is, however.

Opposition to fracking grows

Fortunately, there is growing opposition to fossil fuel expansion by the public as well as climate activists. While mouthpieces for the fracked gas industry will continue to spread denial about their product’s dangers, ever fewer are believing their lies. In 2020, major fossil fuel pipeline projects to fold in the face of massive opposition included the Dakota Access and Keystone XL oil pipelines in the Midwest as well as the West Virginia Atlantic Coast gas pipeline. Just this past month, in small-town Belfast, Maine, climate activists mobilized to stop a 40-mile-long expansion of a fracked gas pipeline.

Using petitions, mass attendance at city council meetings, and planning for future demonstrations and civil disobedience, the climate groups successfully mobilized public opposition that led Summit Natural Gas to scrap its \$90 million project. Lamenting its defeat the gas company offered a bit of truth: “Our project is not alone in its inability to move forward.”

The fossil fuel despoilers are doing only what the capitalist system demands of them – make a profit – notwithstanding their high and mighty comments about how we are all in this together. The negative societal consequences of their businesses are just collateral damage.

Big Oil & Gas has known about greenhouse gas emissions and their impact for half a century, just as the tobacco industry knew their products caused lung cancer, just as the Sackler family knew that their pain pills caused opioid addiction, just as the plastics industry knows that plastics kill ocean life. *They don’t care; they’re making money.*

The American people oppose fracked gas. Only 38% support more hydraulic fracturing for oil and natural gas, whereas 77% of Americans agree that wind, solar and hydrogen development is more important than expanded production of US fossil fuels. Results of a national poll conducted by the Pew Research Center published in Nov. 2019 showed 67% of adults think the federal government is doing too little to reduce the effects of global climate change.

Yet, the industry is lightly regulated at the state level and has remained virtually untouched by the federal government, whether controlled by Republicans or Democrats. It was, after all, Presidential candidate Joe Biden who vigorously proclaimed and who will forever be remembered as uttering the words, “I never said I opposed fracking.”

Capitalist enterprise with its profit motive has forever privatized the gain and socialized the pain. Such formulas are in the bloodstream of the ruling 1%. They cannot put themselves out of business which exactly is the antidote needed to avoid the pending climate catastrophe and a host of other calamities.

That is where socialism comes in and that is why working people need to do it for them. ■

BY W.T. WHITNEY JR.

Cuba's socialist approach to developing vaccines against COVID-19 differs strikingly from that of capitalist nations of the world. Cuba's production of four vaccines is grounded in science and dedicated to saving the lives of all Cubans, and to international solidarity.

The *New York Times's* running report on the world's vaccine programs shows 67 vaccines having advanced to human trials; 20 of them are in the final phase of trials or have completed them. The United States, China, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, South Korea, and India have each produced many vaccines; most vaccine-manufacturing countries are offering one or two vaccines.

Cuba is the only vaccine manufacturer in Latin America; there are none in Africa. The only state-owned entities producing the leading vaccines are those of Cuba and Russia.

Cuba's Finlay Vaccine Institute has produced two COVID-19 vaccines. Trials for one of them, called Sovereign I, focus on protecting people previously infected with COVID-19. The antibody levels of some of them turned out to be low, and the vaccine might provide a boost.

The other vaccine, Sovereign II, is about to enter final human trials. For verifying protection, these trials require tens of thousands of subjects, one half receiving the vaccine and the other half, a placebo vaccine. Cuba's population is relatively small, 11 million people, too small to yield enough infected people in the short time required to test the vaccine's protective effect. That's why Sovereign II will be tested in Iran.

100 million doses of Sovereign II are being prepared, enough to immunize all 11 million Cubans, beginning in March or April. The 70 million remaining doses will go to Vietnam, Iran, Pakistan, India, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Nicaragua. Sovereign II "will be the vaccine of ALBA," explained Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodríguez, referring to the solidarity alliance established in 2004 by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Cuba's Fidel Castro.

"Cuba's strategy in commercializing the vaccine represents a combination of what's good for humankind and the impact on world health. We are not a multinational where a financial objective comes first," says Vicente Vérez Bencomo, director of Cuba's Finlay Vaccine Institute. Income generated by vaccine sales abroad will pay for health care, education, and pensions in Cuba just as happens with exports of medical services and medicines.

Cuba's Center for Genetic and Biotechnological Engineering is developing two other COVID-19 vaccines; One, named "Mambisa" (signifying a female combatant in wars of liberation from Spain), is administered via the nasal route, just as is Cuba's hepatitis B vaccine. The other vaccine, named "Abdala" (a character in a Jose Martí poem) is administered intramuscularly. The two vaccines are involved in early trials.

Cuba was ready

Cuban education emphasizes science and technology. In the 1990s, Cuba accounted for 11% of doctorate-level Latin American scientists. Cuban scientists work in the 50 or so biomedical research and production facilities which together make up Cuba's state-owned BioCuba-Farma Corporation, and which produces vaccines, drugs, medical tests, and medical equipment. It makes 60% of medicines used in Cuba, and 8 of 12 vaccines.

Cuba previously produced a pioneering vaccine that prevents life-threatening infection caused by type B meningococcus. Cuba developed a genetically-engineered hepatitis B vaccine and a vaccine offering palliative treatment for lung cancer. A Cuba-developed vaccine offers protection against infection, particularly childhood meningitis, caused by the Hemophilus In-

Cuba's COVID-19 vaccines serve the people, not profits

fluenza type B bacterium.

In fashioning vaccines, Cuban scientists relied on familiar technology.

To provide an immunological extra, the antigen of Cuba's Sovereign II vaccine is mixed with tetanus toxoid, as was done with Cuba's Hemophilus influenza vaccine. As with other vaccines, scientists used a segment of the virus's protein – here the COVID-19 virus – to form an antigen to stimulate protective antibodies. By contrast, the U. S. Pfizer and Moderna vaccines contain the whole viral protein, not a segment. That protein contains "genetic instructions" which enter human cells, causing them "to make spike proteins, which then get released into the body" where they trigger antibodies.

