

Unionize Amazon With Class Struggle!

- Karla Ann Cote / Nur Photos

Joshua Lott / Washington Post

and menaced the city that night, working in tandem with Kenosha police, looking to terrorize and shoot anti-racist protesters. Yet all sides in this deadly farce – defense, judge and prosecution – bought the

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The “Voice of the Voiceless” Held 40 Years in Pennsylvania’s Racist Dungeons Mobilize Labor/Black Power to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal

On December 11, a demonstration in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania marked the 40th anniversary of the imprisonment of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the U.S.’ most prominent class-war prisoner. He was sentenced to death in a rigged trial on the trumped-up charge of murdering a cop. Mumia is innocent – it is the capitalist “justice” system that is guilty, of throwing him and countless other innocent black and oppressed people into the labyrinth of racist dungeons.

A contingent of two dozen supporters of the Internationalist Group/Revolutionary Internationalist Youth participated prominently in the protest. Our signs called for workers action to free Mumia and all class-war prisoners, notably former Black Panthers who have been behind bars for more than half a century.

Yet our contingent was almost half of the march. The failure of the left to mobilize for this anniversary of Mumia’s 1981 imprisonment is another expression of the “Biden effect” on the U.S. left. In their eagerness to repudiate the racist, misogynist, xenophobic Republican Donald Trump, the large majority of the left either voted for Democrat Joe Biden, or called to install him in the White House in the event of Trump resistance. In contrast, the large

IG banner calling to “Free Muma Abu-Jamal!” proclaimed: “Democrats, Republicans – Racist Legal Lynchers.”

In 2020, following the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis, Minnesota cop, millions took to the streets across the country to protest racist police terror. But with Biden in office, in 2021, as police have continued to kill civilians at the same rate as in 2020, there have been virtually no mass protests.

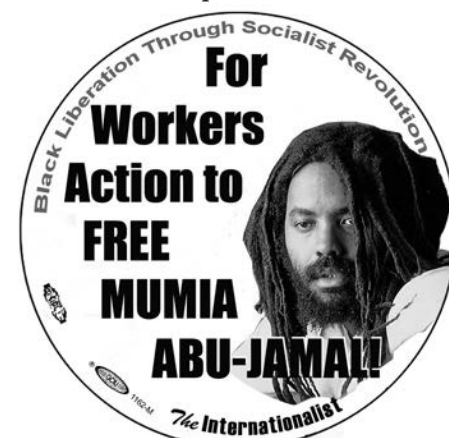
In brief remarks at the end of the event, comrade Gordon of the IG stressed the importance of workers mobilizations to free Mumia in which the League for the Fourth International has played a leading role. In April 1999 school teachers in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, stopped work for Mumia, and the next day longshoremen shut down the U.S. West Coast demanding his release.

He also highlighted the call for Mumia’s freedom by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, the largest union on the entire African continent. **A forum has been announced for 1 February 2022 calling for international workers action to “Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and All Anti-Racist and Anti-Imperialist Freedom Fighters!” For more information, contact InternationalWorkersAction@gmail.com.**

The latest development in Mumia’s endless battle in the racist judicial system was an October 26 ruling by the Pennsylvania Superior Court quashing Mumia’s fifth appeal in 40 years. Philadelphia judge Leon Tucker in December 2018 granted Mumia’s petition for more appeal rights. But district attorney Larry Krasner, who was elected with the support Democratic “progressives” and pseudo-socialists (including the DSA and Socialist Alternative) appealed Tucker’s ruling.

This shows once again that through decades of prosecution and persecution, for former Black Panther Abu-Jamal, as for so many others, there is *no justice in the capitalist courts*. Despite his innocence and no matter what the law states, there is always a “Mumia exception.” While supporting using any legal opening, the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth Inter-

national look not to a new trial but call to ***mobilize labor/black power to free Mumia and all class-war prisoners.*** ■



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British Court Reversal – Imminent Danger of Extradition to U.S.

Julian Assange Is a Hero – Stop Extradition, Free Him Now!

On December 10, a British appeals court ruled that Julian Assange can be extradited to the United States, where he could face up to 175 years in prison on outrageous charges under the Espionage Act. His “crime”: exposing U.S. mass murder in Afghanistan and Iraq. The judges reversed a January 2021 decision by a district court that Assange not be extradited because of substantial risk of suicide given the prospect of life imprisonment in a maximum-security prison or solitary confinement.¹

Both Republican president Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden have pursued Assange with a vengeance, seeking to put a stop to revelations of the deadly secrets of U.S. imperialism. The British court’s reversal came just two days after U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken announced at a State Department virtual “Summit for Democracy” the U.S.’ supposed commitment to protecting independent journalism!

Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, heroically exposed heinous war crimes by U.S. imperialism and the “dirty tricks” of its spy agencies. In October 2010, WikiLeaks published a series of leaks provided by whistleblower Chelsea Manning, a U.S. Army intelligence analyst. These included the infamous Baghdad airstrike murder of civilians² and the Iraq war logs. The imperialist judicial persecution of Assange began immediately, first from Sweden, which sought to extradite him to testify on bogus sexual assault allegations, and since 2018 on U.S. spy charges.

After Trump on his last day in office appealed the British district court ruling against extradition of Assange, a commission of civil liberties and rights groups

wrote: “The indictment threatens press freedom because much of the conduct described in the indictment is conduct that journalists engage in routinely – and that they must engage in in order to do the work the public needs them to do.” The *New York Times* and London *Guardian* noted that they use the same methods in garnering information about government cover-ups, and have published information ferreted out by WikiLeaks.

The infamous 1917 Espionage Act has also been used to charge socialist Eugene Debs, imprisoned for his opposition to the imperialist World War I, and Edward Snowden, for exposing the National Security Agency’s massive warrantless domestic surveillance program that a U.S. federal appeals court ruled in 2020 was illegal and probably unconstitutional.

Now the *New York Times* (18 December) has begun publishing a series, “The Civilian Casualty Files – Hidden Pentagon Records Reveal Patterns of Failure in Deadly Airstrikes.” The articles are based on a trove of Pentagon documents showing more than 1,300 civilian deaths in Iraq, both under Obama and Trump, in “a war of all-seeing drones and precision bombs.” But this mouthpiece of U.S. imperialism – which covered up preparations for the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba and peddled the Big Lie of Iraqi “weapons of mass destruction” – can publish what for Assange has meant a decade of persecution and for which he faces a lifetime of torture, imprisonment and despair.

If an appeal to Britain’s Supreme Court of the High Court’s decision is turned down, extradition of Assange could come as early as January.

The Internationalist Group says: *Assange, Manning and Snowden are heroes for exposing the crimes of imperialism. Stop extradition – Free Julian Assange!* ■

¹ See “Free Julian Assange – No Extradition, U.S. Hands Off Edward Snowden!” *The Internationalist* No. 62, January-March 2021.

² *Collateral Murder* video, (April 2010).



Internationalist contingent at December 11 protest in Philadelphia marking 40 years of imprisonment of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

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for the Reforging of the Fourth International**

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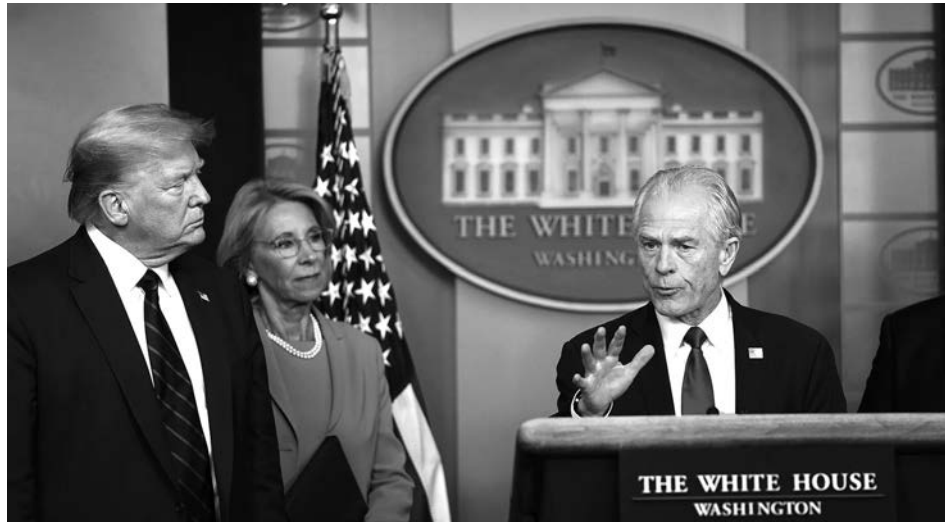
Not Just a Conspiracy Theory, an Anti-Communist Battle Cry U.S. Big Lie Over Wuhan Is War Propaganda

For the past two years, all factions of the U.S. ruling class, backed by the bourgeois media and a number of bellicose scientists, have unleashed a propaganda barrage scapegoating China for the pandemic of COVID-19 caused by the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. This is not limited to the “Wuhan lab leak” conspiracy theory, which started out as a far-right fixation, went viral with Republican Donald Trump’s rambling campaign rants, was picked up by unreconstructed Cold Warriors in the new Democratic administration and the liberal media, and then received the presidential imprimatur of Joe Biden. A soft-core strain of the campaign is to accuse Beijing of grossly mishandling the outbreak of the disease and worse, covering up their bungling with police state repression. Now we have the latest variant, accusing China of overreacting with its “zero COVID infections” policies. From start to finish, it’s one Big Lie, with a sinister purpose.

A transparent aim of this virulent China-bashing is to shift responsibility for the deadly outcome of the disease. Rather than (correctly) blaming the capitalist world, whose utterly calamitous actions and inaction turned an epidemic into a pandemic in which well over 5 million people have died from this modern plague, they want to pin it on China, which effectively and spectacularly confined the spread of the virus with a toll of less than 5,000 dead. A second aim is to whip up anti-communism against China, in order to divert attention from the irrefutable fact that it was the socialized and centrally planned economy that enabled the (bureaucratically deformed) workers state to marshal vast resources to contain the epidemic in short order and then re-open safely. Most importantly, the salvos of propaganda heavy artillery are part of the anti-China war drive, aimed at softening up public opinion and providing a *casus belli* or excuse for imperialist military attack, whether in the South China Sea, the Taiwan Straits or elsewhere.

The “blame China for COVID” gambit is a bipartisan psychological warfare operation, enlisting the feuding Democratic and Republican parties of U.S. imperialism, both liberal and conservative media and the patriotic algorithm managers of social media. After previously wiping “Wuhan lab leak” posts, Facebook did an about-face last May, following Biden’s marching orders, and platformed the conspiracy mongers, “updat[ing] our policies as new facts and trends emerge.”¹ It recalls the all-sided scaremongering campaign over Saddam Hussein’s phantom “weapons of mass destruction,” which served as the prologue to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. No facts needed, and where actual facts contradict the story line, they are buried under a mountain of fake news. Whether in Trump’s crudely racist vituperation against

¹ “Facebook lifts ban on posts claiming Covid-19 was man-made,” [London] *Guardian*, 27 May 2021.



White House briefing on coronavirus, 27 March 2020. Donald Trump spread racist lie of “China virus,” trade advisor Peter Navarro declared that “This is a war ... that China started.” False. China contained the virus, U.S. spread it.

the “kung flu” or the *New York Times*’ more sophisticated version, the Sinophobic psy-op continues unabated.

Trump’s White House trade advisor Peter Navarro laid out the story line early on – after blaming China for shutting down Midwest industry, rising suicide rates, opioid addiction, divorces and child poverty in the U.S.: “This is a war. It’s a war that China started by spawning the virus, by hiding the virus, by hoarding personal protective equipment during the time it hid the virus.”² What’s behind this blatant war-mongering? For starters, there is the imperialist rulers’ efforts to obscure their thousand times worse handling of the pandemic, compared to China’s remarkable success in combating it. But most fundamentally, it’s part of escalating Washington’s decades-old effort to reverse the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution.

The overthrow of capitalist rule in the most populous country of the world established a workers state based on collectivized property, which brought enormous gains for workers, women and oppressed peoples in China. Since the revolution,

² Real Clear News, 25 April 2020.

average life expectancy has risen from 35 years in 1949 to 77 in 2018. It was the socialized core of China’s economy that enabled it to dramatically raise living standards while the capitalist world was mired in depression after 2008. And it was a planned economy not driven by profit that made possible China’s rapid and effective response to the outbreak of COVID-19. But its potential to be the basis leading to a genuinely socialist society has been grievously undercut by a narrow, nationalist bureaucracy.

Meanwhile, three decades after capitalist counterrevolution destroyed the USSR, for the rulers of U.S. imperialism the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state looms as an increasingly worrisome obstacle to their world domination. As we have underscored, the destruction of this obstacle has become ever more central in U.S. war preparations and propaganda.³ Against the imperialist onslaught, the Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International call to *defeat the U.S. drive for counterrevolution in Chi-*

³ See “Biden Escalates Anti-China War Plans,” *The Internationalist* No. 64, July-September 2021.



Doctors conferring in Wuhan shopping center converted into an emergency hospital, 17 February 2020. U.S. did not isolate non-critical cases.

na, and for real communist leadership to defend and extend the revolutionary gains under attack from without and imperiled from within.

The COVID Blame Game

In this ongoing “blame China for COVID” campaign, the centerpiece has been the claim that the virus originated, or could have originated, in a Chinese lab from which it escaped. It must be said at the outset that *never has any evidence been proffered that this actually happened*. It is all conjecture, and this “theory” has been political from the start. The first version came in a tweet by a self-described “British-HongKonger” on 6 January 2020 declaring, “Today the evil regime strikes again with a new virus,” with the hashtag “#bioweapon.”⁴ The story line was then picked up by an article in the arch-anti-communist *Washington Times* (26 January 2020), “Coronavirus link to China biowarfare program possible, analyst says.”⁵ The analyst, one Danny Shoham, is “a former Israeli military intelligence officer,” while the article’s author, Bill Gertz, is a long-time China-basher closely connected to the Washington defense/intelligence establishment.⁶

Early on the lab leak flimflam was embraced almost exclusively on the far right, championed in particular by Arkansas senator Tom Cotton, who has become the No. 1 Congressional anti-China hawk over the coronavirus. Trump picked it up and pushed it on the campaign trail in the spring of 2020, while his secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, declared that “there is significant evidence that this came from the laboratory” (AFP, 8 May 2020). No evidence was provided. In contrast, the liberal *Washington Post* (29 January 2020) headlined, “Experts debunk fringe theory linking China’s coronavirus to weapons research,” while the *New York Times* (2 May 2020) wrote that intelligence “agency

⁴ The author is a Hong Kong independence fanatic who cheered the anti-China riots that took place the year before. See our articles “Hong Kong: Defeat Pro-Imperialist Riots With Revolutionary Workers Mobilization,” *The Internationalist* No. 57, September-October 2019; and “Hong Kong ‘Democracy’ Riots: Pro-Imperialist, Anti-Communist, Fascist-Infested,” along with “Washington’s Hand Behind Anti-China Riots in Hong Kong,” *The Internationalist* No. 58, Winter 2020.

⁵ The *Washington Times* was launched by the Unification Church of would-be messiah Sun Myung Moon and South Korean Lt. Col. Bo Hi Pak as an “ideological” outlet to “combat communism.” The “Moonies” were closely tied to the administration of Ronald Reagan and used as a conduit by the (South) Korean Central Intelligence Agency.

⁶ Shoham now writes “lab leak” propaganda for the right-wing Zionist Begin-Sadat Center. Gertz is the author of *The China Threat: How the People’s Republic Targets America* (2000) and has lectured at the U.S. Defense Department’s National Security Leadership Program, the FBI National Academy, the National Defense University and the CIA.



Dr. Shi Zhengli in lab of Wuhan Institute of Virology in 2017 when her research tracked down the source of SARS virus in bats. She has continued to lead groundbreaking research in searching for potential sources of deadly coronaviruses, warning of dangers of a pandemic. Now Wuhan lab-leak conspiracy-mongers grotesquely blame her for COVID-19.

analysts have said they most likely will not find proof” of the “unsubstantiated theory” that the coronavirus was the result of a lab leak. Throughout 2020, the Democrats were eager to focus attention on Trump’s disastrous handling of COVID.

All that changed on 20 January 2021, when Joe Biden moved into the White House. As we warned early on, “While Trump has been on-again, off-again in his ‘transactional’ relationship with [Chinese president] Xi and the Beijing regime, the Democrats have positioned themselves as the consistently hardline Cold Warriors against China (and North Korea).”⁷ Democratic president Barack Obama led off with his 2015 call for the U.S. military to “pivot to Asia,” although he only dug himself deeper into the Middle Eastern quagmire with murderous drone strikes and massive indiscriminate bombing of civilians. Two months after Biden took office, his secretary of state, Antony Blinken, set the confrontational tone in a testy exchange with his Chinese counterparts in Anchorage, Alaska where he said going in that he planned to “call out” China, declaring afterwards that on a number of issues, “we are fundamentally at odds.”

Then in late May 2021, just as two Republican senators pushed through a

⁷ “U.S. Response to Coronavirus: China-Bashing and War Moves,” *The Internationalist* No. 59, March-April 2020.

bill to declassify any intelligence about a potential leak from the Wuhan lab, Biden ordered U.S. spy agencies to investigate and issue a report within 90 days on the origins of the coronavirus. Suddenly what was once a discredited fringe conspiracy theory found a new lease on life. The liberal media dutifully followed suit. The *New York Times* (28 May) reported, “Data Remains Unexamined in Inquiry on Virus Origins, Officials Say.” *The Atlantic* (26 May) asked, “If the Lab-Leak Theory Is Right, What’s Next?” And it answered: “We know enough to acknowledge that the scenario is possible, and we should therefore act as though it’s true.” *Vanity Fair* (3 June) chimed in: “The Lab-Leak Theory: Inside the Fight to Uncover COVID-19’s Origins.” Even the “progressive” *Nation* (13 July) and conspiracy-minded radlibs (Intercept) got in on the speculative frenzy.