Observers suggest that this innovative U.S. technology may be less safe than the one used in Cuban vaccines. Not requiring extremely cold storage, as do the U.S.

been sent out, of which 93 percent were supplied to only 15 countries." In Latin America, only Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, and Chile have secured purchase contracts adequate for immunizing entire populations. The companies' contracts with African nations allow for immunization of only 30 percent of Africans in 2021. Meaningful immunization has yet to begin there.

Wealth determines distribution. Epidemiologists at Duke University report that, "While high-income countries represent only 16% of the world's population, they currently hold 60% of the vaccines for COVID-19 that have been purchased so far." Cuban journalist Randy Alonso reports that only "27 percent of the total population of low and middle income countries can be vaccinated this year."

"The world is on the brink of a cata-

Problems include: wealthy nations order vaccines independent of COVAX; they buy more vaccine than they need; manufacturers set prices; and prices are secret, variable, and very high.

Most other countries producing COVID-19 vaccines are at variance with Cuba through their profiteering and because they are complicit with the U.S. economic blockade of Cuba. Pursuing routine overseas commercial affairs, they all too easily adjust to U.S. regulations by means of which that cruel policy is enforced. More to the point, the U.S. blockade hinders Cuba's vaccine efforts, and they are silent.

"We don't have in Cuba all the raw materials and supplies we'll need for the unprecedented scale of production that vaccinating our whole population requires," Dagmar García-Rivera, Director of Research at Cuba's Finlay Vaccine In-



vaccines, the Cuban vaccines are suited for areas without adequate refrigeration capabilities.

Cuba's bio-medical production sector has also created drugs for treating Covid-19 infection. Interferon, an antiviral agent developed in Cuba, produced in China, and used throughout the world, prevents many Covid – infected patients from becoming critically ill. The Cuban anti-inflammatory drug Jusvinza, used for treating auto-immune diseases, and Cuba's monoclonal antibody Itolizumab, which moderates exaggerated immune responses, are both effective in reducing Covid-19 deaths.

The other way

The U. S. approach to producing and distributing COVID-19 vaccines is based on private enterprise, although the U. S. government did deliver billions of dollars to pharmaceutical companies to produce vaccines free of charge to recipients. The companies have contracted with purchasers abroad.

According to forbes.com in November, 2020, "If Moderna's [vaccine] can get FDA approval and can make enough doses, its top line could be nearly \$35 billion higher ... than ... in the last 12 months." Another report suggests that, "The companies (Pfizer and Moderna) stand to earn billions of dollars in profits from their COVID vaccines this year [and] there will be more profits in later years." The companies "claim the rights to vast amounts of intellectual property."

With corporations in charge, distribution of COVID-19 vaccines is skewed. As of Jan. 27, "some 66.83 million doses have

The WHO initiated the global vaccine collaboration COVAX to assure access by poor nations to COVID-19 vaccines.

strophic moral failure – and the price of this failure will be paid with lives and livelihoods in the world's poorest countries," declared Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director of the World Health Organization, on January 18. He warned that, "some countries and companies continue to prioritize bilateral deals, going around COVAX, driving up prices and attempting to jump to the front of the queue."

Access for poor nations

The WHO initiated the global vaccine collaboration COVAX to assure access by poor nations to COVID-19 vaccines. The 190 nations that are enrolled agreed to obtain vaccines through COVAX. Rich nations would supply COVAX with funds to enable 90 poor nations to receive no-charge vaccines. COVAX anticipates distributing two billion doses, enough to immunize only 25 % of the populations of poor nations during 2021.

stitute, explained. "They have to be purchased and for this, we need financing. This is made infinitely more difficult by the U.S. embargo ... Procuring the necessary reagents for research and the raw materials for production is a challenge we face daily."

In confronting the pandemic, Cuba exhibits attention to detail suggestive of a level of caring and concern not readily matched elsewhere. For example, Cuba's government-friendly cubadebate.cu website provides a daily, detailed update of the infection's impact. Its report on Jan. 27 presents data relating to cities, provinces, the nation, and the world – and the nation's intensive care units. Readers learn that of 43 patients in intensive care that day, 16 were in critical condition, stable or unstable, and 27 were in "grave" condition.

All 43 cases are reviewed, beginning with: "Cuban citizen, 75 years old, from Alquízar, in Artemisa, already suffering from arterial hypertension and ischemic cardiopathy who is afebrile, on mechanical ventilation, is hemodynamically stable... with acceptable blood gases (oxygen and CO2), is improving radiologically with inflammatory lesions in the right [lung] base – reported as critical but stable." The cases of four Cubans who died that day are also presented.

Fighting a pandemic in Cuba, it's understood, is no casual matter. Nor is the health of the Cuba's people. ■

Physician and life-long Cuba solidarity activist, W.T. Whitney Jr. resides in rural Maine. This article originally appeared in Marxism Leninism Today,

...killer cop trial

(continued from page 1)

mates of participants ranging from 16 to 24 million – all demanding Black Lives Matter! and an end to institutionalized police terror and racist brutality. Initiated largely by working class Black, Latino and Native American youth, the unprecedented and courageous mobilizations witnessed the solidarity of millions of white youth imbued with the spirit of solidarity.

That these multi-racial protests took place in the context of a deadly global pandemic evidenced the growing radicalism in the U.S. today and especially among the youth.

Slap on wrist for murdering cops

Derek Chauvin's murder trial is set to begin on March 8. The mere fact that he was charged with the murder of George Floyd is almost unprecedented as most police officers who murder Black and Brown people get off with just a slap on the wrist at most. A murder conviction is an extremely rare exception given the numerous provisions of a racist legal system that virtually exempts killer cops from conviction.