The vast “lab leak” propaganda campaign is focused on the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), a branch of the state Chinese Academy of Sciences. The Institute, established in 1956, houses China’s first biosafety level 4 (BSL-4) laboratory, the largest of only 59 such highest-security labs in the world, led by Shi Zhengli. In 2005, Dr. Shi identified bats as a natural reservoir for coronaviruses such as those that caused the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) that killed 770 people two years earlier. In 2011, she and a team from



Wuhan Institute of Virology, the premier institution internationally for study of bat coronaviruses and site of the largest BSL-4 laboratory in the world. U.S. imperialists invented bogus “safety concerns” to justify the China-bashing “Wuhan lab-leak” conspiracy theory.



Emergency hygiene vehicle leaving Wuhan Huanan Wholesale Seafood Market where most of the initial cases of infection were reported.

WIV discovered in a cave in Yunnan province, where they found, among hundreds of diverse bat-borne coronaviruses, dozens of strains in the same group as the SARS virus. In 2017, Shi and the WIV became internationally famous for identifying a coronavirus whose genomic sequence was almost 97% identical with that found among civets in Guangdong, where wildlife traders were infected with the SARS virus.⁸

In several scientific papers, Dr. Shi highlighted the danger of diverse bat coronaviruses leading to outbreaks of disease. In 2015 she noted that “The emergence of SARS-CoV heralded a new era in the cross-species transmission of severe respiratory illness with globalization leading to rapid spread around the world and massive economic impact.”⁹ Examples include the 2009-10 H1N1 swine flu pandemic and the 2012 MERS (Middle Eastern respiratory syndrome) epidemic, also attributed to bat coronaviruses. In 2005, Shi warned that given the genetic diversity of zoonotic (animal to human) bat viruses, trade in wildlife was “increasing the possibility of variants crossing the species barrier and causing outbreaks of disease in human populations.”¹⁰

⁸ “How China’s ‘Bat Woman’ Hunted Down Viruses from SARS to the New Coronavirus,” *Scientific American*, 1 June 2020.

⁹ Shi Zhengli, R.S. Baric et al., “A SARS-like cluster of circulating bat coronaviruses shows potential for human emergence,” *Nature Medicine* (December 2015).

¹⁰ Shi Zhengli, et al., “Bats Are Natural Reservoirs of SARS-Like Coronaviruses,” *Science*, 28 October 2005.

In 2018 she reported on research among miners in Szechuan showing that bat coronaviruses “are able to directly infect humans without intermediate hosts.”¹¹

Following the outbreak of what is now called COVID-19, Dr. Shi, as director of the Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases at the WIV, and her team set about sequencing the genome of the novel coronavirus, which they achieved in days, by 7 January 2020. The virus, eventually named SARS-CoV-2, was 96% identical to one that had been identified in bats in Yunnan (RaTG13), as they reported in an article they sent on 20 January 2020 to *Nature* magazine.¹² The article stressed that “broad-spectrum antiviral drugs and vaccines should be prepared for emerging infectious diseases that are caused by this cluster of viruses.” But while Shi and the WIV’s groundbreaking work made possible such rapid analysis of the culprit coronavirus, enabling development of tests and pharmaceutical responses to combat it, soon they were being viciously slandered as supposedly responsible for unleashing the disease by the imperialist criminals whose actions turned the epidemic into a deadly worldwide pandemic.

So let’s go through the claims.

¹¹ Shi Zhengli, et al., “Serological Evidence of Bat SARS-Related Coronavirus Infection in Humans, China,” *Virologica Sinica*, 2 March 2018.

¹² Shi Zhengli et al., “A pneumonia outbreak associated with a new coronavirus of probable bat origin,” *Nature*, 3 February 2020.



After Biden Gives the Green Light



On May 27, Democratic president Joe Biden orders report on COVID origins

The Washington Post

Timeline: How the Wuhan lab-leak theory suddenly became credible

The Intercept

NEW DETAILS EMERGE ABOUT CORONAVIRUS RESEARCH AT CHINESE LAB

VANITY FAIR

The Lab-Leak Theory: Inside the Fight to Uncover COVID-19's Origins

Liberals Sign On to Wuhan Lab-Leak Conspiracy Theory

When Joe Biden ordered spy agencies to investigate baseless “theory” of coronavirus leak from Wuhan lab, liberals saluted and did an about-face.

A Litany of Bogus Claims

The coronavirus originated in Wuhan where the WIV is located. The first and most persistent claim is perhaps the most ridiculous: that the coronavirus “originated in Wuhan, China. 400 meters away from a CCP [Chinese Communist Party] lab studying coronaviruses derived from bats,” as Republican senator Ted Cruz tweeted. Actually, the WIV is located eight miles away and across the Yangtze River from the Wuhan Huanan Wholesale Seafood Market where most of the initial cases of infection were reported. It is hardly surprising that a coronavirus would spill over into the human population in Wuhan, with its population of 12 million people in a province of 60 million, that is one of the most densely populated areas in the world, a major transit hub and a market and supply site for peasants from the hinterland, in a city where 20,000 live wild animals were sold every year in 17 wet markets.¹³ And it is quite logical – in fact, a very good thing – that a lab conducting research on coronaviruses would be located in the region where the original SARS outbreak had occurred.

Secret U.S. intelligence reports sick WIV researchers. Next up: according to a fact sheet published by Mike Pompeo’s State Department and subsequently recycled by Michael Gordon of the *Wall Street Journal*, several researchers from this facility were hospitalized with “flu-like symptoms” in November 2019, just before cases of Covid-19 began surfacing in Wuhan. That proves zero. If there were sick lab workers (the WIV says not; the source is a secret U.S. intelligence report), in the middle of the flu season, maybe they had the flu.

Safety issues? Then we have the charge that the Wuhan labs had “safety issues.” Josh Rogin of the *Washington Post* wrote that he had obtained a State Department cable to that effect.¹⁴ So what are the issues?

- Rogin claimed that a cable “warns that the lab’s work on bat coronaviruses and their potential human transmission represented a risk of a new SARS-like pandemic.” But the cable text says *nothing about unsafe operations*, instead reporting that “productivity is limited by a shortage of the highly trained technicians and investigators.” And far from representing a risk of a

new pandemic, the cable said that “Despite Limitations, WIV Researchers Produce SARS Discoveries,” and that the work of the lab was vital to heading off a new pandemic:

“Most importantly, the researchers also showed that various SARS-like coronaviruses can interact with ACE2, the human receptor identified for SARS-coronavirus. This finding strongly suggests that SARS-like coronaviruses from bats can be transmitted to humans to cause SARS-like disease. From a public health perspective, this makes the continued surveillance of SARS-like corona viruses in bats and study of the animal-human interface critical to future emerging corona virus outbreak prediction and prevention.”

- As for the “talent gap,” the cable reported that the Virology Institute “would welcome more help from U.S. and international organizations” in training technicians. Instead, in late 2019 the Trump administration cut off funding and collaboration with the WIV.

They studied bat viruses didn’t they? Another perverse accusation is that if Shi and the Institute had so quickly identified another bat coronavirus similar to SARS-CoV-2, it must mean that they were studying it, and hence, deliberately or accidentally, the WIV could be the source of the pandemic. Except that in terms of evolutionary time, the 96% match between RaTG13 (the coronavirus previously sequenced by the WIV) and SARS-CoV-2 is quite distant.¹⁵ Dr. Shi herself has said that upon learning of the outbreak, “she frantically went through her own lab’s records from the past few years to check for any mishandling of experimental materials, especially during disposal. Shi breathed a sigh of relief when the results came back: none of the sequences matched those of the viruses her team had sampled from bat caves.”¹⁶ Not one piece of evidence has been put forward contradicting her statement.

Gain of function research? This brings us to a centerpiece of the Wuhan lab leak “narrative,” as the postmodernists like to label Big Lies. Republican

¹⁵ A study last year put the “divergence time” between the two coronaviruses at about 50 years, suggesting they had a common ancestor around 1969: “Evolutionary origins of the SARS-CoV-2 sarbecovirus lineage responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic,” *Nature Microbiology*, 28 July 2020. By way of comparison, the human genome is 96% similar with that of the chimpanzee, the closest ancestor, whose evolutionary path diverged around 6 million years ago.

¹⁶ “How China’s ‘Bat Woman’ Hunted Down Viruses...”

Trumpers and Democratic liberals alike repeat as supposed fact that “Shi and her colleagues at the WIV have performed high-profile experiments that made pathogens more infectious. Such research, known as ‘gain-of-function’ [GOF], has generated heated controversy among virologists,” as *Vanity Fair* wrote.¹⁷ Dr. Shi and the WIV emphatically deny this. Shi wrote in an email response to questions from the *New York Times* that “she did not set out to make a virus more dangerous, but to understand how it might jump across species. ‘My lab has never conducted or cooperated in conducting GOF experiments that enhance the virulence of viruses,’ she said.”¹⁸

In one case, Shi’s research was funded by the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (part of the National Institutes of Health), headed by Dr. Anthony Fauci. *The Intercept* (9 September 2021) headlined that “NIH Documents Provide New Evidence U.S. Funded Gain-of-Function Research in Wuhan.” It claimed this contradicted Fauci’s testimony before Congress last May that “The NIH has not ever and does not now fund gain-of-function research in the Wuhan Institute of Virology.” No contradiction. The grant stipulated that it could not be used for GOF experiments, seven out of eleven scientists working in virology and related fields that *The Intercept* consulted said that the project was not GOF research, and:

“Scientists unanimously told *The Intercept* that the experiment ... could not have directly sparked the pandemic. None of the viruses listed in the write-ups of the experiment are related to the virus that causes Covid-19, SARS-CoV-2, closely enough to have evolved into it.”

This didn’t stop the Wuhan lab leak conspiracy-mongers at *The Intercept*. But despite the bombastic headline, their bombshell was a dud.

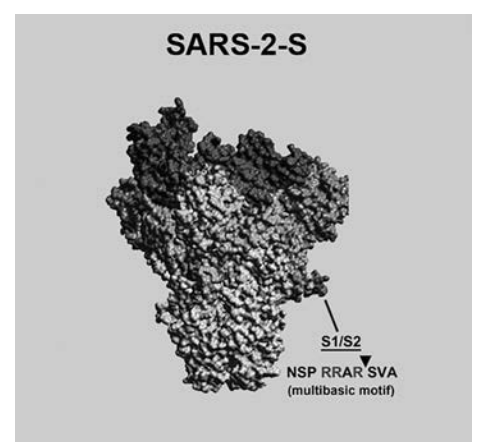
What the WIV research did do was create “chimeras,” that is, combining genetic materials from different viruses present in bats. The purpose was to understand how mutations and recombinations could occur, so that with that knowledge better defenses (drugs, vaccines) could be developed prior to a potential deadly pandemic. In its 2015 report on this work, Shi’s team warned that chimeras, despite useful results, could pose a danger: “the potential to prepare for and mitigate future outbreaks must be weighed against the risk of creating more dangerous pathogens.”¹⁹ In their investigation, they wrote that the creation of a chimeric virus “was not expected to increase pathogenicity.” When it did, they concluded: “On the basis of these findings, scientific review panels may deem similar studies building chimeric viruses based on circulating strains too risky to pursue, as increased pathogenicity in mammalian models cannot be excluded.”

So, again, this is the exact opposite of some group secretly trying to cook up a new biowarfare pathogen, or being ir-

¹⁷ “The Lab-Leak Theory: Inside the Fight to Uncover COVID-19’s Origins,” *Vanity Fair*, 3 June 2021.

¹⁸ “Chinese Scientist Under Pressure As Lab-Leak Theory Flourishes,” *New York Times*, 15 June 2021.

¹⁹ Shi et al., “A SARS-like cluster of circulating bat coronaviruses shows...”



Furin cleavage site (here at S1/S2) occurs naturally in coronaviruses, contrary to conspiracy theorists who claim it was genetically engineered.

responsibly oblivious to the inherent dangers. And, again, no evidence has been presented contradicting Shi’s statement that the WIV never engaged in or cooperated with “gain-of-function” research to increase the toxicity of viruses. Zero.

What about that famous furin cleavage? This refers to the site in the coronavirus’s structure (S1/S2) where the amino acids in the spike protein are located that enable it to cling (cleave) onto the furin enzyme in human cells. This aspect of the virus has made it particularly transmissible, and it is unique among other known strains of the sarbecovirus. Lab-leak propagandists point to the furin cleavage site as proof that the virus must have been genetically engineered – where else? – in the WIV’s lab. Nicholas Wade, a former *Times* science writer, cleaved onto the unique trait as supposed proof of its lab origins.²⁰ And when the GOP staff of the House Foreign Affairs Committee released an addendum to their earlier report on the origins of COVID-19, they identified the furin cleavage site as “evidence of genetic modification.”²¹

So, first of all, as two ShanghaiTech virologists have noted, “furin cleavage sites are widely present in the whole coronavirus family,”²² at the same S1/S2 site, including a strain of alphacoronaviruses that cause the common cold. Also, 14 biologists early on identified a furin cleavage site at S1/S2 in a bat coronavirus (RmYN02) from Yunnan.²³ Second, as evolutionary virologist Stephen Goldstein has explained,²⁴ the normal process of replicating a virus in a lab typically results in the furin cleavage site deleting itself. “You cannot, in a normal cell culture, maintain the furin cleavage site,” he elaborated. Instead of pointing to a grand premeditated design, the famous furin cleavage site is the kind of structure that bears the clear imprint of random chance, of evolutionary contingency.

²⁰ Nicholas Wade, “The origin of COVID: Did people or nature open Pandora’s box at Wuhan?” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 5 May 2021.

²¹ House Foreign Affairs Committee Minority Staff Report, *The Origins of COVID-19: An Investigation of the Wuhan Institute of Virology*, 1 August 2021.

²² Wu Yiran and Zhao Suwen, “Furin cleavage sites naturally occur in coronaviruses,” *Stem Cell Research*, 50, January 2021.

²³ Hong Zhou et al., “A Novel Bat Coronavirus Closely Related to SARS-CoV-2 Contains Natural Insertions at the S1/S2 Cleavage Site of the Spike Protein,” *Current Biology*, 8 June 2020.

²⁴ Justin Ling, “The Lab Leak Theory Doesn’t Hold Up,” *Foreign Policy*, 15 June 2021.

And contrary to Wade's assertion that "the virus has changed hardly at all," in fact, three of the mutations making the Omicron variant of COVID-19 more infectious are right at the furin cleavage site. Will we soon hear claims that the Wuhan Institute of Virology created Omicron as well? The strategy of the Wuhan lab-leak propaganda warriors is to wage an information war of attrition by creating the appearance of controversy. If one lab leak claim doesn't pan out, another can quickly take its place. As a *San Francisco Chronicle* (7 July 2021) editorial noted, this is "not a theory at all by any scientific definition," as "purported genetic evidence of human manipulation keeps emerging and then withering under examination." And as with all conspiracy theories, absence of evidence easily morphs into supposed evidence of the conspiracy itself.

If all else fails, they scream about China's "lack of transparency" and demand an "independent" inspection of the WIV ... by the imperialists who are waging a disinformation war on China now, as part of preparing the way for actual war. They're following a time-tested playbook: propaganda now, guns later.

The Wuhan "Lab-Leak" Conspiracy Goes Mainstream

As we have emphasized, the drive to demonize China is bipartisan, common to both wings of the U.S. bourgeoisie. The mainstreaming of the "Wuhan lab leak" hoax, its conversion from a "fringe theory" to standard "discourse," naturally involved the pliant, "free but responsible" bourgeois press that acts as a mouthpiece for the "national security community." Josh Rogin of the *Washington Post* and Michael Gordon of the *Wall Street Journal* have been the spy agencies' main conduits for the ongoing campaign of selective and misleading leaks. Rogin is an anti-China zealot and Iran-bashing Zionist "neoconservative" known for serially inaccurate reporting. Gordon beat the drums for the U.S.' 2003 invasion of Iraq by co-authoring with Judith Miller the notorious *New York Times* articles claiming Saddam Hussein was seeking materials to build a nuclear weapon. Both traffic in leaks provided them by U.S. "intelligence officials."

Most striking was how the bourgeois press turned on a dime when Biden ordered the intelligence agency review, suddenly discovering that the "lab leak" theory was plausible, even likely. As the *New Yorker* observed, "there was some irony in seeing how quickly these establishment types could swivel."²⁵ A key role was played by Nicholas Wade's essay in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. "For the lab escape scenario, a Wuhan origin for the virus is a no-brainer," he wrote. Brainless would be a better description, as no evidence at all was presented of a leak at the WIV. After baffling his readers with pseudo-scientific BS, he gets down to brass tacks with his real purpose: the blame game. "First and foremost, Chinese virologists are to blame for performing gain-of-function experiments," he writes, in particular Shi Zhengli. Next are "China's central authorities," who supposedly covered up "China's responsibility" for the pandemic.

²⁵ "The Sudden Rise of the Coronavirus Lab-Leak Theory," *New Yorker*, 27 May 2021.

But then Wade adds to the list of culprits "the worldwide community of virologists," who allegedly pushed GOF research in order to rake in government dollars, saying that virologists as a whole "deserve to get regulated by others." He also throws in U.S. funding for the Wuhan Institute of Virology, all based on the evidence-free conjecture of a lab leak, of course. He also has an axe to grind with "science reporters" who "see their role largely as purveying the wisdom of scientists to the unwashed masses." Behind this disdain is an obvious grudge: Wade's book, *A Troublesome Inheritance: Genes, Race and Human History* (2014), was widely denounced by science reporters. A reviewer in *Scientific American* noted how, after Wade claims it is "not automatically racist" to cite racial categories as explanatory, "He then explains why white people are better because of their genes."²⁶ Pseudo-science purveyor Nicholas Wade is a raving racist.²⁷

An important role in the turnabout of liberal opinion was a letter published by *Science* magazine on 14 May 2021 by a number of prominent scientists complaining about the report of the joint mission of China and the World Health Organization (W.H.O.) on COVID-19 and calling for a more intrusive investigation of the Wuhan lab-leak claim. A prominent signer is David Relman of Stanford University, a member of the Intelligence Community Studies Board that, he says, "serves as the convening authority for the discussion of science and technology issues of importance to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence." Another signer is Ralph Baric, a top epidemiologist at the University of North Carolina, who has carried out gain-of-function research to "study the pathogenesis of recombinant viruses" (NIH project details). Baric has also worked with Shi Zhengli in the WIV's research involving chimera viruses, and is clearly trying to duck the incoming salvos of the lab-leak war propaganda.

Along with these well-connected members of the defense/intelligence/university complex, the signers include Yujia Alina Chan, a post-doctoral fellow at the Stanley Center for Psychiatric Research of the Broad Institute of the Massachu-

²⁶ Eric Michael Johnson, "On the Origin of White Power," *Scientific American*, 21 May 2014.

²⁷ In the book, the former *Times* science writer argues, following the German-British Zionist Norbert Elias, that in Europe "between medieval and modern times, a societywide shift has taken place toward greater sensibility and more delicate manners"! Yet 20th century Europe, with tens of millions dead in two world wars, was the site of the bloodiest period in history. This supposed "evolution of European populations" was because "the increasing monopoly of force by the state ... reduced the need for interpersonal violence." In contrast, he explains widespread poverty in Africa may be the result of Africans' "time preference, work ethic and propensity to violence." Wade spews out this repulsive racist garbage with no evidence whatsoever, of course, just as with his justification of the Wuhan lab-leak "theory." It is no accident that neo-Nazis and white supremacists generally have latched on to Wade's book. It's also worth mentioning that among those praising Wade's pseudo-scientific tract on the origins of COVID is his successor as *New York Times* science reporter, David McNeil, Jr., who was fired last February for using racial slurs, as well as remarks disparaging black teenagers.



Shi Zhengli (front row, third from left) and colleagues from the Wuhan Institute of Virology on 15 January 2020, after they had succeeded in sequencing in record speed the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

setts Institute of Technology and Harvard University. Chan has played a key role in pushing the Wuhan lab-leak ploy from the beginning, arguing that the SARS-CoV-2 virus was surprisingly "well adapted for humans," suggesting a genetically engineered origin.²⁸ Chan recently published a book, *Viral: The Search for the Origin of COVID-19* (2021), together with Matt Ridley, a hereditary peer of the British House of Lords and a "science writer" specializing in climate change denial. They rely on material from an amorphous group calling itself D.R.A.S.T.I.C (Decentralized Radical Autonomous Search Team Investigating COVID-19), which they admit "are not the sort of sources authors usually turn to."

Another key Wuhan lab-leak conspiracy-monger is one Nikolai Petrovsky, an Australian endocrinologist sacked from his university for refusing the officially mandated vaccine, who is featured in the COVID potboiler "whodunit" pulp fiction, *What Really Happened in Wuhan?* (2021). At the same time that he has attacked the life-saving mRNA vaccines as "gene therapy," Petrovsky's private company has been trying to cash in on his own vaccine. (He also claims to have developed vaccines against SARS, MERS, Ebola, avian influenza, Japanese encephalitis, Hepatitis B, malaria, rabies and HIV.) He is joined by Yuri Deigin, a Canadian biotech entrepreneur without a scientific degree who co-authored a paper claiming a lab-leak origin was plausible. Deigin is the chief executive officer of Youthereum Genetics, a company developing "epigenetic rejuvenation gene therapy," which he claims extended the lifespan of mice by 50%.

So along with the originators Donald Trump and his coterie (Pompeo, Cotton, and don't forget Steve Bannon) vituperating against a Communist plot to foist COVID on the world, the Wuhan lab-leak "theory" has been taken up by the liberal media, racist journalists and a hodgepodge of government-financed scientists, climate change deniers, shadowy internet sleuths, medical profiteers and merchandisers of quack medicine. Quite a menagerie. Yet this unholy alliance has had an effect. By July 2021, an opinion poll by the liberal Politico news site and the Harvard T.H.

²⁸ Y. A. Chan, "SARS-CoV-2 is well adapted for humans. What does this mean for re-emergence?" bioRxiv, 1 May 2020.

Chan School of Public Health reported that 52% of the U.S. public (including a majority of Democrats) believe that COVID-19 came from a Chinese government laboratory, compared to only 28% who think the deadly disease had a natural origin.²⁹ It is the technique of the Big Lie: the bigger the better, and just keep repeating it.

"How the Wuhan lab-leak theory suddenly became credible," as the *Washington Post* (25 May 2021) "Fact Checker" headlined, is that Democrats and Republicans reflect a bipartisan consensus of the imperialist bourgeoisie to escalate the anti-China war drive. On the basis of no evidence whatsoever, they "weaponized uncertainty" (*Wired*).³⁰ The order of the day was to bring the public to attention. The "mainstream" media saluted, executed an about-face, and set out to regiment the population to march in lockstep behind the new official story.

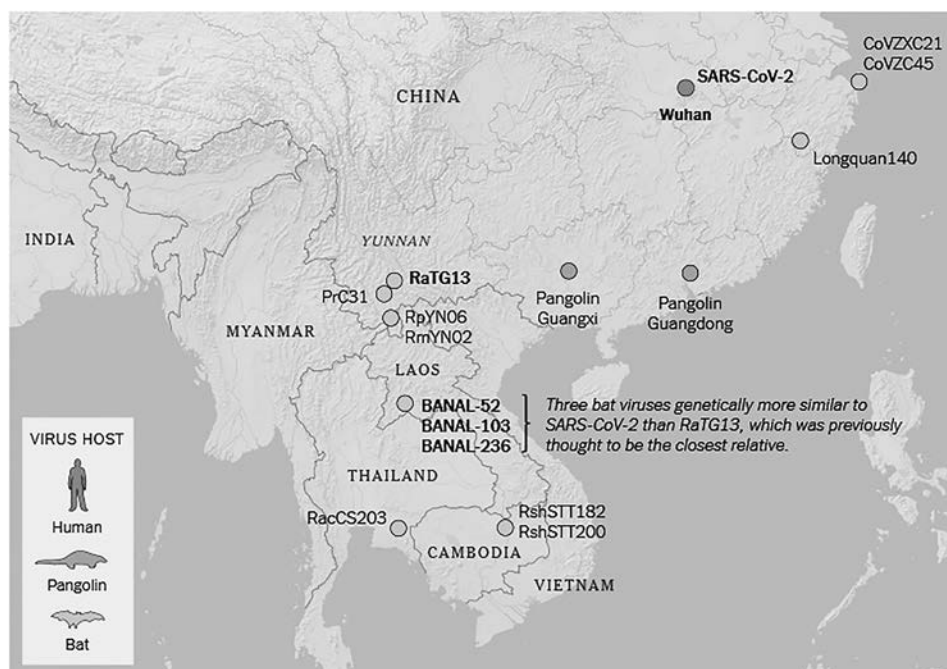
But not all the "scientific community" had been brought to heel. On August 18, a group of 21 prominent virologists, epidemiologists and other bio-medical professionals, including Edward Holmes, Stephen Goldstein, Angela Rasmussen, Michael Worobey,³¹ Kristian Andersen and Robert Garry, issued an assessment, "The Origins of SARS-CoV-2: A Critical Review," stating:

"There is currently no evidence that SARS-CoV-2 has a laboratory origin. There is no evidence that any early cases had any connection to the WIV, in contrast to the clear epidemiological links to animal markets in Wuhan, nor evidence that the WIV possessed or worked on a progenitor of SARS-CoV-2 prior to the pandemic."

²⁹ "Politico-Harvard poll: Most Americans believe Covid leaked from lab," *Politico*, 9 July 2021.

³⁰ This was when "the media started criticizing social media for criticizing the media for not criticizing scientists for criticizing the non-scientists who criticized the scientists for not saying it was a lab leak" (*Wired*, 28 May 2021).

³¹ Worobey had also signed the May 14 statement calling for more "investigation" of the lab-leak claim but later had "second thoughts" ("Call of the wild: Why many scientists say it's unlikely that SARS-CoV-2 originated from a 'lab leak'," *Science*, 2 September 2021. The fact that the majority of early cases were linked to the several different wholesale wet markets in Wuhan, and that thousands of wild animals were being sold there right up to the outbreak, led him to consider a natural origin the most likely, as was originally reported.



Newly discovered bat coronaviruses in Laos have many features in common with SARS-CoV-2.

In addition, recent reports from French virologists at the Institut Pasteur in Paris of investigations of bats in northern Laos in summer 2020 found, among dozens of coronaviruses, three with a molecular hook like that of SARS-CoV-2. In fact, while the virus studied at the WIV has 11 out of 17 key “building blocks” of the receptor-binding domain of the COVID-19 virus, the Laotian viruses had as many as 16 out of those 17 key characteristics, while being more distant in other aspects. “That really puts to bed any notion that this virus had to have been concocted, or somehow manipulated in a lab, to be so good at infecting humans,” commented Worobey.³²

As for the National Intelligence Council’s “Updated Assessment on COVID-19 Origins” (29 October 2021), it was hardly what the hardliners sought. The report held that “the virus was not developed as a biological weapon”; that SARS-CoV-2 was not “the result of laboratory adaptation”; that “Chinese leaders did not have foreknowledge of the virus” and “WIV personnel were unaware of the existence of SARS-CoV-2 until the outbreak was underway”; that the reputed illnesses of WIV researchers in late 2019 were “not diagnostic of the pandemic’s origin”; and that there are “no indications that WIV research involved SARS-CoV-2 or a close progenitor virus.”³³ On the origin of the virus, four “elements” of the “Intelligence Community” and the National Intelligence Council thought it was “most likely caused by natural exposure to an animal infected with it or a close progenitor virus,” while only one thought it “most likely was the result of a laboratory-associated incident.”

The report also noted that Beijing was unlikely to cooperate with any outside investigation in part because of “frustration the international community is using the issue to exert political pressure on China.” And rather than peremptory demands on China, it listed some suggestions for information it could provide that would “help us better evaluate hypotheses related to the origins of COVID-19.” While

³² “Newly Discovered Bat Viruses Give Hints to Covid’s Origins,” *New York Times*, 14 October 2021.

³³ The report added that “the furin cleavage site (FCS) ... can also be consistent with a natural origin of the virus,” that “similar FCSs are present in the same region of the spike protein as other naturally occurring coronaviruses.”

unsurprisingly undecided on the virus’ origins, the U.S. spy agencies – reflecting some of the tensions within the military/intelligence “community – rejected almost every contention of the lab-leak proponents. But that will not stop them. This is not about finding the facts about the origins of the pandemic, it is a cynical attempt to shift the blame for the COVID-19 plague that has killed more than 800,000 people in the United States, while more than 100,000 have died in each of Europe’s three most populous countries of France, Germany, and Italy and millions more in Latin America, Asia and Africa. The responsibility for that lies squarely with the imperialist rulers.³⁴

A Battle Cry in the Anti-China War Drive

“What happened in Wuhan” is also a battle cry for the escalating military threats against China, as “remember the *Maine*” was for the war that first announced U.S. imperialism’s emergence as a world power: the 1898 invasion and occupation of Cuba, Puerto Rico and Philippines. Not only is the United States the only power that has ever used nuclear weapons, as well as indiscriminate firebombing (Tokyo, Dresden, Hamburg), it has been a top

³⁴ See “‘Africa Starved of Vaccines’: An Imperialist Crime,” *Revolution* No. 18, September 2021.



Internationalist photo

Bipartisan anti-China war drive fuels racist anti-Asian attacks. Defend China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam against imperialism and counterrevolution!

perpetrator of germ warfare. It airdropped infected insects on Chinese troops during the Korean War, unleashed swine flu and tobacco mold in Cuba, and produced botulinum toxin-laced cigars in its hundreds of attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro. Even after biological warfare was banned in 1972, the U.S. has continued to pursue “defensive” biowarfare research, at Fort Detrick in Maryland and elsewhere.³⁵ And there have been numerous accidents, including ones involving anthrax, avian flu and smallpox viruses.³⁶

³⁵ In July 2019, the U.S. Army bio-“defense” lab working with deadly microbes at Fort Detrick was shut down by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) over inadequate wastewater decontamination systems. (See “Pathogens Research Lab Is Shut Over Safety Fears,” *New York Times*, 6 August 2019.) The lab did not reopen until December 2019.

³⁶ These are alluded to in the article by novelist Nicholson Baker, “The Lab-Leak Hypothesis,” *New York* magazine, 4 January 2021. Baker was motivated in part by his study of U.S. biowarfare and accidents, chronicled in his book *Baseless* (2020). The title is derived from Project Baseless, a Korean War-era Pentagon program to achieve “an Air Force-wide combat capability in biological and chemical warfare at the earliest possible date.” But while possibilities of accidents are inherent in any risky research, the Wuhan lab-leak “hypothesis” that Baker took up is something very different, a propaganda ploy in the U.S. imperialist anti-China war drive.

We have focused here on the bogus claims of those who have sought to pin the COVID-19 pandemic on China. A second article will deal with another Big Lie, the claim that Beijing early on supposedly tried to hide, cover up errors and repress information about the pandemic. But more broadly, the lab-leak scam underscores that defense against the biological threats unleashed by increasing urbanization, global trade, climate change and other factors requires the smashing of imperialism. Instead of the demonization of the Wuhan Institute of Virology, which has been carrying out vital work in forestalling future SARS-like diseases, what is called for is increased support for this premier, world-class institution and more like it, in China and elsewhere. As we have written from the beginning, defeating the COVID plague and preventing future outbreaks from turning into pandemics requires worldwide scientific and health collaboration and economic planning – in short, international socialist revolution. ■



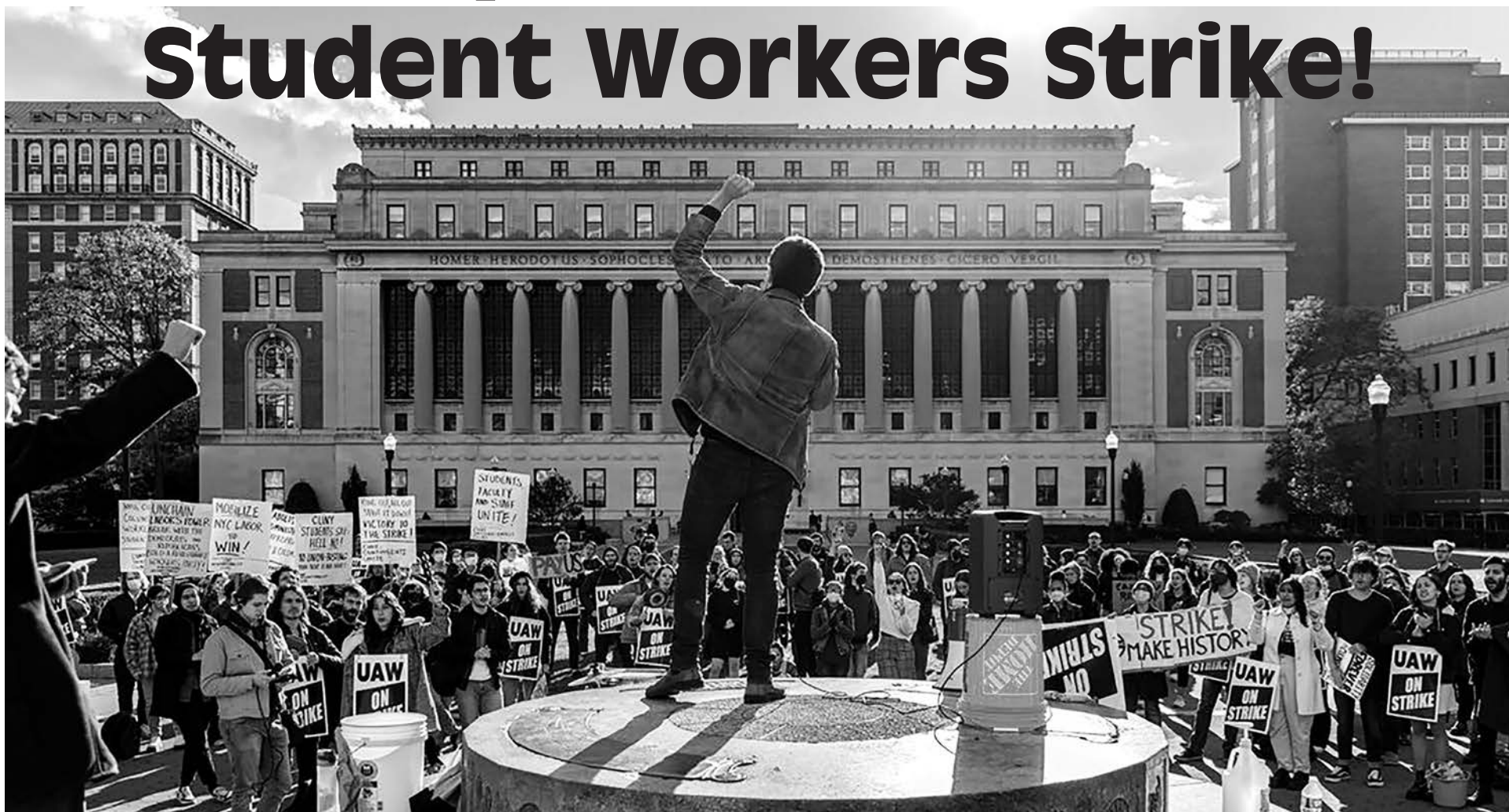
U.S. Navy

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT: U.S. imperialists are looking for a *casus belli* to justify war against China. Above: U.S. Navy carrier strike groups led by USS Ronald Reagan and USS Carl Vinson together with British battle group led by HMS Queen Elizabeth and Japanese helicopter destroyer conduct provocative operations in the Philippine Sea, 3 October 2021.