But Chauvin's case may be this exception. On March 12 the City of Minneapolis agreed to settle a civil suit for

have hemmed and hawed and delayed any final decisions over the last few months. Things have largely returned to "normal" in Minneapolis and St. Paul, not to mention the rest of the country, where police continue to kill people of color on a daily basis with virtual impunity.

On December 30, police shot and killed a Somali American man, Dolal Idd, at a gas station in South Minneapolis during a felony traffic stop for an alleged firearms sale. At the same time, the City of Minneapolis is spending \$6.4 million to hire dozens of new police officers, a move that was unanimously approved by the Minneapolis City Council in February 2021.

Meanwhile, security measures in Minneapolis are ramping up in anticipation of new protests during the Chauvin trial. Minnesota Governor Tim Walz has activated the National Guard to police the event. The Guard has also been assigned to duty during the follow-up trial of the other three officers.

The Minneapolis Police Department, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, the Minnesota State Patrol and the Minnesota National Guard are all collaborating on security measures. 1,000 National Guard troops and 1,200 law enforcement of-



Derek Chauvin

the City of Minneapolis to pay for the cost of security measures surrounding Chauvin's trial, including the costs of bringing in surrounding police agencies to help with crowd control.

Some Senators have justified these measures imposed on Minneapolis based on the argument that other cities shouldn't be responsible for paying for riot response in a city that isn't supposedly doing enough to stop those riots.

"People across the state are very, very frustrated with the City of Minneapolis, the leadership, that over and over and over talked about defunding the police,"

munication with the community" during the trial. As part of these communication efforts, the city will be hiring six social media influencers to intentionally target Black, Native American, Somali, Hmong and Latinx communities with messaging throughout the trial. In a public statement, the City Council said, "The City is collaborating with social media partners to share public information with cultural communities and to help dispel potential misinformation during the upcoming trials of the former officers involved in the killing of George Floyd.

The goal is to increase access to information to communities that do not typically follow mainstream news sources or City communications channels and/or who do not consume information in English. It's also an opportunity to create more two-way communication between the City and communities. The recommendations for which social media messengers to partner with come from the City's Neighborhood and Community Relations staff."

But community activists are already expressing concern about this strategy. Toussaint Morrison, a local activist with over 11,000 Instagram followers, is concerned about the clear bias of this messaging. "The key words here are 'city approved.' What do you think the message is going to be? It's going to be pro-city; it's going to be anti-protest," said Morrison in an interview with CBS News. Sara Davis, the Executive Director of the Minneapolis Legal Rights Center, expressed similar concerns.

"It really reflects that they know there's a lack of trust between community and city institutions and that's real, let's be honest about that, that's real," she said. Following mounting pressure and criticism from the community, Minneapolis officials backtracked and said they are no longer planning to hire influencers to spread city-approved messages during the trial.

Cops make streets unsafe

Clearly, pouring millions of dollars into hiring more police officers, ramping up security measures, and controlling messaging surrounding Chauvin's trial is not going to make our streets safer. It's not the protestors, often labeled "rioters," who are making our streets unsafe.

In fact, the vast majority of protests against police brutality that took place in 2020 were peaceful. It's the police officers who are arresting Black and Brown people for low level drug offenses and putting them in jail, ripping them out of their families and their communities.

It's the police officers who collaborate with ICE agents to deport immigrants, who most of the time haven't committed any crime at all, and are just trying to work to provide a better life for their families.

It's the fact that we have thousands of people experiencing homelessness in the Twin Cities, people who are kicked out of city parks for living in tents, people who are without housing during the brutal Minnesota winter while rent costs skyrocket.

And yet, the City can find millions of dollars to spend on so-called security measures. The planned massive police presence during Chauvin's trial is aimed at suppressing free speech and the right of people to protest peacefully in the streets. It's the police officers who should be arrested for their brutal treatment of the most oppressed members of our society, not the protestors speaking out for truth and justice.

Check back on our website, socialistaction.org, for ongoing coverage of Derek Chauvin's trial.

Join the mass protests to demand justice for George Floyd! Jail killer cops! Defund, disarm and disband racist police departments! For Black, Brown and indigenous community control, not racist police! ■



wrongful death filed by the Floyd family by agreeing to pay an unprecedented \$27 million. The settlement is separate and apart from the legal proceedings against Chauvin that have already begun. Some eight jurors have already been selected. All but one admitted to previously seeing the Chauvin murder video.

Adding to the chances of a murder conviction, the Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled last week to reinstate a third degree murder charge against Chauvin that had been previously dropped by a judge in late February. Chauvin already faces charges of second degree murder.

Prosecutors are also asking for charges of aiding and abetting third-degree murder to be added to the cases of J. Alexander Kueng, Thomas Lane and Tou Thao, Chauvin's police colleagues who stood by and watched while Chauvin murdered George Floyd. These officers will be tried in August.

Police murders continue

Despite widespread calls to "Defund the Police" coming from protestors and community leaders, Minneapolis officials

Despite widespread calls to "Defund the Police" coming from protestors and community leaders, Minneapolis officials have hemmed and hawed and delayed any final decisions over the last few months.

will be on standby to help "keep the peace." Officials have stated there will be "zero tolerance for rioting, looting, and property destruction."

Measures are in preparation to prevent highways being used for protest marches. Concrete security perimeters are already being erected around Minneapolis City Hall and the Government Center, while several downtown streets will be closed for the duration of the trial.

The Republican-controlled Minnesota Senate approved a measure that compels

said Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka.

At the same time, the Democratic Farmer Labor-controlled House was expected to take up legislation to create a \$35 million SAFE Fund (State Aid for Emergencies), that would help reimburse cities that support nearby areas with firefighters and police during rioting and other emergency situations. That measure was tabled.

The Minneapolis City Council recently approved \$1,181,500 for so-called "com-

...what changed?

(continued from page 1)

Bashar al-Assad, was said to be preparing to flee.