Against Bosses' Threats and Maneuvers – Solidarity from CUNY

Victory to the Columbia Student Workers Strike!



Hiroko Masukita/The New York Times

On the first day of the Columbia University student workers strike, November 3.

DECEMBER 28 – As we go to press, the strike of Student Workers of Columbia (part of United Auto Workers Local 2110), now in its ninth week, is at a critical juncture. It is the fourth strike in five years, as the union is still fighting to win a first-ever contract. Representing more than 3,000 Columbia University graduate and undergraduate academic employees (including instructors, teaching assistants, graders, researchers and others), the SWC's demands include a *living wage* (many student workers who are paid hourly earn as little as \$16 an hour, while those on an annual appointment currently make as little as \$26,000 a year), *better health care* and *measures against discrimination and harassment*.

On December 23, the university presented its “best and final” contract proposal. The SWC noted that Columbia gave some ground on pay, healthcare and other issues. (Certainly, the university can't plead poverty – its endowment grew more than 32% in fiscal 2021, to \$14.35 billion.) Yet a central sticking point remains: the bosses' insistence on excluding from the bargaining unit those who have less than 15 hours' work per week or haven't yet racked up 250 hours. The purpose is to further divide the workforce and incentivize reliance on grossly underpaid “casual” labor. Calling an online “Rally for Recognition” on December 30, an SWC spokesperson stated, “By creating a category of ‘casual’ workers who are excluded from the union, the administration will be able, over time, to replace union jobs with ‘casual,’ non-union jobs.”

Union activists rightly emphasize the need to oppose this union-busting scheme. The issue of full union recognition has been a central reason for the current strike from the beginning. Last May, in the previous strike, union members rejected, by a vote of 1,093 to 970, a deal with the university negotiated by the bargaining committee then in office. This was in large part because the proposed settlement would have “excluded hundreds of workers who have gone on strike and organized for this union,” as Joanna Lee, one of the three committee members who opposed it, tweeted at the time. (The *Columbia Spectator* [2 May] reported that “a graduate student union has never before rejected a tentative agreement.”)

To explicitly reflect its inclusion of undergraduate employees, the union changed its name from Graduate Workers of Columbia to Student Workers of Columbia. A new bargaining committee

was elected in July, and in September the membership voted to authorize a new strike, which began on November 3. In this strike, as in the spring and in earlier strikes, activists from the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Class Struggle Education Workers have participated intensively on the picket lines and in helping build support. In an important step, SWC members began seeking to

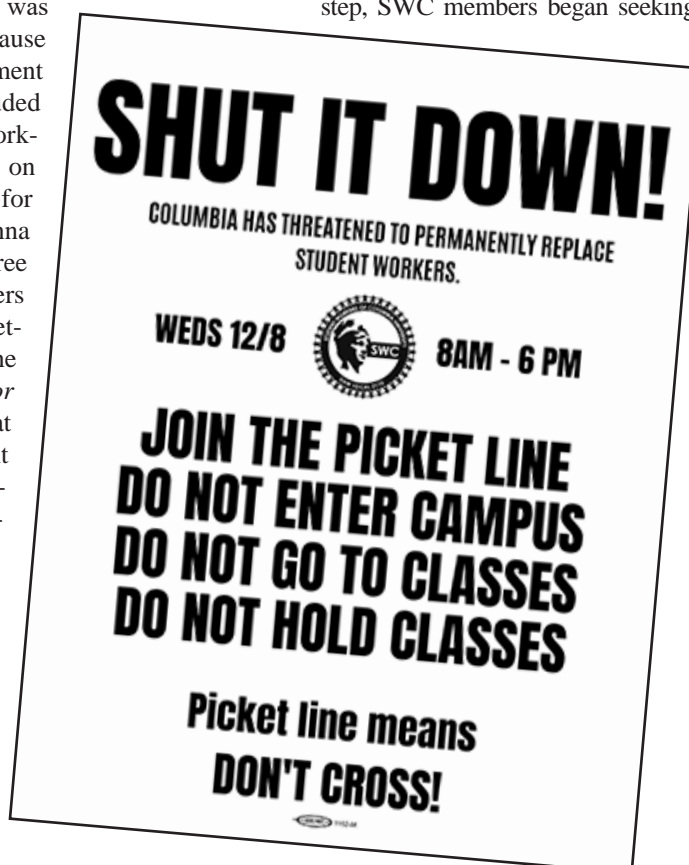
stop deliveries to the struck campus, starting in the predawn hours, and our comrades have participated in these efforts, which have sometimes met with success.

Throughout, we have emphasized that it's essential to put into practice the principle that “Picket lines mean don't cross.” To win a solid victory at Columbia, a pillar of New York's capitalist elite, it's key that all classes be cancelled and all sectors of the campus workforce brought out. (See the leaflet of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth, “Solidarity from CUNY – All Out to Win: Victory to the Columbia Grad Workers Strike!” March 2021.) This means “One out, all out,” instead of the labor tops' policy of keeping the rest of the workforce (including other units of UAW Local 2110) on the job.

As higher-education labor struggles continue to break out across the country, whatever happens at Columbia will be cited as a precedent. A solid victory here won't be won with business-as-usual unionism. It would need to go well beyond Columbia's academic “ivory tower” to bring in the power of NYC labor together with oppressed communities. In particular, black Harlem, just below Morningside Heights, has been forever lorded over by Columbia, whose flagrant racism sparked the historic strike of 1968.

The Struggle Escalates

On December 2, Columbia threatened to fire strikers (which would mean opening the way to their replacement by scabs) if



SWC leaflet for day of action to shut down Columbia.



CUNY Internationalist Clubs at December 8 Columbia picket.

they did not return to work by the 10th, a couple of days before final exams were due to begin. For the strikers, weeks of “one day longer” on the picket lines were stretching toward the end of the semester, bills were piling up, could they hold out? Columbia’s arrogant bosses thought they could finally break them.

Instead, strikers redoubled their determination, upping the ante. The elements of what’s needed to win were coming more sharply into focus for many – in particular, that picket lines really do mean don’t cross. A day of action was called and hundreds of union fliers were posted up calling to “SHUT IT DOWN” on Wednesday, December 8. (See graphic.) The *Columbia Spectator* (9 December) reported:

“On Wednesday, the Student Workers of Columbia-United Auto Workers held multiple picket lines blocking all entrances to Columbia’s Morningside campus from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., asking students and faculty not to cross the picket lines in an effort to entirely shut down the campus. The student-workers were joined by faculty members, undergraduates, and members of other unions and labor organizations across New York City.”

Strikers and supporters linked hands, circling both sides of huge campus gates, holding official “On Strike” signs, and often large handmade ones. Early in the day at Columbia’s main entrance on Broadway and 116th Street, a prominent strike organizer, an Asian woman, was viciously shoved by a man who ostentatiously ripped up the large sign she was carrying, which read “ON STRIKE! SHUT IT DOWN! PICKET LINES MEAN DON’T CROSS!” Later at the same gate, an NYPD “Community Affairs” officer lunged suddenly and shoved picketers.

At a different entrance a scab violently barged into a young woman picketer from the CUNY Internationalist Clubs, who was knocked over backwards and would have hit the sidewalk had another picketer not caught her. Anti-strike aggressions multiplied as the day went on – but the Columbia administration, following the union-busters’ playbook, lyingly accused the strikers of “violence.”

On December 8, the situation varied from one place and time to another, and so did consciousness. It was notable that, repeatedly, where scabs violently busted through the picket lines, determined strike militants doubled down, seeking to uphold and defend the vital labor principle that

picket lines mean don’t cross. But at some entrances pickets were porous, which undermines strikes. The uneven consciousness reflects decades of union bureaucrats calling “informational” picket lines – a contradiction in terms which teaches people that it’s supposedly “OK” to cross picket lines. But as hundreds of Columbia strikers linked hands in large pickets, blocking entrances and chanting “picket lines mean don’t cross,” many may have begun to see, for the first time, that once a strike has been collectively decided on, *everyone* must respect the lines. Generalizing and putting this into practice is crucial for the future of this and other struggles.

Outreach to a number of NYC labor sectors brought a lively contingent of Verizon workers from CWA Local 1101; officers and members of the CUNY faculty/staff union (PSC); some activists from DC37, unionized Legal Aid and legal services employees, and others. Most prominent was a truck from Teamsters Local 804, which represents UPS workers, bearing a huge inflatable “fat cat.” (This recalls how adjunct faculty at Sussex County Community College in New Jersey won their contract fight in a day back in 2009, when unionized truck drivers blocked all the entrances.) The Central Labor Council sent out an announcement of the SWC’s day of action. This was important, of course – though if the CLC were to actually mobilize to the picket lines even one or two thousand out of the 1.3 million workers it boasts of representing, it would be a whole different ballgame.

As in any strike, it’s about power. The strikers’ December 8 day of action to “Shut It Down” was a big step up in militancy, and certainly a crucial factor in getting the administration to move on some of the union’s key demands. With the new year around the corner, the strikers are sticking to their guns. They deserve and need the massive, militant solidarity that can help push this struggle over the finish line, forcing Columbia’s high-handed bosses to give in. A victory for the Columbia strikers would be a boost and an inspiration to workers and students everywhere, as we face the big challenges and opportunities ahead. ■

For a video about the Columbia University student workers strike, go to the Internationalist Group YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/Internationalist4>



Six workers killed in Amazon warehouse hit by tornado in Illinois, Dec. 10.

Amazon...

continued from page 1

warehouse remained open, while workers travelling to and from the facility were threatened by widespread flooding. Amazon carries out minimal or no emergency preparedness. It should be required to have **hardened underground safe rooms** for tornados and hurricanes, and at every facility and dispatch location, there should be **worker safety committees** to enforce safety protocols and assert their power to stop production if working conditions are unsafe!

How can we do that? The tragedy in Edwardsville underlines the urgent need to unionize the entire Amazon empire. While demanding the most rigorous safety standards be adhered to, one can’t rely on Amazon or the NLRB, which is an agency of the *bosses’ government*. Nor will it be achieved by looking to the Democratic Party, which is a *capitalist party*, representing the owners of industry and commerce as much as, or even more than, the Republicans. As we have pointed out, in the 2020 election cycle Wall Street gave five times as much money to the Democrats as to Republican candidates, and in the case of Big Tech far more than that. Amazon gave 13 times as much to the phony “friend of labor” Democrats as to Trump and the Republicans.¹

To unionize Amazon, it will be necessary to **mobilize the power of the workers movement in sharp class struggle**. The nor-

¹ See “No to the Democratic Party of Amazon (and Silicon Valley and Wall Street),” *The Internationalist* No. 63, January-March 2021.



Amazon warehouses are built like a giant erector set that could easily collapse under pressure. JFK8 in Staten Island (above) is the size of 15 football fields. Relentless pressure for speed produces super-high injury rates.

mal tactics of “business unionism,” based on collaboration with management, won’t cut it. **To defeat the hardnosed union-busters at Amazon will take strikes and walk-outs, flying pickets, plant occupations – the kind of class-struggle methods that built the unions in the 1930s.** Unionization must include everyone from pickers and drivers to airline pilots, nationally, and internationally. And it requires independence from the bosses’ government and parties, as we fight to build a **class-struggle workers party** that defends black people, women, immigrants and all the oppressed.

Solidarity is key. Unionizing Amazon will be more like a revolt of the working people than your run-of-the-mill piecemeal organizing campaign. It’s a tall order and a hard fight, but we – the workers and oppressed – have the power. For all the automation at Amazon, without the workers, nothing will move.

Amazon: Union-Buster, Pandemic Profiteer, Industrial Murder Machine

Amazon’s founder and executive chairman Jeff Bezos is a modern-day robber baron, using vicious anti-labor methods to carry out savage exploitation of Amazon’s 1.5 million employees worldwide, with 1 million in the U.S. Bezos has been a pandemic profiteer, with his net worth now at \$208 billion, even after his divorce settlement has given his ex-wife a tidy fortune of \$62 billion. In addition to its e-commerce monopoly (it controls almost 50% of the U.S. market), Amazon has many subsidiar-



No Amazon facilities in North America have been unionized. In Europe, only in Italy have unions won a contract. Above, Milan logistics center during first-ever national strike against Amazon, 22 March 2021.

ies, including Whole Foods, the *Washington Post*, and Amazon Web Services, the world's largest cloud computing platform, notable for its recent outages.

Initially mainly relying on UPS, FedEx and the U.S. Postal Service to make its deliveries, Amazon now delivers most of the products it sells (and the products of third-party vendors) with its own vast fleet of 60,000 trucks and vans, with 100,000 more on order, and its fleet of 80 large cargo aircraft. It is estimated that the company now makes 20% of the shipments in the U.S. That's why a resolution at the June 2021 Teamsters convention referred to Amazon as an "existential threat" to the union, since with its low wages and poor working conditions it exerts a downward pressure on unionized trucking and delivery companies.

No Amazon facility in the U.S. is unionized, and while there are several unions at its European operations, only in Italy have they won a contract – by striking. In Germany, the Ver.di service workers union forced some concessions through repeated strikes. In spring 2020, French workers forced Amazon to provide safety measures against COVID at six warehouses. But in the U.S. and globally, Amazon was notorious for providing little or no safety protocols or PPE in the early stages of the pandemic. In November, it was fined \$500,000 by California for failing to notify workers of outbreaks in its warehouses.

Vice magazine (23 November 2020) detailed the company's vast spy and surveillance network directed against union activity, including the hiring of the notorious Pinkerton detective agency. At its Global Security Operations Center, "intelligence analysts keep close tabs on how many warehouse workers attend union meetings." Recently Amazon started to apply hi-tech methods to its hundreds of thousands of drivers, requiring them to submit to biometric monitoring, with "faceprinting" and video snooping on their every action (including yawning or getting out of the cab to relieve themselves) to ensure non-stop labor. It also tells delivery drivers to turn off safety apps monitoring vehicle speed in order to meet production quotas.

Amazon workers have difficulty getting disability pay and COVID leaves under the company's automated "Human Resources by App" system, which is subject to glitches and provides no accountability. The *Boston Globe* (24 July) reported how workers injured on the job got the run-around in getting workers' compensation to cover medical treatment: "Employees alleged that the trillion-dollar behemoth and the company it

uses to handle the cases made accessing the payments and health care due to them under state law confusing and difficult, leaving many languishing for weeks or months with only minimal benefits."

Lessons of Bessemer

On April 9, the National Labor Relations Board announced results of the vote at the union election at Amazon's BHM1 warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama. The vote was 1,798 against to 738 for the union, with some 500 ballots contested, mostly by the company. The result was a victory for Amazon, which had waged a vicious anti-union campaign, and a bitter defeat for the RWDSU (Retail, Warehouse and Department Store Union). The RWDSU blamed the defeat on unfair labor laws and the illegal activities of Amazon, as well as "legal" tactics such as requiring workers to attend "captive audience" meetings with anti-union consultants (paid \$3,200 a day), threatening that bringing in a union would mean a loss of benefits, and implying that it could shut down the warehouse if workers voted to unionize, as it did at a warehouse in Chicago where workers had carried out protests.

On November 29, the NLRB ruled in favor of the RWDSU, nullifying the results of the election and allowing a re-vote, for which a date has not been set. The union has maintained a base of supporters in the Bessemer facility and recently posted on Facebook (BAmazonUnion, 22 December) about how on November 28-29, two workers collapsed in the warehouse within six hours of each other. Both died. One worker had suffered a stroke while working, but his manager told him he could not leave, and that since he had no "unpaid time off" remaining, if he left he could be

fired. After the deaths the company told workers to carry on working and not to talk about what had happened. At least four other workers have died at that warehouse this year.

The Bessemer campaign, carried out by a mainly black workforce in the deep South, if successful would be the first union victory against Amazon in the U.S. As word of the campaign spread last spring, many Walmart workers, Whole Foods workers and unorganized workers around the country looked to the Bessemer struggle as their own. In the wake of the defeat in that election, now annulled, there were many post-mortems from the left, and other unions, mostly focusing on tactical issues. For example, that the RWDSU should not have proceeded with the vote after Amazon won a broad definition of warehouse employees to include seasonal and temporary workers; or that the union should have pushed for workers to wear pro-union buttons or otherwise go "public." (The RWDSU said it didn't do so because of Amazon's history of firing pro-union workers.)

The campaign was also criticized for being too rushed – the vote was held less than a year after the warehouse was opened in March 2020. Workers in BHM1, many of whom had been active in the massive wave of protests against racist cop terror that summer, approached the RWDSU in July of that year. The union felt it had to act quickly and forge ahead because of the high turnover at Amazon warehouses. It was also criticized for relying on phone banking to convince workers to vote for the union instead of visiting them at home. *The Internationalist* objected that in response to Amazon's harping about union dues, the RWDSU said workers wouldn't have to pay because Alabama is a "right-to-work" state where requiring union membership is outlawed!

The real lesson of the Bessemer defeat is that it showed the limits of playing by the bosses' rules. NLRB-supervised representation elections are so rigged in favor of the companies, and unions are so hamstrung by anti-labor laws, that it is extremely difficult, often next to impossible to win by going that route alone. A fighting union would have mobilized workers in action to demand a big wage increase, union safety committees, slowing down the breakneck line speed, etc. The RWDSU leaders wouldn't do that, because like the rest of labor officialdom they are chained to the capitalist system. Besides, wages in RWDSU-organized poultry plants in the South are no higher than Amazon's, and the union tops never shut down those plants in the pandemic despite hundreds of COVID infections.



Trade-union supporters of the Internationalist Group during unionization campaign at BHM1 warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama, 27 March 2021.

Teamsters vs. Amazon

Going back to their 2016 convention, Teamsters union leaders have made general statements about wanting to organize Amazon. In 2020, the IBT formed a division to oversee organizing at Amazon, headed by Randy Korgan, president of a Teamster local in San Bernardino, California. That is in the heart of the Inland Empire, the corridor along Interstate 10 where endless warehouses stock and deliver goods coming through the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. This area should be a ripe target for a massive organizing campaign – a serious struggle starting at a few locations could spread quickly among these heavily immigrant workers, join with the hard-pressed, mainly Latino port truckers and hook up with the powerful ILWU longshore union. If the bosses are worried about the supply chain now, consider what a warehouse-trucker-port strike would do.

On June 24, the IBT national convention passed a "Special Resolution: Building Teamster Power at Amazon." Citing how Amazon posed "an existential threat to the standards we have set" in UPS, parcel delivery, freight, etc., it vowed that "helping [Amazon] workers achieve a union contract is a top priority" for the Teamsters. Korgan has said that "the NLRB is not the only way" and written that Teamsters have "fought for workers' rights to organize and build power any way we could, including shop floor strikes, city-wide strikes and actions in the streets. Building genuine worker power at Amazon will take shop-floor militancy by Amazon workers and solidarity from warehousing and delivery Teamsters" (*Salon*, 14 June 2021).

Talking the tough talk has to be put into practice. Organizing Amazon was an issue in the national Teamsters election this fall, in which the ruling Teamster Power faction of the bureaucracy of retiring president James Hoffa Jr. was pitted against the Teamsters United faction, led by Sean O'Brien and Fred Zuckerman, much of whose base came from Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU). The history of this grouping is important. The TDU originated in the 1970s and notoriously sued the Teamsters in the capitalist courts in the name of "union democracy," a betrayal of working-class principle. Having invited the capitalist government in to run the union elections, Ron Carey, a TDU-supported candidate, won the IBT presidency in 1991. But after a strike at UPS in 1997 won, the government ousted Carey. *Bring in the feds and they own you.*

So the chickens came home to roost, and James Hoffa Jr. led the union for the next 24 years. Now a TDU-backed coalition has won the union election with almost 70% of the vote. A big issue was the rotten 2018 UPS contract agreement, which the Hoffa leadership pushed through even after the membership voted it down. That contract created a new "22.4" job category in which workers were paid less and worked "flexibly" (with ever-changing hours) while keeping part-time workers at poverty-level wages. O'Brien broke with Hoffa Jr. over that contract and UPS workers, notably in the powerhouse Local 804 in New York City, are a key base of support to the TDU. Now the Teamsters are proclaiming a mandate of "militancy."

But the leadership of the Teamsters, whether Teamster Power or Teamsters United, is not based on militant class strug-



Supporter of Amazon Labor Union and his son leafleting warehouse workers and drivers at JFK8 facility in Staten Island, New York, May 2021.

gle. For more than half a century, the entire U.S. labor bureaucracy has been committed to class collaboration – Hoffa Sr. included, although the feds went after him for achieving the first-ever national Master Freight Agreement. While the IBT has had training sessions on engaging Amazon drivers and warehouse workers, a central activity has been lobbying local governments to stop Amazon from building facilities because it treats workers unfairly, causes pollution, etc. This is a worthless strategy: what’s needed to promote workers’ rights and social benefit is to organize Amazon, not look to local capitalist governments to pressure Amazon.

O’Brien and the TDU have said that a key part of their strategy is to show Amazon workers the benefits of a union by fighting for “strong contracts” when the UPS contract expires in 2023 and the DHL contract expires next year. Winning major gains from the shipping bosses won’t come easy – it will take an all-out nationwide strike. But to show Amazon that the Teamsters mean business, **solidarity action** will be vital. Instructing Teamster drivers to **NEVER CROSS PICKET LINES**, and to **“hot cargo” (refuse to handle) struck goods anywhere** will send a clear message to union activists at Amazon that the Teamsters have got their backs.

Organize JFK8 with Class Struggle!

Defying defeatist moods that set in after the defeat at Bessemer, an organizing campaign was launched last April at Amazon’s JFK8 warehouse in Staten Island, New York City by activists who formed the Amazon Labor Union (ALU). The ALU asserted it would win because it was “worker-led” and not affiliated with an existing union. However, the ALU’s strategy has been remarkably similar to the RWDSU’s in Bessemer: rapid gathering of authorization cards to meet the NLRB threshold for an election, while holding solidarity rallies and seeking the support of politicians and celebrities. So far only a small number of workers have come out openly as union supporters. In response to the ALU, Amazon followed its Bessemer playbook, churning out anti-union propaganda and holding “captive audience” union-bashing meetings with workers. Pro-union activists have countered the company stooges in those meetings.

The ALU is led by Chris Smalls, who was a supervisor at JFK8 until he was fired in March of 2020 for bravely protesting

against the lack of COVID safety protocols in the warehouse. On October 25, the ALU turned in over 2,000 authorization cards at the NLRB office in Brooklyn, declaring its intention to organize not only JFK8 but three smaller Amazon warehouses on Staten Island. The ALU said 5,600 workers work there, Amazon claimed 9,660 workers at those four facilities. On November 12, the ALU withdrew its election petition after the NLRB said that its initial check found almost half the workers who signed authorization cards no longer worked at the warehouse, reflecting the massive turnover. On December 22, now with 3,000 cards in hand, the ALU resubmitted its request for an election vote at JFK8 only.

Smalls has stated that things will be different than in Bessemer, because “New York is a union town.” That is certainly a major factor, but it’s not enough unless NYC unions actively mobilize to aid the organizing drive in Staten Island. At a December 22 Times Square rally, Smalls called for the NLRB to “do the right thing” and “use remedies that go around the 30%” rule – that 30% of the workforce must sign cards to get an election – “because the annual turnover rate at JFK8 is 150%.” There should be no illusions in the Labor Board, which was set up in 1935 to enforce *government control of unions* not to build them. The NLRB is no ally but an enemy of labor. As we have written before, while union activists may have to make use of its procedures:

“Genuine Marxists (i.e., Trotskyists) oppose any mechanisms of government control of labor, whether by card check or NLRB-supervised ‘elections.’ A real union organizing drive would rest on mobilizing the workers’ strength in action, including possible strike action.”

–“Why Marxists Oppose All Government Intervention in the Unions,” *The Internationalist* No 28, March-April 2009

Co-organizing the Times Square rally was the Workers Assembly Against Racism (WAAR), led by the Workers World Party (WWP). WAAR and WWP have latched onto the ALU effort, promoting rallies outside Bezos’ Manhattan penthouse rather than pushing for class struggle. They call for Amazon to voluntarily “Stop Union Busting! Recognize the Union & Negotiate Now!” Lots of luck with that one. Begging the union-busters to turn into union promoters is a liberal delusion. Similarly, after the defeat in Bessemer, Workers World launched a petition to “Tell Biden to Pass the PRO Act by Executive Order!” Instead

of calling to break with the Democrats and oppose government control, this only promoted illusions in Biden and phony “friend of labor” Democrats.²

The same day as the rally (December 22), the NLRB announced it had reached a settlement with Amazon on dozens of complaints that had been filed since the start of the pandemic, under which the company would post signs saying that it had violated workers’ right to organize by prohibiting employees from being on the property more than 15 minutes before or after a shift and banning union supporters from advocating in lunchrooms and other non-work areas, as has happened at JFK8, Chicago and elsewhere. Amazon was required to notify all of its employees nationally that they have the right to organize and that Amazon will not interfere with that right. Want to bet on how seriously Amazon will abide by this settlement? And keep in mind that black workers at JFK8 are almost 50% more likely to be fired than white co-workers.³

The key to winning a union at JFK8 and Amazon locations around the country is to **build a core of class-struggle unionists** in the warehouses and among drivers; to **bring out supporters in a show of strength** at key moments (Black Friday, Amazon Prime Day, May Day), including in **shift-change rallies and job actions building up to walkouts** when the union is strong enough to make them real; to raise concrete demands **now (\$5 an hour raise, union safety committees, slower line speed, longer lunch and bathroom breaks, end cellphone ban and firing by apps, etc.)**; and to **mobilize mass labor solidarity**, with hundreds of unionists outside the warehouses. Union supporters must see they are not alone. The bottom line is that a substantial core of committed class-struggle militants must be cohered in order to win broad backing for the union in action rather than relying on the bosses’ government.

² The “Protect the Right to Organize” Act passed the House of Representatives but hasn’t got a chance in hell in the Senate. It is a sop to keep liberals and labor tied to the Democrats. While the PRO Act would repeal some notorious anti-labor provisions of the 1948 Taft-Hartley Act, it maintains the framework of government control of unions, including compulsory arbitration on first contracts of new unions, which would surely include a “no-strike” clause.

³ See “The Amazon That Customers Don’t See,” *New York Times*, 15 June, which notes that the multiracial workforce in the warehouse is mostly African American and Latino while management is overwhelmingly white.



Worker at JFK8. Speed-up causes injuries. For workers safety committees with the power to shut it down.

What Does Class Struggle Unionism Look Like?

Also on December 22, about 70 Amazon workers at two delivery stations in Chicago and Cicero, Illinois walked off the job demanding raises, longer breaks and better staffing to reduce overwork. These workers are led by Amazonians United, which also carried out a walk-out last April in response to the implementation of brutal “megacycle” shifts. That walkout won a \$2 shift differential for that shift. Such job actions show it is possible to struggle against Amazon. They raise the need for the kind of militant actions that built the unions in the 1930s.

The organizing drives that created the industrial unions were not won in government-run elections. The mass, militant 1934 Minneapolis strikes that forged the Teamsters were led by Trotskyists, who stopped scab trucking with flying picket squads and ran off sheriff’s deputies and auxiliaries in the streets. They then used these militant tactics to organize Midwest over-the-road truckers and unemployed workers in Minnesota. Also in 1934, the ILWU established its hold in the West Coast longshore and warehouse industry as a result of the San Francisco general strike, also led by “reds.” The great Flint, Michigan sit-down strike of 1936-37 was won by occupying the GM plants, fighting off an attempt by city cops to retake the key plant in the “Battle of Running Bulls,” and seizing an additional plant with the aid of an Emergency Brigade formed by the Women’s Auxiliary, led by a Trotskyist activist.

These battles paved the way for the founding of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), large-scale unionization of key industries and the consolidation of the union shop. Yet even then, the leaders of the CIO, including the reformist Communist Party, hitched the unions to the New Deal coalition of Democratic president Franklin Roosevelt. And a decade later, in the late 1940s, the Democratic Party spearheaded the “red purge” that expelled communists from most of the labor movement. Then and now, what was and is needed is to break with the Democrats and **build a workers party to fight for a workers government!** Class struggle independent of the bosses isn’t just a nice idea: it’s the only way workers can fight back effectively and win, at Amazon and everywhere. ■

Nov. 15 March Fizzles, Left Accomplices Exposed

The much ballyhooed march by counterrevolutionary opponents of the Cuban Revolution, called for November 15 (15N in Spanish), was an utter flop. There were no large crowds on the street, not even smaller groups singing the *gusano* anthem “*Patria y vida*” or shouting “Down with communism.” Not even *cacerolazos* (pot-banging protests) to make noise and stir unrest. Nor were there scenes of large-scale police repression (which the organizers doubtless hoped for – and, if needed to repel counterrevolutionary attacks, would have been justified). All in all, it was a big nothing.

On the other side of the class line,

supporters of the revolution gathered in front of the homes of the most notorious instigators and chanted slogans against the 15N provocation. They also came up with creative ways to deny the counterrevolutionaries their desired media exposure, such as lowering large Cuban flags from the roof to cover their windows. A “red bandanna movement” of pro-revolution youth formed and camped out in a central square of downtown Havana.

Monday, November 15, rather than being a day of counterrevolution, saw millions of students happily going to school, attending in-person classes for the first time in months. This was made possible by vaccinating al-

most 100% of all children and youth from ages 2 to 18 against the coronavirus, an accomplishment of the Cuban workers state that is unique in the world, despite the imperialist blockade. Then, on Tuesday, November 16, the main organizer of 15N, Yuniór García Aguilera, absconded to Spain, not even informing his followers, from where he is looking forward to a (well-paid) career as a figurehead of “internal” dissidence.

The 15N bubble burst. By co-sponsoring this provocation, notorious counterrevolutionaries tore off the mask of left-wing apologists for the scheduled march, who stand nakedly exposed as fellow travelers of counterrevolution. Every genuine commu-

nist must never forget this betrayal by fake leftists, among them social-democratic currents that use the name “Trotskyist” while doing the opposite of what Trotsky fought for.

With the failure of the ill-fated action, defenders of the Cuban Revolution have gained valuable time. But the Yankee imperialists will not rest. It is urgent to use this time to advance the program for the Bolshevik-Leninist nucleus that must be cohered in the fight against pro-capitalist “reforms,” to throw off the bureaucratic straitjacket by organizing workers councils to defend and extend revolutionary gains. ■

Called for November 15

Anti-Cuba Provocation Made in U.S.A.

For Workers Mobilization to Block Counterrevolutionary Action

NOVEMBER 11 – A counterrevolutionary “Civic March for Change” has been announced by U.S.-backed forces in Cuba for November 15. The march was called by a recently founded outfit calling itself the Archipiélago platform, which displays a roster of youthful faces on imperialist-financed web sites, in cooperation with the long-standing reactionary and far-right Cuban exile milieu, known as *gusanos* (worms). As we have written, while the Cuba protests last July 11 were fueled by discontent over shortages, blackouts and the pandemic, “the marches were instigated, manipulated and exploited by forces seeking to overthrow the Cuban Revolution.”¹ Now those and other pro-capitalist forces, grouped together in an umbrella formation, the Council for a Democratic Transition in Cuba formed last June, are staging an anti-communist provocation clearly aimed at “regime change.”

The visible face of Archipiélago and the November 15 (abbreviated 15N in Spanish) action is Yuniór García Aguilera, 39, a playwright who was one of the protagonists of a 27 November 2020 protest outside the Ministry of Culture in Havana. He was a founder of the November 27 Movement (27N) that came out of that, which calls for an economy based on “private enterprise,” i.e., capitalism. But, as the *Miami Herald* (13 October) reported, “Archipiélago [was] created by a diverse coalition of artists from the groups Movimiento 27N and San Isidro, young intellectuals, professionals and activists, and longtime dissidents like Manuel Cuesta Morúa.”² The San Isidro

Movement and Cuesta Morúa are part of the U.S. puppet “Transition Council,” which calls for untrammelled “free market” capitalism and demands compensation for properties expropriated in the revolution.

On October 12, municipal governments in Cuba banned the threatened marches (originally scheduled for November 20) on the grounds that public statements by the organizers linked to counterrevolutionary groups financed by Washington made it clear that the marches were “part of the strategy of regime change attempted by the United States elsewhere.” A State Department spokesman in effect confirmed this, saying that the U.S. is “deeply committed” to supporting the Cuban people’s “struggle to freely choose their leadership.” A deputy assistant secretary of state added that the U.S. is “totally committed to supporting, maintaining and strengthening the voice of the Cuban people who want a change” (this being standard State Department/CIA-speak for U.S.-backed coups and counterrevolutions). The U.S. House of Representatives then followed suit, ramming through a resolution supporting the November 15 “peaceful demonstration.”

An article in *Mint Press News* (1 November) headlined that “The United States is Organizing a Color Revolution in Cuba for November 15,” recalling how mobs led by U.S.-trained and paid “activists” brought down inconvenient regimes in Yugoslavia in 2000, Georgia in 2003 (“Rose Revolution”), Ukraine in 2004 (“Orange Revolution”) and elsewhere.³ Cuban officials pointed to how in Venezuela from 2013 on, U.S.-backed forces staged “peaceful” marches that quickly turned into violent *guarimbas* (riots) with

³ We have pointed out the strong similarities between these remote-controlled “spontaneous” uprisings organized by U.S. operatives and the January 6 storming of the Capitol in Washington, D.C. See “Capitalist ‘Democracy’ Falling Apart – Socialist Revolution the Only Solution,” *The Internationalist* No. 62, January-March 2021.



Yamil Lage / AFP

Cuban government supporters came out to stop attack in Arroyo Naranjo, Havana, on July 12.

street barricades, killing dozens. Whether the Yankee imperialists and their stooges expect to bring off such a ploy, or perhaps hope to provoke Cuban forces into using heavy force (which they did not on July 11), the 15N operation is a classic “destabilization” operation that must be foiled.

While the July 11 Cuba protests were unexpected (except by the instigators) and managed to draw in some driven to despair by the economic hardships – as well as plaudits from opportunist leftists who chase after every supposed “mass movement” no matter what its politics – there can be no mistake this time around. This is a well-prepared event whose organizers and paymasters are aiming at the overthrow of the Cuban Revolution. The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International say: **For workers mobilization to block the counterrevolutionary provocation in Cuba planned for November 15 and to disperse the provocateurs.** And as a Cuban supporter of the revolution suggested in online discussion, if the U.S. im-

perialists are so enamored of protests (supposedly), why not give them one: a *mass march to the U.S. embassy to protest the economic blockade?*

Who’s Pulling the Strings?

So who is behind the November provocation? In our article on “The Truth About Cuba Protests,” we showed in detail that these were not “spontaneous” but had been instigated by elements in league with (and some on the payroll of) U.S. imperialism, and were then signal-boosted by the *gusanera* of Miami and Madrid. Now we learn that the chief administrator and only public figure of the shadowy Facebook group, “La Villa del Humor,” that launched the first protest in San Antonio de los Baños outside Havana on July 11, Alex Pérez Rodríguez, is a pastor of a Seventh Day Adventist church living in southern Florida (*Mint Press*, 5 October). This same group then called for a “nationwide work stoppage throughout Cuba” for October. *continued on page 17*

¹ “The Truth About Cuba Protests – Defend the Revolution Against U.S. Imperialism and Its Frontmen,” *The Internationalist* No. 64, July-September 2021.