This U.S.-led cabal had convened in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in December 2015 with 116 participants – none representing the Syrian government – to negotiate among themselves Syria's anticipated division and its future "leaders." President Barack Obama's Secretary of State John Kerry effectively presided over this "Syrian Opposition Conference." Said Kerry, "We welcome the positive outcome of the gathering of the Syrian opposition in Riyadh today including reaching a consensus on principles for a pluralistic and democratic [division of] Syria... We appreciate that this extremely diverse group of Syrians put aside differences in the interest of building a new Syria."

Warmaker Biden

The bully imperialist Biden defended the recent U.S. bombing of Iranian forces in Syria by claiming without proof that it was in retaliation for Iranian forces based in Iraq firing missiles at U.S. military bases including at an airport at Erbil.

Iran denied that its forces were responsible for the attack. Indeed, the New York Times a day later, Feb. 26, reported that "a previously unknown group calling itself Guardians of Blood claimed responsibility."

The corporate media characterized Biden's bombing order, that murdered 22 Iranians in Syria, as the new president's first overseas military venture. They were dead wrong.

Biden's military has been consistent assassins in Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan before and after he assumed the presidency. How could it be otherwise?

The U.S. maintains 1,100 military bases in some 100 nations. This world's most powerful war behemoth exists solely to advance the interests of the tiny ruling class few. For these would-be masters of the universe death and destruction serve as their ultimate weapon, regardless of who holds the presidency.

Biden, of course, neglected to mention that the U.S. today operates to a significant extent as Iraq's neo-colonial master. Following two devastating U.S. wars against this relatively defenseless nation – 1990 and 2003 – and associated sanctions and periodic bombings that combined to take the lives of 1.5 million Iraqis, few doubt that Iraq's periodic U.S. overseen elections notwithstanding, the U.S. continues to call the shots.

The 2003 U.S. military conquest was immediately followed by the appointment of American diplomat Paul Bremer to govern the defeated nation via a "Coalition Provisional Authority." Iraq's oil resources were shortly after ceded to U.S. corporations. Permanent U.S. military bases were established across the country.

Students of Iraqi history may recall that the war itself was justified with the lie that Iraq possessed "weapons of mass destruction" that its President Saddam Hussein was about to launch against other nations. One after another U.S. military official and the then Secretary of State Collin Powell publically presented "evidence" to the United Nations of such "weapons of mass destruction." None existed. None were ever found. Powell himself testified that he was deceived with false information. Nevertheless Iraq was destroyed.

That the current Iraqi government, pressed by massive and repeated anti-U.S. demonstrations protesting last year's Trump-ordered drone assassination of Iranian Quds force leader Qassim Suleimani near the Baghdad Airport, had demanded the withdrawal of U.S. forces also went unmentioned by Biden.

Neither did the fact that the Iranian forces in Iraq were there at the behest of



Meanwhile Biden's touted \$1.9 trillion new COVID-19 relief package has been signed, sealed and delivered but not before Senate Democrats stripped it of key Biden election-time promises, including his proposal to increase the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour.

the Iraqi government, where they operate as an official part of the Iraqi Army engaging in joint efforts to combat ISIS attacks.

It was later reported that Biden's real objective was to force the Iranians to engage in negotiations that would allow the U.S. to return to the previously negotiated and Trump abandoned "Iran Nuclear Deal," the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The Iranians have insisted that any U.S. return was contingent on an end to the deadly U.S. sanctions that have inflicted untold misery on the Iranian people.

Biden's steadily mounting war moves included his cancellation of U.S. plans, negotiated by the Trump Administration, to withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan, where the U.S. war machine continues its 20 years of slaughter and occupation. Biden's commitment to the U.S. \$1 trillion annual military budget remains unchanged.

Biden's U.S. corporate agenda

On the home front Biden quickly signed some 42 Executive Orders, purportedly to revoke Donald Trump's most heinous decrees. The implementation of these orders, however, is far from immediate, being subject to "implementation and interpretation" by yet-to-be-established bureaucratic government oversight bodies.

Meanwhile Biden's touted \$1.9 trillion new COVID-19 relief package has been signed, sealed and delivered but not before Senate Democrats stripped it of key Biden election-time promises, including his proposal to increase the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour.

Biden's promise of a one-time grant of \$2,000 per person as a COVID-19 stimulus relief payment was reduced to \$1,400 with new provisions added to limit eligi-

bility for this reduced payment to 19 million fewer people than Trump's previously-signed legislation.

Similar cuts included reducing unemployment benefits to \$300 rather than the promised \$500. At the last minute Senate Majority leader Chuck Schumer slipped in an additional \$3 billion to fund private religious schools, despite the Democrats opposing such expenditures when proposed by Trump's Education Secretary and charter school champion Betsy DeVos.

No doubt additional surprises will be revealed in the months ahead including mandated cuts in budget allocations for vital social programs resulting from previous legislation that compels such cuts when congress approves measures that increase the federal deficit as is the case with Biden's COVID-19 stimulus package. "The Lord Giveth, and the Lord Hath Taken Away."

Still, there is no doubt that several of Biden's one-time pandemic relief measures will be welcomed by working people at a time when capitalism's ever-deepening economic crises, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, have taken a great toll on the overall conditions of working class life.

Recent polls indicate that his \$1.9 trillion package has the support of over 77 percent of the population. Today's Bureau of Labor Statistics Labor Participation Rate report indicates that almost 40 percent of all eligible workers are without jobs, that massive layoffs continue every week, that increasing numbers live paycheck-to-paycheck, are unable to pay rent and face imminent eviction.

Again, oppressed nationalities and women suffer most.

Under these circumstances and wary of

the deep and mounting working class anger that permeates U.S. society, the ruling rich no doubt felt compelled to pose the Democrats as more attuned to mass moods of discontent and make some temporary and limited concessions.

But Biden's promised \$2 trillion in future legislation to upgrade the nation's failing infrastructure to provide new jobs has been shelved as both capitalist parties reject funding any such project by raising taxes on the rich.

Indeed, both Republicans and Democrats joined to pass Trump's unprecedented tax cuts for the corporate elite that slashed corporate tax levels and allowed U.S. multi-nationals to offshore profits to avoid taxation.

Capitalism's profit or perish credo

The sum total of all the policies of a crisis ridden world capitalist system amount to making working people pay – to the constant immiseration of the masses, to their repeated subjection to recession/depression cycles that permeate capitalism's history and throw ever-increasing numbers into the ranks of the unemployed and underemployed.

Whether it be overt union busting, obliteration of pensions and health care benefits, workplace speed up, offshoring plants to low wage nations, imperialist conquests to secure vital resources, cutbacks in social services, "elimination of welfare as we know it," the bi-partisan objective is the same – to preference the corporate elite at the expense of the vast majority, a preference driven not by any moral failings of the super rich, but by the necessities imposed by the very operation of the system itself.

Whether capitalists are well intentioned or evil, Democrat or Republican, they must deploy one or another or all of the above measures aimed at workers to keep their businesses afloat in the face of the incessant competition that drives them to profit or perish.

Joseph Biden is Donald Trump, but better attuned to posing himself as a civilized politician acting in the interests of the vast majority. Beneath this veneer of compassion, however, lies another experienced racist warmongering puppet of the U.S. ruling elite, the very image he previously projected in the course of his three-plus decades of service to the governments of the exploiting few.

The independent organization of working people to challenge capitalist rule in all its manifestations today stands at the center of the program of all revolutionary socialist organizations today. Join us!

BY ANN MONTAGUE

President Biden has been signing numerous Executive Orders. But a closer look shows they contain no immediate solutions. Instead they merely refer issues to a governmental body or create a task force for further study. Meanwhile, Trump's reactionary policies remain in force.

A March 15 *New York Times* article entitled "Migrant Cascade Worsen Near U.S. Border" was explicit:

"Over the past week, Mexican officials and shelter operators like the International Organization of Migration said they had been surprised by the Department of Homeland Security's new practice of detaining migrants at one point of the sprawling border only to fly them hundreds of miles away to be expelled at a different border town."

The Times continued: "The United States is doing this under a federal order known as Title 42. The order, introduced by Trump but embraced by Biden, justifies rapid expulsions as a health measure amid the pandemic."

Times reporter Maria Abi-Habib disagreed stating. "But cramming migrants into airplanes and overcrowded detention facilities without any coronavirus testing defeats the purpose of [Trump's] Title 42, observers say."

Abi-Habib added, "Stephanie Malin, a spokeswoman for Customs and Border Protection, said that the American authorities had seen 'an increase in encounters' but that to adhere to [Trump's] federal guidelines for Covid-19, border officials were 'expeditiously' transferring migrants out of their custody," that is far away from the Mexican border.

Similarly, the Biden administration has made little or no progress regarding the separation of children from their parents with thousands of terrified children remaining in squalid U.S. detention centers.

Government action needed

U.S. immigration rights activists continue to demand immediate government action on this most critical issues as well as the closure of the private prisons used by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Biden's promises for "review and planning" notwithstanding, hundreds are deported daily, in continuity with the egregious practices of Trump and Obama before him.

Aura Bogado from the Center For Investigative Reporting, notes that President Biden has called only for a "Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Task Force" on family separation. She points out, "This is the same agency that separated children from their parents in the first place. Now they are the ones tasked with figuring out where these families are when they never had a reunifica-

End the Deportations! Reunite Families!



tion plan in the first place? Biden campaigned on opposing family separations. The idea that we need a task force, when Biden has the House and the Senate rings hollow to a lot of people. If you compare Obama and Trump just on the numbers alone, one President deported far more than the other, and that was Obama [who deported three million immigrants, Editor]. So we will see what Biden does."

Erika Pinheiro the Litigation Director of Al Otro Lado is assisting families on both sides of the border. She responds to media statements that there are 600 families who are separated. "There are well-over 600 if you count children who have been put in foster care and parents who were forcibly deported. There could easily be over a thousand families. I was disappointed to see that the task force has 120 days until their first report. That is four months of study! We are in touch with families now! They have been vetted; they are ready to return. We have no indication that they will bring back the families who were deported without their children."

There is great concern among those already working to reunite families that the Task Force is more than a delay; it is just political posturing.

Bogado also points out that the Executive Order to end all new contracts with for-profit private prison companies applies only to the Department of Justice not ICE.

Operation Streamline

Immigration detention should never mean imprisonment because it was technically never a crime. Immigrants were being held on civil charges. But in 2005, through a joint initiative of the DHS and Department of Justice, a program called Operation Streamline was formed.

This set up fast tracked immigration offenses by providing for mass proceedings against unlawful border crossings.

As many as 80 persons were tried together, generally pleading guilty en masse. The first entry was a misdemeanor punished by six months in prison. Reentry became a felony punished by up to 20 years. Prior to Operation Streamline they would have been returned to their home country unless they had committed a felony. Today they are among the ever-increasing U.S. mass incarcerated population of 2.2 million people – the largest number and percentage of the population in the world!

The Tucson, Arizona-based immigrant

rights organization, Derechos Humanos, has for years encouraged supporters to sit in courtrooms en masse to observe Operation Streamline's inhumane processing of immigrants, often among Latin America's most poor and oppressed and all essentially victims of U.S. imperialism's neo-colonial policies that foster underdevelopment, poverty and exploitation.

These "legal" courtroom proceedings are indeed shocking to observe. Large groups of men, 80-90 at a time, are shackled to each other to appear before a judge without a lawyer or due process after having been compelled to sign "plea bargain" agreements presented to them in English prior to walking into the courtroom.

They are then convicted, officially designated as persons with a U.S. prison record, sentenced and quickly ushered to private prisons. Operation Streamline and the criminalization of immigrants has made record profits for corporations like the GEO Group and Corrections Corporation of America.