² Manuel Cuesta Morúa is the head of the Partido Arco Progresista (PARP, Progressive Spectrum Party), a social-democratic pro-imperialist grouping including the Cuban Democratic Socialist Current, which has received funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the agency that stands in for the CIA in financing “dissidents” in regimes targeted by U.S. imperialism.

Social-Democratic Counterrevolutionaries and Camp Followers

Cuba Protests: Litmus Test for the Left

As Facebook videos and tweets started coming in from the July 11 protests in Cuba – instigated, propagated and exploited by counterrevolutionaries – the media machine of U.S. imperialism kicked into high gear. (See our article, “The Truth About Cuba Protests,” *The Internationalist*, 23 July.) A Twitter storm on the Internet hooked up with a demonstration by *gusanos* (Cuban counterrevolutionaries) in Miami to provide the visuals. Artists and social media “influencers” weighed in with the hashtag #SOSCuba and calls for “freedom.” When police in Havana responded to protesters throwing rocks by making some arrests, there followed a chorus of denunciations of “repression.” And when Cuban president and Communist Party (PCC) leader Miguel Díaz-Canel called for “all revolutionaries to go into the streets to defend the Revolution everywhere,” this was met with an outcry accusing the government of calling for “civil war.”

For all the talk of repression, the reality is that the Cuban police stood by and did not make arrests until the July 11 protests turned violent. PCC supporters mobilized to stop provocations, first heading off an attempt to take over the monument to Máximo Gómez on the Havana waterfront and later blocking the attempt to march on the iconic Plaza de la Revolución. Along the way, marchers chanting counterrevolutionary slogans physically attacked defenders of the Revolution. The London *Financial Times* (14 July) reported soberly: “Although Sunday’s protests were a serious and rare challenge to the government, the authorities acted with relative restraint. Police and special forces avoided directly confronting demonstrators, though some arrests were made.”

But such facts didn’t stop the hype. First, Cuban American Republican senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz proclaimed that the protests were not about shortages and vaccines but “the Cuban people” fighting against “Communist/socialist tyranny,” and complained of silence from Democratic president Joe Biden. The next day Biden chimed in, hailing the “clarion call” by “the Cuban people” for “freedom” from “decades of repression” by “Cuba’s authoritarian regime.” He followed up on July 15 by labeling Cuba “a failed state ... repressing its citizens,” and declaring “Communism is a failed system.” While responding to right-wing Republican barbs, the Democrat in the White House is a hardline anti-communist Cold Warrior currently waging an escalating war drive against China, which like Cuba is a bureaucratically deformed workers state.

Florida Democrats went further. As Miami Republican mayor Francis Suarez called to bomb Havana and Cuban exiles clamored for U.S. “humanitarian” intervention, Democratic Rep. Val Demings urged the White House to “move swiftly” against Cuba, while the Florida state party called for “additional sanctions against the leaders of the failed socialist-communist regime” – which Biden imposed a couple



A supporter of the Cuban government demonstrating on July 11. This photo was widely misused, including by United Nations “human rights” chief Michele Bachelet, to symbolize the anti-government protests. When the woman in the picture, Betty Pariol Quesada, complained on Twitter about this vile distortion, her Twitter account was blocked. This was one of many mislabeled photos of the hundreds who took to the streets to block the rioters.

of days later. As for Democratic “progressives,” Sen. Bernie Sanders “call[ed] on the Cuban government to respect opposition rights and refrain from violence,” while Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez proclaimed: “We are seeing Cubans rise up and protest for their rights like never before.” Sanders called to end the U.S. embargo, and AOC “reject[ed] the Biden administration’s defense” of it. But these routine invocations only covered their support for the anti-communist protests.

Bringing up the rear of the bipartisan imperialist hue and cry over repression by the Cuban regime were assorted voices on the left, ranging from liberal intellectuals to avowed socialists. Among the most egregious are some groups that falsely lay claim to the heritage of Leon Trotsky, the co-leader along with V.I. Lenin of the 1917 Russian October Revolution. Many of these would-be “Trotskyists” are at bottom social democrats of the sort that Trotsky and his Fourth International fought against tooth and nail. This is thrown into sharp relief by their responses to the Cuban protests, but it’s nothing new. We saw the same with the rise of Solidarność in Poland in the 1980s and in the capitalist counter-revolution of 1989-92 in the Soviet Union and Soviet-bloc deformed workers states.

Authentic Trotskyists, then represented by the International Communist League (ICL), whose revolutionary political continuity is carried forward by the League for the Fourth International (LFI), called instead to *stop Solidarność counterrevolution*, mobilized to *fight against capitalist reunification of Germany*, and fought to *defeat Yeltsin/Bush counterrevolution* in the USSR. We called for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies which undermined the workers states, and to replace them with soviet democracy led by genuinely communist, Leninist-Trotskyist parties. On Cuba today,

the LFI has called to actively combat capitalist counterrevolution, to break the U.S. imperialist blockade, mobilize workers councils to defend the gains of the Cuban Revolution and to extend them through *international socialist revolution*.

DSA, FSP and SALT: Social Democrats for Counterrevolution

The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) is by far the largest left organization in the U.S. This social-democratic outfit is a hodgepodge of different tendencies, with at least a dozen national caucuses at last count, plus various local groupings. The DSA has been part of the Democratic Party since its foundation in 1982. With the disappointment over Bernie Sanders’ loss to Hillary Clinton and the shock of her defeat by Donald Trump in 2016, there was a flurry of controversy over how long this would or should continue. But with the electoral

successes of “the Squad” of DSA and other “progressive” Democrats in Congress, and the election of DSA candidates in several city council elections, the DSA is now firmly ensconced in the ruling party of American capitalism. Our pamphlet *DSA: Fronting for the Democrats* (February 2018) spells out how this goes back decades.

Over Latin America, DSAers range from hard-core anti-communist “socialists” like Samuel Farber and Dan La Botz on the right to sympathizers of left-populist regimes (Venezuela, Bolivia) and Cuba.¹ On July 11, the DSA International Committee tweeted a brief statement, “DSA stands with the Cuban people and their Revolution in this moment of unrest. End the blockade.” But what actually counts when it comes to the DSA is what its star Ocasio-Cortez says. When AOC declared solidarity with the protests and denounced the mobilization of supporters of the Cuban Revolution, La Botz chimed in, “I agree with her.”² No surprise there. Both Farber and La Botz come out of the current led by Max Shachtman, who broke with Trotsky and Trotskyism by refusing to defend the Soviet Union in World War II.

As Shachtman moved to the right, Shachtmanism became synonymous with Stalinophobia, the virulent anti-communism that embraced bourgeois and even imperialist forces besieging Stalinist-ruled workers states. (Shachtman backed the U.S.’ failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961.) In this vein, writing in the neo-Shachtmanite journal *New Politics*, which he co-edits, La Botz demanded the “right” to “organize new political parties” in Cuba and to “organize independent labor unions”³ – like the anti-communist, Polish Solidarność. That “free trade union” was bankrolled by U.S. imperialism under union-buster Ronald Reagan, in an operation run by Shacht-

¹ “How Cuba’s Communists Survived the Fall of the Soviet Union,” *Jacobin*, 26 July.

² La Botz, “Cuban Protests and the American Reaction,” *New Politics*, 21 July.

³ “Where Should Socialists Stand on Cuba Today?” *New Politics*, 12 July.



Social-democratic anti-communists praised July 11 demonstrators carrying counterrevolutionary slogans.

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3214

Statement: Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez on Demonstrations in Cuba

"We are seeing Cubans rise up and protest for their rights like never before. We stand in solidarity with them, and we condemn the anti-democratic actions led by President Díaz-Canel. The suppression of the media, speech and protest are all gross violations of civil rights."

When it comes to the DSA, what counts is AOC.

manites from top to bottom. Farber, writing in a paper reflecting the views of the DSA right wing, praised the gusano *Patria y vida* video as expressing "many democratic sentiments against the present Cuban dictatorship."⁴

So while many varieties of leftists are playing around in the DSA sandbox, the bottom line is: *ever since 1917, social democracy and "democratic socialism" have always served as a cover for anti-communist counterrevolution.*

In the United States, one group that quickly embraced the July 11 protests is the "socialist-feminist" Freedom Socialist Party (FSP). On July 16, the FSP issued a statement titled "Support protesters in Cuba, defend freedom of speech!" This statement makes no mention of the fact (which can be seen in numerous online videos) that marchers shouted anti-communist slogans such as "down with the dictatorship" and "freedom," or that these were spread by blasts of thousands of postings on social media. The FSP article parroted the claim of the counterrevolutionary website 14ymedio, that the call by Díaz-Canel for revolutionaries to take to the streets to defend the Revolution was "a call for civil war." And it proclaimed: "The Freedom Socialist Party (FSP) stands with the protesters and calls on the Cuban government to release all political prisoners immediately and to respect the rights of its people to demand change."

Release *all* "political prisoners"? Demand "change"? What about those alleged political prisoners and forces who instigated the June 11 protests, egged on by (and in some cases paid by) U.S. imperialism, who shouted "down with communism," calling for "regime change"? Or the *gusanos* who proclaim their aim of ending "62 years of socialism," i.e., undoing the 1959 revolution led by Fidel and Raúl Castro. *Genuine Trotskyists do not recognize a "right" to foment counterrevolution!* On the contrary, we recognize the duty of revolutionary communists to prevent the overthrow of the Cuban Revolution. This includes taking to the streets to stop those who would stage counterrevolutionary provocations, as well as a political fight to deepen the revolution, combating pro-capitalist forces internally, and extending it internationally.

As has always been the position of real Trotskyists since the formation of the Cuban deformed workers state, standing four-square for the defeat of imperialist-backed counterrevolutionaries is the basis for any real fight for proletarian democracy, the rule of workers councils and revolutionary internationalism.

In its July 16 statement, the FSP made only a single passing mention of the U.S. blockade and didn't even call to oppose it. But on July 22, it decided to "update" its statement (overwriting the same internet

⁴ Farber, "Why Cubans Protested on July 11," *In These Times*, 27 July.

address so that readers would not see the original version), including a new headline: "FSP demands an end to the U.S. blockade and intervention against Cuba while supporting the right of Cubans to protest for survival needs." The "updated" statement ditched some lyrical passages (e.g., of protesters "joyfully greeting each other") lifted from *gusano* web sites, while now noting the presence of elements "influenced by the anti-communist propaganda of the U.S. government and right-wing Cuban exiles in Miami." Yet even as it sought to clean up its act, the FSP kept its call for "freedom" for counterrevolutionaries.

A similar tack was taken by a second social-democratic tendency, Socialist Alternative (SAlt), which embraced the Cuban protests lock, stock and barrel. A July 19 statement of the International Socialist Alternative (ISA, SAlt's international current)⁵ declared that it was "the Cuban working people, who took to the streets on July 11." Not a word about the anti-communist chants of the protesters, nor of the role of the U.S.-orchestrated exile milieu in propagating the protests, as we (and others) have detailed. Instead, SAlt asserts that:

"The demonstrations of last July 11 are thus not in this sense 'against socialism' as the imperialist media pretend to present them, much less 'counter-revolutionary' as Díaz-Canel has called them. On the contrary, they express genuine discontent with an economic and health crisis aggravated by the capitalist counter-reforms of recent years...."

We have spelled out how the privatizing "reforms" by the Cuban bureaucracy have aggravated the crisis, but that crisis is overwhelmingly and fundamentally caused by U.S. imperialism's six-decade long economic war on the Cuban Revolution, and by the capitalist world market.

SAlt's attempt to prettify and paint the protests as a healthy working-class response to pro-capitalist betrayals by the bureaucracy is a cynical ploy to give a "left" cover to the drive for counterrevolution in Cuba. It's part of a broader program of siding with U.S. imperialism against the deformed workers states, China in particular. We have documented how SAlt/ISA and its Hong Kong affiliate not only hailed the 2019 anti-communist riots in that capitalist enclave but have for years worked in tandem with U.S.-sponsored "democrats" there and in Taiwan.⁶ The "theoretical" pretext of these "Social-Democratic Accomplices of U.S. Imperialism" (as we have described them) for their machinations in league with open counterrevolutionaries is the bogus claim that China is "capitalist," and indeed "imperialist."

⁵ A 2019 split from the Committee for a Workers International (CWI), historically led by Peter Taaffe.

⁶ See the section on "Social-Democratic Accomplices of U.S. Imperialism" in the article "Hong Kong 'Democracy' Riots: Pro-Imperialist, Anti-Communist, Fascist Infested," *The Internationalist* No. 58, Winter 2020.

The SAlt/ISA statement on Cuba goes on for several paragraphs denouncing China, declaring that "today China is no alternative to capitalism. On the contrary, it is capitalism's most brutal expression." The claim that China somehow made a seamless transition to capitalism under the rule of the Communist Party is belied by facts: as the entire capitalist world sank into depression after the 2007-08 market crash, China boomed; and with its socialized economy, China was able to contain the coronavirus which has devastated the richest capitalist countries. It is also contrary to Marxism, which holds that restoration of capitalist rule would require the overthrow of the workers state. But for these pseudo-socialists, their fatuous talk of a "capitalist/imperialist China" is above all an excuse to refuse to defend China against imperialism and counterrevolution.

China, says SAlt, is the model for "the Cuban regime and its pro-capitalist reforms." Later on, it refers to "the policies of the regime in favor of the market and capitalist restoration." Yet as Trotsky emphasized, the dual nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy (sitting atop the foundations of proletarian rule even as it seeks accommodation with capitalism) means that, while its privatizing "reforms" dangerously foster the growth of capitalist forces, this brittle, contradictory layer is not itself capable of restoring capitalism or leading the counterrevolution. That requires the power of the imperialist bourgeoisie – *and everyone, from Wall Street and Washington to Miami and Havana, knows it.* If capitalist rule is restored – and everything must be done to prevent that – it will be the Yankee imperialists and their *gusano* flunkies who carry it out.

It's noteworthy that the anti-Trotskyists of Socialist Alternative do not call to defend Cuba against U.S. imperialism. Rather they call to "defend the historic gains of the Cuban revolution" – meaning what exactly? They write that the working class should "defend those gains of the revolution that benefit them," but they do not call to defend the Cuban *workers state*, the target of Washington's unrelenting war. And what would they put in place of the present regime? SAlt talks of a process of "grass roots democratization," of "radical democracy from below, to replace the rule of the bureaucracy: for a genuine workers' democracy," and "an alternative socialist democracy." All this could be taken straight from any mainline pro-imperialist

social-democratic outfit, such as the British Labour Party or the DSA, which SAlt members have now entered.

Various Stalinist and Stalinoid groups – including the Communist Party USA (CPU-SA), Young Communist League, Workers World Party (WWP) and the Party of Socialism and Liberation (PSL) – of course denounced the July 11 protests and called for solidarity with Cuba, also stressing their political support for the Cuban government. They do so from a reformist standpoint, looking for alliances with bourgeois and petty-bourgeois "progressives." This was brought out sharply in a *New York Times* (23 July) ad, of which the PSL and its popular-front ANSWER Coalition were prime movers, calling to "Let Cuba Live." Among the hundreds of signers were former presidents Lula da Silva (Brazil) and Rafael Correa (Ecuador), the Brazilian Workers Party (PT), Jeremy Corbyn, Cornel West, Noam Chomsky, and other luminaries.

The ad was an open letter to President Joe Biden, citing his July 12 statement that "we stand with the Cuban people," and based on that calling on him to undo the "243 coercive measures" imposed by Trump and "begin the process of ending the embargo." It called to "return to the Obama opening," when the previous Democratic president reestablished diplomatic relations with Cuba. But aside from the patent absurdity of calling on arch-Cold Warrior Biden to drop Cold War politics and treat Cuba as a "neighbor" rather than an "existential enemy," Obama's policy was hardly intended to establish "peaceful coexistence." Rather he sought to subvert the Cuban Revolution from within, by increasing contact with the U.S., and spending more millions spent on financing anti-communist "dissidents" in Cuba. Genuine defense of Cuba requires struggle for socialist revolution in the U.S. and throughout the Americas.

And the once-Trotskyist Spartacist League? Silence. This would be striking enough from any group claiming to be Marxist, let alone communist. But for a tendency whose origins went back to a historic and crucial fight for genuine Trotskyism at the time of the Cuban Revolution, it is doubly shameful. Some of its cyberspace apologists took up the cudgels in favor of ... the counterrevolutionary-led protests. But the SL, sphinx- or hydra-like, neither confirms nor denies whether that is its line. It seems, according to its online volunteer lawyers, that this is due to yet another all-consuming internal battle.



One of the pro-imperialist 2019 Hong Kong protests hailed by social-democratic pseudo-Trotskyists.

Left Voice/Trotskyist Fraction: Zigzagging Across the Class Line

Hovering on the left flank of the DSA milieu is Left Voice (LV), an internet media outlet that is part of an international network of the “Trotskyist Fraction.” (Known as the FT from its Spanish acronym, it is led by the Argentine Partido de los Trabajadores Socialistas, or PST.) As the FSP and SAlt echo Biden and AOC in fulsomely embracing the protests and denouncing repression by the Cuban government, LV talks out of both sides of its mouth. It notes that U.S. and bourgeois exile forces sought to “manipulate” the protests to promote counterrevolution, while mainly denouncing the bureaucracy, which it (like SAlt) calls capitalist-restorationist. The double-talk serves to cover the fact that *ultimately the FT lines up with imperialism*, as in 2019 over Hong Kong’s anti-China riots, and as it did in 1989-92 in the counterrevolutionary wave that swept through East Europe and the Soviet Union – all in the name of “democracy.”