Without doubt no Biden executive order will end either Operation Streamline, the criminalization of immigrants, or the private prison system.

Call to action

More than 160 immigration and criminal justice groups across the country are calling for an end to Operation Streamline, mass sentencing and for a suspension of unauthorized entry and reentry prosecution.

They demand the termination of DHS contracts with private prisons. Ten of thousands of activists have protested the inhumane treatment of immigrants over the last four years. They increasingly understand that yet another government "task force" to study the "problem" is no remedy at all. The capitalist system requires cheap labor, immigrant labor, prison labor and non-union labor to survive and prosper.

Immigrants and the poor are tragically among those most likely to be infected with the COVID-19 virus, to be without health care, to be forced back to work with the least protection and to be constantly at the mercy of racist police and the spectrum of border police, ICE and Homeland Security officials who exist to keep them compliant, passive and subordinate.

The vast anti-racist and democratic rights protests of last summer inform us that major fightback struggles are on the agenda today.

Join the fight for immigrant rights!

End all deportations!

No human being is illegal!

Reunite families!

End Operation Streamline!

Abolish ICE!

Close all private profit prisons!

Open the borders! Empty the prisons filled with capitalism's victims!

Join us!

...Haiti

(continued from page 10)

anti-imperialist and certainly not revolutionary. Despite vague populist statements from the PPD, they are all capitalist parties.

Haiti still awaits the building of a revolutionary socialist party of working class fighters. Such a party would join in the day-to-day struggles of the Haitian masses, but with the understanding that the misery in Haiti will not end without a revolutionary transformation of Haitian society.

Biden's racist Haitian deportations

In campaign speeches, Biden promised a 100-day moratorium on deportations, a promise cynically made in Miami's Little Haiti community.

This promise, as with most of Biden's campaign pledges, turned out to be yet another lie as Biden has followed Trump's use of a Title 42 federal order that justifies

rapid deportations as a health measure amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

ICE knows exactly what deportees to Haiti face. *Buzz Feed* reporter Hamed Aleaziz, (March 3), revealed that Department of Homeland Security internal documents acknowledge that deported Haitians "may face harm" due to violent crime and political instability.

In a March 16 dispatch, Steve Forester, Immigration Policy Coordinator for the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, wrote, "Today's flight (the 20th to Haiti since Feb. 1, with four last week expelling hundreds, including scores of children) is to a nation where Administration officials acknowledge that deportees 'may face harm.'"

Forester refers to editorials in *The Miami Herald*, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* calling for stopping the deportations, and urging that Haiti's TPS (Temporary Protective Status) be maintained so that proposed expulsions will be immediately terminated.

Forester asserts, "These Haiti expulsions of virtually anyone who crosses the (Mexican) border seem to be the very intentional Biden-team policy, not rogue ICE behavior."

Racist expulsions

The expulsions are blatantly racist, a continuation of the historic double standard in U.S. immigration policy toward Haitians, in particular, in comparison to the *carte blanche* asylum received over decades by the mostly white, anti-communist, Cuban so-called "refugees."

The racist deportation policy continues to this day for Haitians fleeing the most brutal of U.S.-backed dictatorships.

In a statement released Feb. 9, the organization Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees, said, "We are outraged by the discriminatory deportations that continue to be carried out by ICE in the midst of this global coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic and while there is a serious political crisis in Haiti, and a surge in kidnapping terrorism by government-backed gangs. In the

same week that President Biden signed an executive order to launch a task force to reunite families separated by the Trump administration, this administration is deporting Haitians, including children and infants, in record numbers."

In stark contrast, on March 8, 2021, the Biden Administration announced that it would designate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to eligible Venezuelans in the United States. This could allow over 320,000 Venezuelans to remain in the United States with legal standing. Once granted, their TPS status would last for up to 18 months.

Clearly, the Biden administration is using Venezuelans in the U.S. as part of its regime change propaganda barrage, massive sanctions and other war moves against Venezuela, all aimed at once again securing that nation's vast oil reserves for future U.S. corporate plunder.

U.S. Hands off Haiti!

U.S. Troops Out Now!

No to All Deportations!

Brewery workers resist concessions

Northern Lights

News and views from Socialist Action Canada

website://socialistaction.ca



BY BARRY WEISLEDER

Call it the growing gap. Actually, *chasm* might be a more apt term to describe the breach between workers' aspirations and what most union leaders are willing to do to fight the concession demands of the boss class. Helping to close

that *chasm* is the Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers' Local 325.

The workers at Molson Coors Beverage Company in the north Etobicoke suburb of Toronto voted 208 to 69 on February 17 to reject the firm's latest demands.

That was after 17 weeks of heated negotiations. No talks have occurred since their lock-out on February 18.

The multinational drink and brewing company, headquartered in Chicago, was formed in 2005 through the merger of Molson of Canada, and Coors of the United States. In 2016, Molson Coors acquired the full global brand portfolio of Miller Brewing Company for approximately US\$12 billion. The agreement made Molson Coors the world's third largest brewer at the time.

What do the owners want from workers at their profitable Toronto complex?

They want to entrench a two-tier wage structure that was introduced in 2010. It caps new hires at 84 per cent of the previous wage scale. Employees with up to ten years' experience would continue to be paid 16 percent less for doing the same work.

In addition, the company aims to transfer all but the most senior employees from a defined-benefit pension plan to a defined-contribution plan, which puts pensions at the mercy of the stock market.

On top of that, the bosses want Molson

workers to accept a health destroying, family wrecking job schedule of 12-hour days, three days a week, just to avoid paying 8-hours a day workers for overtime.

Because they said NO to this infernal set of concession demands, the courageous workers at CUBGW Local 325 were locked out.

Instead of brewing beer they are burning wood in barrels on the picketline, trying to keep warm 24-7.

At a time when growing numbers of young workers strive for anti-capitalist change, but wonder where is the union leadership so sorely needed, the brewery workers offer an inspiring example. They are fighting concessions, rooted in the capitalist agenda where the bottom line is profit maximization.

For this example of working class resistance to flourish, it is crucial that labour activists make a priority of solidarity with the locked-out Molson Coors workers.

Small victories can lead to bigger ones when unions take the path of putting the *movement* back into the labour movement. ■

Hardly a week passes without another scandal that tears the lid off rampant sexism and racism in the Canadian military and police forces.

The latest episode involves allegations of sexual misconduct by two former chiefs of staff. General Jonathan Vance is accused of inappropriate behaviour involving a woman he outranked. Admiral Art McDonald stepped aside as top commander only five weeks after taking over from Vance.

McDonald is now under investigation over allegations that CBC News say concern his conduct in 2010 toward a female junior officer.

This is nothing new. In 2015, former Supreme Court of Canada Justice Marie Deschamps produced a scathing report that concluded sexual misconduct is "endemic" in the armed forces and that leadership has long tolerated abuse.

Deschamps recommended that Ottawa "Create an independent center for accountability for sexual assault and harassment," independent of the armed forces, that would receive allegations of misconduct and coordinate action against it.

The report gathered dust, while top military leaders, including Vance and McDonald, ran top-down campaigns such as "Operation Honour", supposedly to counter abuse.

It gets worse. According to Global News, Lt.-Cmdr. Raymond Trotter, who reportedly flagged a claim of misconduct against McDonald, received two threatening phone calls that warned him against co-operating with the House of Commons Defense Committee's investigation, and that his military career would be over if he did.

Global reported that the calls came from blocked numbers, one from a person claiming to be a military officer and the other from someone who identified themselves as "a senior member of the Canadian government."

The Conservative Party cited this as "more evidence that Justin Trudeau and his Liberal government have gone to great lengths to coverup allegations of sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces."

The opposition parties, including the labour-based New Democrats, and the pro-Liberal Toronto Star, call for

Canadian military and cops — rife with racism and sexism



an independent body to root out abuse.

Independent of what? Independent of the capitalist state and the corporate elite, or just their military arm?

Socialists fully support the demand for justice by women and all victims of oppression under the present system. That includes BIPOC folks and LGBTQI people killed by soldiers and cops, at home and abroad. Remember what Canadian forces and police did in Afghanistan, Sudan, Libya and Haiti.

Remember how the RCMP failed to investigate hundreds of cases of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls on B.C.'s notorious Highway of Tears. Or how the Mounties invaded unceded Wet'suwet'en territory and arrested Indigenous pipeline opponents. Or how the federal cops watched as racists in

Nova Scotia assaulted Mi'kmaq fishers and burned their lobster catch and storage huts.

In November 2020, another retired Supreme Court judge, Michel Bastarache, handed federal Public Safety Minister Bill Blair a devastating report about the state of affairs within the RCMP.

"One of the key findings of this report", Bastarache noted, "is that the culture of the RCMP is toxic and tolerates misogynistic and homophobic attitudes among its leaders and members."

Should anyone be surprised that the state recruits members in its own colonial, bigoted and authoritarian image?

And don't forget how Toronto police watched from inside her apartment, as 29-year-old Regis Korchinski-Paquet, an

Indigenous, Black woman, plunged to her death from a 24th floor High Park balcony. Just west of Toronto, Peel police killed a number of people of colour in 2020, some experiencing mental health issues. Sadly, in cities and towns across Canada there are many more examples of this horrific pattern of misconduct.

The struggle continues... against a problem that is clearly systemic in nature. Socialists recognize that the military and the police *may not soon be abolished*. But demands for justice, demands for restitution, and calls for defunding the police and the military should be advanced, and should be linked inseparably to a vision of revolutionary working class rule where sexism and racism no longer have a material basis in social inequality. —B.W..

SOCIALIST ACTION

BY MARTY GOODMAN

For many weeks thousands of Haitians marched through the capital, Port-au-Prince, and other cities across the country to demand that the de facto President Jovenel Moïse and his corrupt crony capitalist blood-stained oligarchy step down.

A relentless, arrogant U.S. imperialism is putting its money – once again – on this Haitian dictator who came to power in a 2015 election so fraudulent that it had to be done over.

Moïse refused to step down on Feb. 7, 2021 as required by Article 134.2 of the 1987 Haitian Constitution mandating that presidents must leave office on Feb. 7 after five years in office.

Typical placards at the February protests read, “U.S., UN and OAS: Hands Off Haiti” and “Haiti Can’t Breathe” and many other slogans that rejected U.S. imperialism and Haiti’s ruling elite.

On Feb. 1 and 2 a general strike called by trade unions and supported by a diverse range of opposition organizations paralyzed Haiti. The giant weekly demonstrations that followed were met with clubs, tear gas and bullets wielded by Haitian soldiers trained by the U.S.–remnants of decades of U.S./UN occupation.

Protests met with mass repression

Human rights attorney Mario Joseph, who heads the International Lawyers Office spoke out against the police repression in a Jan. 27 press conference. “The corrupt PHTK [Haitian Bald Headed Party] government has weaponized the PNH [Haitian National Police] to use bullets, tear gas, physical aggression, arbitrary arrests, and imprisonment to crush popular protests,” (Haiti Liberte, 2/3/21)

The giant anti-Moïse mobilizations were initiated by capitalist opposition forces but have taken on a popular character. Anger has been focused on Moïse but also on the generalized corruption, inequality and dire poverty that has been Haiti’s fate under the thumb of U.S. imperialism for more than a century.

To this day, Haiti remains among the poorest nations on earth with a U.S.-dominated economy replete with near slave wage sweat shop factories enforced by systematic repression. Seventy percent of the working age population is unemployed; inflation stands at 23.4 percent; food insecurity affects more than 4 million out of a population of 11 million.

Dozens of civic organizations, attorneys and judges, trade unions, peasant groups, and student organizations insist that the de facto president must leave office as per Haiti’s constitutional requirements.