The first, instinctive reaction of the FT and LV to the July 11 protests in Cuba was to denounce “police repression.” As noted above, the police only intervened when the protests became violent. In response to the arrest of Frank García Hernández (the main organizer of the 2019 Trotsky Conference in Havana) during the protests, *Left Voice* (12 July) published a statement demanding, “Repression and arbitrary detentions by the Cuban government must end. Yes to the democratic right to protest and to free trade union, social, and political organizations.” “Free trade unions”? This was the classic anti-communist demand of Cold War labor operatives – whose counterrevolutionary machinations led the U.S. labor federation to be known as the “AFL-CIA” – as they went about financing subversion in the Soviet bloc (e.g., Polish Solidarność). “Free political organizations”? What about counterrevolutionaries like the Patriotic Union of Cuba (UNPACU)? Trotskyists say, *no way!*

And that “democratic right to protest” – any protest? There was no mention of the role of U.S. government-funded actors and of *gusano* internet operations in the July 11 protests. At least it called for “hands off Cuba” and to “end the blockade,” although this is hardly radical, as almost every government in the world has voted year after year for almost three decades calling for the U.S. to end the embargo. Moreover, when the next day it was reported that García Hernández had been released, *Left Voice* repeated its “democratic” demand for freedom for counterrevolutionary agitation. This is a fundamental *class* issue, particularly in an isolated workers state under unrelenting imperialist assault – and *LV/FT is on the wrong side of the class line*.

Left Voice and the FT often use leftist verbiage to package their ingrained opportunist practice, so unlike out-and-out reformists like SAlt and the FSP, they started oscillating. The first iteration was an article, “End the U.S. Embargo of Cuba: Support the Revolution and the Right to Protest” (*Left Voice*, 12 July), saying they “reject the right wing, the church, and the ‘Patria y Vida’ movement that continue to capitalize on this discontent over the situation in Cuba, attempt to stifle the pending conquests of the revolution, and set the

path for capitalist restoration.” This time they defended the “right to demonstration and union organization of those who fight to defend and deepen the conquests of the Cuban Revolution,” while demanding “an immediate release of the political prisoners that defend the revolution.”

But, hold on, in an article on July 16 they were back to the original *bourgeois* democratic call: “In the present context, we must first of all fight government repression, and fight for the freedom of those arrested in demonstrations, and for freedom of expression, demonstration, and union democracy.”¹ So whatever happened to the call for the right to demonstration and union organization and freedom for political prisoners “that defend the revolution”? On July 17, we read: “We must not hand over the banner of democracy to imperialism and its agents.” Here the FT calls for “an end to repression; freedom for those detained” and “political freedom and freedom of organization for the Cuban masses.” Yet the next sentence calls for “legalization of the anti-imperialist Left parties and forces that defend the conquests of the revolution.”²

This was becoming downright schizophrenic: every day a different line on whether it’s calling for democratic rights for all (thus including counterrevolutionaries) or for defenders of the revolution, and now two lines in one article. So yet again, as the “Trotskyist” Fraction swayed to and fro, it was time for another corrective. On July 18, an article by one of the FT’s main writers, Claudia Cinatti, admitted that rightists not only “encouraged” and were “taking advantage of” the July 11 protests, they also “participated,” and “bombarded the social media,” using agencies “funded by the State Department,” along with “bots, ‘influencers’ and celebrities coopted by imperialism.”³ But along with “legalization of political organizations committed to defending the gains of the revolution,” there is once again a call for “the right to freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, freedom of trade unions.”

Wanting to have it both ways, with its endless zigzagging over fundamental questions of principle – of revolution vs. counterrevolution – the FT proved, yet again, blind to the class line.

The gyrations of the “Trotskyist Fraction” over Cuba make clear that it is anything but Trotskyist. In the *Transitional Program*, the founding document of the Fourth International, Trotsky emphasized that in the USSR under Stalin’s bureaucratic regime, the fight for “freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly and freedom of the press” must be part of “the struggle for the regeneration and development of *Soviet democracy*” (emphasis in original). And again: “Democratization of the soviets is impossible without legalization of *soviet parties*.” Not “free trade unions” in general; not the “right of assembly” for counterrevolutionaries as well; not “free-

¹ “Protests in Cuba: Between Imperialist Cynicism and the One-Party Regime,” *Left Voice*, 16 July.

² “The Mobilizations in Cuba and Defense of the Revolution,” *Left Voice*, 17 July.

³ “Cuba: Causes and Consequences of July 11,” *Left Voice*, 25 July. The article appeared in Spanish on July 18.



Yamil Lage / AFP

Repression? This is the aftermath of anti-government riot in Havana that social democrats claim was repressed.

dom of the press” for imperialist-financed publications, nor “free political organizations” of any stripe, but specifically *soviet* democracy, *soviet* parties.

This question was sharply posed during the 2019 Havana Trotsky conference. Comrades of the League for the Fourth International who participated there waged a sharp fight against “third camp” tendencies that raise such supposedly classless “democratic” demands, and thereby undercut defense of Cuba. As we reported on this groundbreaking event, our comrades said:

“Democracy. Is Trotskyism the champion of democracy ‘in general’? Does Trotskyism want democracy ‘in general’ in a state where capitalism has been abolished, in a bureaucratically degenerated or deformed workers state? Does Trotskyism call for freedom for all political parties in states of that type? Not according to Trotsky. Not according to Lenin. According to Lenin, if you read his ‘Theses on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat’ [1919], you’ll see that democracy ‘in general’ means bourgeois democracy. We stand for proletarian democracy. What is bourgeois democracy, the call for bourgeois democracy, in a bureaucratically degenerated or deformed workers state? It means capitalist counterrevolution. *Capitalist counterrevolution*.”

“And this is not an asterisk or a footnote for Trotsky. He wrote many polemics and whole books on these topics. Comrades should know that there was a fundamental split in the Trotskyist movement between those who upheld the program of the Fourth International, of unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism, and those who rejected this program, such as Max Shachtman. That meant that Shachtman refused to defend the Soviet Union in World War Two.”⁴

After one of our comrades gave a presentation on Trotsky’s last battles, including the fight against Shachtman, DSAer La Botz shouted “Shachtman was right” in taking a “third camp” position rather than defending the USSR, as Trotsky had insisted. Now La Botz’s immediate response to the July protests on Cuba was to call for the “right” of “Cubans” to “organize new political parties” in general and to “organize independent labor unions.”⁵ And the knee-

jerk response of the misnamed Trotskyist Fraction was the same line as that of this latter-day Shachtmanite.

Anti-Trotskyist Fraction Sided with Counterrevolution in the Soviet Bloc

Cinatti’s article claims that “free trade unions” is “a basic demand which Lenin defended in the 1920s in the Soviet Union.” False! Lenin held, in the 1921 trade-union controversy with Trotsky and Bukharin, that the trade unions in Soviet Russia should not be simply a state institution (although already fulfilling certain functions of the workers state) but should be mass organizations “open to workers of various political views and attitudes” while “under the leadership of the communist fractions.”⁶ This is very different from what the LV/FT as well as “labor” spokesmen for U.S. imperialism are calling for, the “freedom” to form anti-communist unions that would in reality be pro-capitalist political groupings serving as weapons against the workers state. And when the model of such a “union,” CIA-financed Solidarność, brought down the Polish deformed workers state in the late 1980s, the FT’s forerunner *opposed* calls to defend that state.

The Trotskyist Fraction resulted from a split with the current founded and led by the Argentine pseudo-Trotskyist Nahuel Moreno, whose followers were so rabid in their “solidarity with Solidarność” that they named their newspaper after it, copying the logo. The new Partido de los Trabajadores Socialistas (PTS – Socialist Workers Party), which gave rise to the FT, was founded in 1989, just as Polish Solidarność took power as the spearhead of counterrevolution in East Europe. Today, Claudia Cinatti writes that, “The processes of capitalist restoration started in 1989 have re-created exploitative relations, deepened inequality, and, against all democratic illusions, established authoritarian (Bonapartist) regimes.” But that was decidedly not what the PTS said at the time. On the contrary, it insisted that, “In short, the process we are going through is one of political revolution and not of capitalist counterrevolution.” And so it argued that calls to “defend the workers state” were a “crude capitulation to Stalinism.”⁷

Not only did the PTS explicitly *not* call to defend the bureaucratically deformed workers states against imperialism and counterrevolution (and denounced those who did), it actively *called for counterrevolution in East Germany* in the guise of

⁶ “On the Role and Tasks of Trade Unions,” X Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), March 1921.

⁷ *Cuadernos de Avanzada Socialista* No. 4 (April 1990).

defending “democracy.” Thus as struggle over the fate of the German Democratic Republic (DDR, from its initials in German) heated up, even as it talked of a “united, workers and socialist Germany,” the PTS called for the “Immediate withdrawal of all occupation troops from German soil, of the armed forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.”⁸ In neither case were these “occupation armies,” and as the then-Trotskyist International Communist League (ICL)⁹ underlined: “The Soviet troops have been the first line of defense of the workers states against imperialism, *and that is what the Morenoites want to withdraw.*”¹⁰

While the future Trotskyist Fraction joined the pro-imperialist chorus of Western leftists demanding withdrawal of Soviet troops, we were distributing Trotskyist literature to those troops, as well as forming soldiers committees in the DDR army on the program of mobilizing to stop counterrevolution. Then, following the March 1990 DDR elections – in which the ICL ran candidates on a program of “No to Capitalist Reunification” and “For a Red Germany of Workers Councils” – the PTS wrote that it “defended the right of the German masses to unite however they wish, even if they decide to do so within the framework of capitalism,” so long as it “is carried out democratically.”¹¹ Spelling that out, the next month they added the slogan: “For a Truly Sovereign Constituent Assembly” in East and West Germany. Here the FT’s hobbyhorse call for constituent assemblies everywhere was directly in the service of restoring capitalist rule.

⁸ *Avanzada Socialista*, 6 December 1989.

⁹ The founders of the League for the Fourth International include leading cadres of the ICL (expelled in 1996) who were directly involved in and responsible for its work in Germany, where the Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands (Spartacist Workers Party of Germany) was formed in January 1990 with comrades from both East and West Germany.

¹⁰ See “Morenoism: A Case Study of Stalino-phobia” in *Workers Vanguard* Nos.506 and 507, 13/27 July 1990.

¹¹ *Avanzada Socialista*, 30 March 1990.

Morenoites – Gusano “Socialists”

As the Trotskyist Fraction went back and forth calling for “free trade unions,” freedom for political parties and all “political prisoners” while claiming to oppose counterrevolution, the mainline followers of Nahuel Moreno dispense with the fig leaf and openly side with the anti-communists in the name of “democracy,” and not only in Cuba. After several decades of political banditry in which Moreno donned different disguises, sequentially posing as a Peronist, Maoist Red Guard, Guevarist guerrillaist, Sandinista guerrilla and Iranian Islamic populist, from 1982 on he settled down as a social-democratic advocate of a (bourgeois) “democratic revolution.” Throughout, Moreonite politics were marked by virulent anti-Soviet Stalino-phobia, to the point of calling (in response to the 1980 Soviet intervention against CIA-backed “holy warriors” in Afghanistan) to extend the mullah-led “Iranian revolution” to Soviet Central Asia.¹

So having examined the wayward off-spring, let’s look at the official heirs of the pseudo-Trotskyist imposter.

A July 14 statement by the Morenoite International Workers League (LIT, from

¹ See “Morenoites Call for Counterrevolution in the USSR,” *Spartacist* No. 27-28, Winter 1979-80.

The real position of the current that is now the Trotskyist Fraction in 1989-90 was for “democratic” counterrevolution, refusing to defend the workers states as they were being liquidated by imperialism. Today it joins the imperialist outcry to free all those detained in the July 11 protests that were instigated, propagated and exploited by counterrevolutionary forces. In Mexico, the FT affiliate noted that the government of the bourgeois populist Andrés Manuel López Obrador sent aid to Cuba, but took AMLO to task for “not say[ing] a word about the repression unleashed by Díaz-Canel’s government, nor about the political prisoners after the recent demonstrations” (*La Izquierda Diario*, 27 July). So the FT is *calling on the capitalist Mexican government* to demand the freeing of those arrested in anti-communist-led protests!

The Trotskyist Fraction claims now to have broken with Morenoism, but maintains Moreno’s overall “democratist” outlook, constituent assemblies and all, and his penchant for constant maneuverism. Far from repudiating its tailing of capitalist counterrevolution in the crucial period of 1989-92, this was a central building block for what became the FT. After the July 11 events in Cuba, the official Morenoites noted that the FT’s back-and-forth over the protests meant that, in its several articles, there was “not a single concrete orientation about what an FT member should do faced with these mobilizations.... Should they promote and participate in them, ... or on the contrary, fight them and call to not participate.”¹² For our part, the League for the Fourth International declared forthrightly, “Trotskyists would have joined the pro-government mobilization, appropriately equipped to stop those who would bring back the Yankee imperialists and gusanos.”¹³

¹² LIT-CI, “What Must the Policy of Trotskyism Be Toward the Present Cuban Process?” (in Spanish), 14 August.

¹³ “The Truth About Cuba Protests – Defend the Revolution Against U.S. Imperialism and Its Frontmen.”

its Spanish and Portuguese acronym) proclaimed: “Total Support to the Struggle of the Cuban People.” It wholeheartedly adopted the language of the *gusano* counterrevolutionaries denouncing the “Cuban dictatorship” and the “dictatorship of an oligarchy concentrated atop the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC).” The LIT says that although Cuba was “the first victorious socialist revolution in the Americas,” this is all part of a past of which “the capitalist restoration, completed by Castroism itself, eliminated any trace.” It warns readers not to be “confused” by “the struggle between the Cuban bourgeoisie in Miami and the Cuban regime,” which is supposedly just about “who shall take charge of the capitalist restoration [which has been] carried out by the state.”

It goes on endlessly in this vein, denouncing the “capitalist dictatorship, like that in China, a dictatorial regime in the service of capital.” Many may indeed find it hard to swallow the Morenoite fiction that in Cuba a counterrevolution took place unbeknownst to all (they place the date “in the 1990s”), carried out by the same people who led the revolution. U.S. imperialists, Cuban *gusano* exiles and the governing Stalinist bureaucracy all insist the fight is over what

they (inaccurately) call communism. To back its claim of a phantom counterrevolution, the LIT lists various European, Russian, Latin American and Canadian companies doing business in Cuba. This hardly amounts to restoring *capitalist rule*, and in any case, the fundamentals of the Cuban economy are not set by profits or losses in a capitalist market but by the PCC leaders.

The reality is that Cuba is, and has been since the early 1960s, a bureaucratically deformed workers state, which U.S. imperialism has never ceased trying to overthrow. As we have explained in detail in our pamphlet on Cuba,² the Castro regime, emerging from the guerrilla army that destroyed the old state apparatus ruled by rightist dictator Fulgencio Batista, was pushed by Washington’s provocations into alignment with Khrushchev’s Soviet Union, building up the corresponding bureaucracy and adopting the Stalinist policy of building “socialism in one country.” After the 1991-92 counterrevolution that destroyed the USSR (which the Morenoites hailed!), and thus cut off the vital Soviet aid that kept the island economy afloat, the Cuban Stalinist bureaucracy has adopted pro-capitalist economic “reforms” and tried to attract capitalist investment. As opposed to this, authentic Trotskyists call to form workers councils in a *proletarian political revolution* to oust the bureaucracy and unleash the energy of the Cuban working class *in defense of the Revolution*.

In another article, the Morenoite LIT declares that, contrary to abundant evidence, “the character of the July 11 mobilizations was neither reactionary nor ‘pro-imperialist’” but rather was “a process of just and legitimate struggle.” The same line is echoed by smaller Morenoite tendencies, like the Argentine Izquierda Socialista, leading party of the International Workers Unity tendency (UIT, from its Spanish initials). The IS/UIT declared that “we support the popular protest,” and that the imperialist blockade “is not the fundamental cause of the grave social situation the Cuban people are enduring,” but instead it is “capitalism *a la cubana* [that] has existed for decades” on the island.³ This group equates the protests in Cuba with “mobilizations in Chile, Colombia, Peru or Brazil against austerity.” Really? Like Colombia, where well over 100 have been killed and “disappeared” by the government of Iván Duque, which continues the murderous work of its rightist predecessors that murdered untold thousands of leftists and trade unionists? What a cynical whitewash of capitalist terror!

In turn, the Argentine Nuevo MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo), of the Socialismo o Barbarie international tendency, declares that Cuba is a “bureaucratic state,” explicitly denying that it was ever a bureaucratically deformed workers state.⁴ The Nuevo MAS seems to have had some difficulties with its initial support for the protests, however, later issuing a “corrected and revised report,” which while declaring the “legitimacy” of the July 11 “outbreak,” notes that “it would be hard for the protests not to be used

² See the Internationalist Group Class Readings, *Cuba: A Bureaucratically Deformed Workers State* (August 2010).

³ *El Socialista*, 15 July.

⁴ IzquierdaWeb, 18 July. This is similar to Shachtman’s claim that the USSR under Stalin was “bureaucratic collectivist,” to excuse his refusal to defend it in World War II. Not surprisingly, the Nuevo MAS’ prime source on Cuba is the Shachtmanite Samuel Farber.

by the right.” It adds that “in Cuba we are facing a fight on two fronts,” namely “against Castroism and ‘progressives’” who defend the bureaucracy and “against the *gusanos* and imperialism.” In keeping with this “third camp” position, the Nuevo MAS/Socialismo o Barbarie does *not* call to defend the Cuban state against counterrevolution.⁵

A third Morenoite tendency, the Argentine Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores (MST), of the International Socialist League (LIS, from its Spanish acronym), is more circumspect, declaring that “the July 11 mobilization was heterogeneous” and noting the impact of the economic blockade in causing shortages.⁶ At the same time, the LIS describes Cuba as having embarked on a “restorationist course that began in the 1980s” and “accelerated” in the 1990s as a result of the “disintegration” of the USSR, but which has not yet been “consummated.”⁷ And while the MST/LIS is not quite so openly counter-revolutionary as the other Morenoite tendencies on Cuba, its Venezuelan affiliate, Marea Socialista, is notoriously rightist, having held formal talks with the Yankee’ would-be puppet president, Juan Guaidó.