Moïse, who ran as the candidate of the rightist PHTK says he will not step down until Feb. 7, 2022, citing the year he spent as Haiti’s “transitional” president does not count as part of his current term. During that transitional year he organized a re-run of the fraudulent election that he “won” in 2015. With a mere 18 percent of the re-run vote in 2016 he took office on Feb. 7, 2017.

The Haitian Constitution, however, does not agree with Moïse’s math.

Moïse was the hand-picked favorite of the previous Haitian president Michel Martelly, 2011-2016. Martelly, who told the world “Haiti is opened for business,” had his first election campaign boosted through the active imperialist intervention of President Barack Obama’s Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton.

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton, then the U.S. earthquake relief representative in Haiti in 2010, oversaw a multi-billion dollar “aid” program mired in scandal, corruption, mismanagement and racist arrogance.

Of the \$billions contributed from nations and relief organizations around the world, little went to the Haitian people not to mention to rebuild the virtually leveled Haitian capital. With approximately 3 million people affected, the 7.0 earthquake was the



Valerie Baeriswyl/AFP via Getty Images

Thousands of Haitians protest against U.S./UN boot



most devastating natural disaster ever experienced in Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and among the poorest in the world. Roughly 250,000 lives were lost. 300,000 were injured and 1.5 million forced to live for years in makeshift camps devoid of water, electricity and basic social services.

The Clinton’s pressure on Haitian election officials “persuaded” them to promote Martelly’s run-off campaign, enabling this mob-linked candidate to win. The insidious role of the Clintons, which included pressuring legislators to keep down Haiti’s minimum wage, was revealed by Wikileaks founder, Julian Assange.

Striking back at his critics, Moïse has threatened to impose his own constitutional amendment, itself an unconstitutional act. His proposal would essentially give him control of Haiti’s parliament and its electoral council, while granting him direct control over the army, which would in turn be granted immunity from prosecution over its heinous deeds, past and present.

Will parliament block Moïse? Not a chance since there are only ten remaining elected officials in the entire country! Moïse has already dismissed the entire parliament, as well as local mayors. He has dissolved the Supreme Court and arrested its top justices!

Biden continues Trump’s Haiti policies

Despite the generalized Haitian outrage at Moïse’s dictatorial proclamations, the despot has received the unconditional support of U.S. imperialism, with the Biden administration continuing Trump’s and Obama’s policies without missing a beat. A Biden

spokesperson made this clear at a Feb. 5 U.S. State Department press conference on Haiti stated, “In accordance with the OAS position on the need to proceed with the democratic transfer of executive power, a new elected president should succeed President Moïse when his term ends on February 7, 2022.”

In addition, the Biden administration has not criticized Moïse’s “referendum” that would essentially establish Haiti as a one-person dictatorship. Similarly, U.N. representatives, referring to their still occupying forces, have indicated that they will assist Moïse in conducting the “referendum.”

And the same with the U.S.-compliant Organization of American States (OAS) that hustles Latin American votes for Washington including casting critical votes condemning Venezuela, despite Venezuela’s granting Haiti \$4 billion in petroleum credits to aid its poor. An official Haitian audit revealed that vast amounts of donated relief funds were pilfered by Moïse and his associates before he assumed the presidency.

Amy Wilentz, a contributing editor at *The Nation* magazine and a longtime Haiti observer, wrote that the director of the UN’s Mission for Justice Support in Haiti and a U.S. diplomat, Helen Meagher La Lime, is seen by Haitian protesters as “a symbol of UN support for Moïse.” Wilentz wrote that Meagher La Lime, “...continued the UN’s almost unstinting support of Moïse.” She added, “Meanwhile, we have Joe Biden continuing Trump’s support of Moïse – a real slap in the face to the Haitian Americans who voted for him with high hopes.” (*The Nation*, 3/1/21)

After several U.S. Senate and House

members urged the State Department to reject Moïse, a Biden spokesperson stated on Feb. 8, “The situation remains murky.” A State Department spokesperson claimed on Feb. 12, that there was a “remarkable lack of popular response to calls for mass protests in recent weeks.”

Moïse’s mass murder and repression

The day after Moïse was supposed to step down, he awarded his sweatshop millionaire pal, Andy Apaid, a large plot of land to help produce Cola-Cola, ceding to Apaid about 8,600 hectares (over 21,000 acres) of farmland in the departments of Artibonite and Central Plateau.

Haiti Liberte reported on Feb. 17 that “In a country where nearly 40 percent of the population suffers from food shortages, this large tract of land would be used to produce stevia as a sweetener for the benefit of the multinational Coca Cola.”

Jacqueline Charles, a Haitian reporter for the *Miami Herald*, reported on Jan. 14 some of the grizzly details of Moïse’s rule: “Between 2018 and 2020, at least 10 massacres have been perpetrated in Port-au-Prince, the most dangerous city in the country, resulting in the murder of 343 people, the disappearance of 98 others, and the gang rape of 32 women. Two hundred and fifty-one children have been orphaned because of these bloody events.”

In just one incident in 2018 in La Saline, Charles reported, after conducting extensive interviews, that “government-allied gangs killed at least 70 people to retaliate against anti-government organizing in the neighborhood.”

The “Opposition”

The New York City-based *Haiti Liberte*’s Feb. 3 issue reported, “Two principal wings of Haiti’s constantly uniting and the fracturing opposition – the Political Direction of the Democratic Opposition (DIRPOD) and the Dessalines Children Platform (PPD) of former Sen. Moïse Jean-Charles – along with a smaller, newer coalition known as the National Front for Democracy (FND), announced the Terrace Garden Final Accord, which created the National Commission for the Establishment of the Transition (CNT).”

An outlier in recent years, the Lavalas Family party of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, did not sign the accord.” None of these “opposition” groups signal that they will oppose any aspect of capitalist rule. None are democratic workers formations; none are consistently

(continued on page 8)