All of these offshoots of the tendency founded by the pseudo-Trotskyist Nahuel Moreno supported the July 11 protests in Cuba, whether fulsomely (PSTU/LIT), “critically” (MAS/SoB) or equivocally (LIS); they all denounce the “repression” of the protests; and whether claiming that a “capitalist dictatorship” has already been restored on the besieged island, or that a “restorationist bureaucracy” is irrevocably establishing bourgeois rule, they all direct their fire mainly against the Castroite “dictatorship” rather than against the imperialist and pro-imperialist forces that are trying to overthrow the Cuban deformed workers state and against pro-capitalist sectors of the bureaucracy that endanger it. Thus in practice the Morenoites of all denominations are stooges of imperialist-led counterrevolution, in Cuba as elsewhere.

The LIT, in particular, has made its denunciation of “capitalist Cuba” a calling card. This requires a fundamental revision of the Trotskyist analysis of the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet workers state under Stalin. Trotsky insisted, against James Burnham, who would soon become a leader of Shachtman’s petty-bourgeois opposition tendency in the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, that “The class character of the state is determined by its relation to the forms of property in the means of production.”⁸ For the Morenoites, in contrast: “the (objective) social-economic bases that are being built depend on a factor that we can consider ‘subjective’: the will of the ‘power’ (the state and the political regime that controls it) to promote and defend these social-economic bases.” If that regime “undertakes a policy” that would “promote a capitalist functioning of the economy, it ceases to be a workers state and has become a capitalist state.”⁹

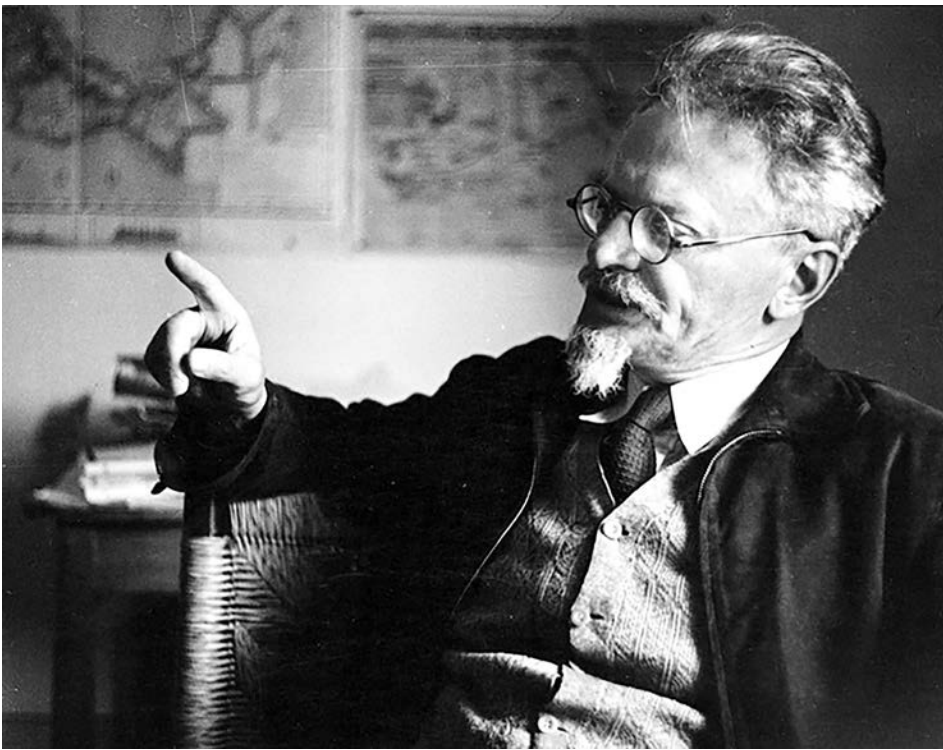
⁵ “States exist, to be sure. But we do not sum up our policy or start from fights between states.... So we do not start with the blockade. We start with the legitimacy, or not, of a particular mobilization,” as the July 11 protests whose “legitimacy” they defend (IzquierdaWeb, 25 July). The “correction and revision” of the report was evidently substantial, as the entire issue of the Nuevo MAS’ publication *Socialismo o Barbarie* No. 596 disappeared from its website.

⁶ MST/LIS, 24 July.

⁷ Periodismo de Izquierda, 31 July.

⁸ Leon Trotsky, “Not a Workers and Not a Bourgeois State?” (November 1937).

⁹ LIT-CI, “What Must the Policy of Trotskyism Be Toward the Present Cuban Process?”



Leon Trotsky in Coyoacán. The founder of the Red Army and of the Fourth International defended the Soviet Union against imperialism and counterrevolution. The pseudo-Trotskyist Morenoites side with imperialists and counterrevolutionaries against Cuba.

So for the Morenoite LIT, the class character of the Cuban (or Chinese, or Vietnamese, or North Korean) state depends not on the objective, material basis of the property forms that it rests on but on the perceived subjective political “will” and policies of the leadership. This was a common thread of the petty-bourgeois oppositions that broke with Trotsky and the Fourth International, refusing to defend the Soviet workers state in war on the grounds of the *policies* of Stalin and his heirs. Whether they labeled the USSR “bureaucratic collectivist” (Shachtman/Burnham), “state capitalist” (Cliff) or some other construct, these anti-materialists based their “analysis” on what they divined to be the ideas of the leadership. It is the same basis on which Mao declared Khrushchev’s Soviet Union “social-imperialist,” and on which Maoists declared China under Deng “capitalist,” because they were led by “capitalist roaders.”

This asserts that counterrevolution can take place by a mere change of leaders, or even a change in the leaders’ policies without any struggle, and often unnoticed until years later. What it means in practice, is writing off the bureaucratically degenerated/deformed workers states before the final battle is posed, claiming there is nothing left to defend. So the LIT now claims that China became a “capitalist dictatorship” in 1978 with Deng’s “four modernizations”; that the USSR went capitalist in 1985-86 with Mikhail Gorbachev’s proclamation of *perestroika* market reforms; and that Cuba did so in 1994 as the central planning council was folded into the economic and planning ministry. None of these measures established capitalist rule, and this anti-Marxist “analysis,” that capitalism has already been restored, *serves to justify the LIT’s support for actual counterrevolutionaries in China and Cuba today.*

The upshot in the Soviet Union was that when the key battle did occur, with Boris Yeltsin’s August 1991 countercoup in conjunction with U.S. president Bush,¹⁰ the

¹⁰ When Soviet leader Gorbachev was seized by a cabal of rump Stalinist bureaucrats (the Emergency Committee), the pro-capitalist Russian Federation president Yeltsin moved to seize power, in telephone communication with and the backing of U.S. president George G.W. Bush, with the CIA’s Radio Liberty broadcasting directly from an office in Yeltsin’s headquarters. See “Soviet Union: X-Ray of a Coup,” *Workers Vanguard* No. 540, 6 December 2021.

LIT not only did not oppose this, it hailed this as a new “Russian Revolution.” The then-revolutionary International Communist League (ICL) instead called for “Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!” Tens of thousands of copies of this appeal in Russian were distributed by our comrades in the Soviet Union. Earlier, in an October 1990 conference of Soviet miners in Kuznetsk, where ICL representatives sold hundreds of copies of a Russian-language bulletin calling for workers soviets and opposing a capitalist market economy, we ran into Morenoites working together with hard-core “AFL-CIA” counterrevolutionaries in pushing for a Solidarność-type anti-communist “union.”

As for Cuba, the Morenoites counterrevolutionary agitation goes way back. In August 1994 during the “Special Period” when the island nation was desperately short of everything following the end of Soviet aid, a few hundred people rioted on Havana’s seaside avenue, the Malecón, in what became known as the “*maleconazo*.” Mexican supporters of the Morenoite LIT published an article (*El Socialista*, October 1994) praising this counterrevolutionary action, along with another article hailing the “Cuban proletariat in the U.S.” for blocking an agreement between the Democratic administration of Bill Clinton and Fidel Castro. The Morenoites wrote that “hundreds of thousands of Cuban exiles hate Castro” and his “dictatorial regime” because they “had to leave their fatherland and separate from their families.” They approvingly quoted “Cuban leaders in exile” and hailed a demonstration called by the Cuban American National Foundation led by the fascistic Jorge Mas Canosa.¹¹ *The Morenoites really are gusano “socialists”!*

This is not some literary dispute – at key moments the Morenoites have intervened with their bogus arguments as *active counterrevolutionaries*. The ludicrous “theoretical” claims they come up with to justify this are – like those of Max Shachtman and Tony Cliff before them – are utterly threadbare. If Cuba is capitalist, who are the members of the capitalist class that own the means of production? A layer of bureaucrats who run enterprises, and can be promoted

¹¹ See “Morenoites and Cliffites, *Gusano Socialists*?” in *Espartaco* No. 6, Winter 1994-95.

or purged, is a parasitic growth on the workers state, but they are not capitalists. And if Cuba has already been a “capitalist dictatorship” for 27 years, according to these phonies, how come U.S. imperialism is keeps trying to overthrow it after repeatedly failed attempts to do so? On the other hand, if according to Morenoite split-offs like the Trotskyist Fraction and others, the Cuban bureaucracy is solidly “capitalist-restorationist,” why hasn’t it been able to finish the job in more than a quarter century, or a decade, depending on their dating? In reality, despite the Cuban leaders’ pro-capitalist initiatives, there has been plenty of backsliding ... and resistance.

Leon Trotsky’s Fourth International was founded on the program of intransigent opposition to the Stalinist bureaucracy, and intransigent defense of the Soviet workers state that the Stalinist misleaders betrayed with their anti-Marxist dogmas of building “socialism in one country” and seeking “peaceful co-existence” with imperialism. Cuba’s experience is proof positive of the impossibility of both, and of the bankruptcy of Stalinism. But the Cuban workers state – with its enormous achievements in education, medicine and health care – as bureaucratically deformed as it is, is a historic conquest for all of humanity, and *must be unconditionally defended*. Those like the Morenoites who refuse to do so in the hour of need, placing themselves on the other side of the barricades along with the *gusanos* and Yankee imperialists, are *traitors not Trotskyists*.

Trotsky, in his analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet Union under Stalin, repeatedly emphasized the brittle and contradictory nature of the bureaucracy. In the Transitional Program (1938), he wrote: “either the bureaucracy, becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back to capitalism; or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to socialism.” At the same time, he stressed that “all shades of political thought are to be found among the bureaucracy,” from genuine Bolshevism to fascism. The counterrevolutionary sectors, “candidates for the role of compradors, consider, not without reason,” that their privileges can be insured “only through rejection of nationalization, collectivization and monopoly of foreign trade in the name of ... capitalism.” There is no doubt that such sectors exist in Cuba, and are growing.

But not the entire bureaucracy is capitalist-restorationist, especially given the likelihood that counterrevolution would bring about a bloodbath of supporters and officials of the regime. Trotsky noted that “The revolutionary elements within the bureaucracy, only a small minority, reflect, passively it is true, the socialist interests of the proletariat.” In a crisis, they could be thrown to the workers’ side. But that requires, first of all, the understanding that capitalist rule has not already been restored, nor is the entire regime dead-set on restoring it. It calls for a genuinely Marxist program to *mobilize the working class in defense of the workers state*, including to *form workers councils to preserve and extend the gains of the Cuban Revolution*, and above all, to *forge an authentically Leninist-Trotskyist party* to lead the struggle.

The League for the Fourth International has put forward such a program for a *proletarian political revolution to fight for egalitarian communism*. The cheerleaders

for counterrevolution, as well as the camp followers tagging along behind, are unable to do so because they are, one and all, on the other side of the barricades – some enthusiastically, others with qualms and hesitations. The Cuban protests of July 11 are a time of reckoning, a litmus test for the left. *Where do you stand?* ■

Provocation...

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ber 11, which flopped. Its main focus now has been the planned upcoming November action, calling to “take to the streets until they’re gone” – clearly referring to the government established in the revolution that uprooted capitalist rule.

The main spokesman for the planned November 15 marches, Yunió García Aguilera, has been lionized by the imperialist press, which describes him as “a skinny, bespectacled, left-leaning playwright” (CNN, 4 November). The reality is rather different. In February 2018, García Aguilera traveled to Buenos Aires to participate in a seminar sponsored by a certain Center for Opening and Development of Latin America (CADAL, by its Spanish acronym), on the subject of “Changing Times and the New Role of the Armed Forces in Cuba.” CADAL is an anti-communist think tank which functions as an “Anti-Castro Operations Base”⁴ in Argentina, with much of its income coming from the CIA front National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in the U.S. and German imperialism’s Christian Democratic Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

That seminar was organized by Rut Diamint of Buenos Aires’ Torcuato di Tella University, a former official in the Argentine Ministry of Defense and a fellow of the NED, who has given lectures at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School and the Pentagon’s National Defense University. Also attending this event was Manuel Cuesta Morúa of the U.S.-backed “Transition Council.” The mission statement of the “Changing Times in Cuba Project” that sponsored the seminar says it seeks to “work with Cuban actors so they can generate activities allowing them to link up with members and ex-members of the FAR [Revolutionary Armed Forces] open to change.” In other words, this is a blatant effort at “regime change” by subverting the Cuban military from within.

In September 2019, García Aguilera and Cuesta Morúa attended a follow-up conference at the Madrid campus of Saint Louis University, a U.S.-based Jesuit research institute, on “the role of armed forces in processes of change in Latin America.” They were addressed by Richard Youngs of Carnegie Europe (which describes itself as a “trusted source” for “security analysis”) on “new forms of civic activism.” We know this because one of the participants in both meetings was Dr. Carlos Leonardo Vázquez González, an oncologist, who spilled the beans. Dr. Vázquez revealed on the program “Razones de Cuba” that for the past 25 years he has worked for Cuban state security infiltrating counterrevolutionary activities. He warned: “In the paramilitary workshop we participated in, there were two generals. What Yunió García Vázquez is seeking is for the Armed Forces to clash with the people, and we won’t permit that.”

⁴ *Página 12* (Buenos Aires), 27 February 2012.



Organizers of November 15 provocation **Unior García Aguilera (left) and Manuel Cuesta Morúa (right)** at 2019 dinner during seminar on “the armed forces in processes of change” held at Madrid campus of U.S.-based Jesuit university. The “Changing Times in Cuba Project” sponsoring the seminar seeks to infiltrate the Cuban military.

In addition, the TV/Internet program played a recording of a phone call between November 15 march figurehead García Aguilera and Raúl Saúl Sánchez, head of the Democracy Movement and a well-known anti-Cuba terrorist leader. Sánchez was part of the ultra-right counterrevolutionary terror groups Alpha 66, Omega 7 and CORU, later specializing organizing “freedom flotillas” from his base in Miami. On the phone call, García Aguilera says that they have moved up the date of the protest. Sánchez responds that “we are 100

percent for what Archipiélago is saying” and also praises Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, founder of the San Isidro Movement who was deservedly jailed (as were others) for instigating the U.S.-promoted July 11 protest in Havana. García stresses that they “need the support of the whole exile community” for the November 15 action. Faced with the revelations, he does not deny the phone call, and admits that he has maintained ties with the U.S.’ top diplomat in Havana and with a State Department Cuban affairs officer.

“Left” Lawyers for Counterrevolution

As November 15 approaches, a number of liberal, populist and reformist leftist personalities, politicians, academics, theologians and others have denounced the brazenly counterrevolutionary protest.⁵ However, while calling to end the blockade aimed at throttling the Cuban economy and to stop destabilizing actions, these self-described friends of Cuba do so not from a revolutionary but from an explicitly anti-revolutionary position. They denounce the “subversive demonstrations” for violating “the laws in force that prohibit any attack on the current political system, as is logical in all the states of the world,” while emphasizing that Cuba has never threatened the “security” of the United States. But contrary to these paeans to the established order, defense of the Cuban Revolution requires *international socialist revolution to defeat, disarm and overthrow the U.S. imperialist monster*, whose drive for world domination constantly threatens the life and security of oppressed people everywhere.

While rump Stalinist organizations around the world continue to pursue the pipedream of “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism, some social-democratic outfits that falsely claim to be Trotskyist have joined the imperialist outcry over repression in Cuba.⁶ After July 11, the lawyers’ brief for those protests was that they were heterogeneous, that not everyone who marched was a conscious counterrevolutionary, that it was all about shortages, even though many of the chants – *¡Abajo la dictadura!* (Down with the dictatorship!), *¡Patria y vida!* (Fatherland and life!) – were those of the pro-imperialist *gusanos*. So now what about the November 15 marches? This is an openly planned-in-advance event, called by people directly involved in U.S. operations against Cuba,

hailed by reactionary Cuban exiles and explicitly backed by Washington. Thus the positions now taken on it are doubly revealing, while shedding even more light on the political meaning of what left tendencies said about the events of last July.

The political tendency of the heirs of Argentine pseudo-Trotskyist fraudster Nahuel Moreno, mainly the International Workers League (LIT in Spanish and Portuguese), unsurprisingly gives full political support to the 15N provocation, declaring it a “legitimate democratic mobilization” with a “progressive democratic character.”⁷ Unsurprising, because the virulently Stalinophobic LIT, which called for Islamic fundamentalists to bring down the Soviet Union and praised anti-Castro protests by the “Cuban proletariat in exile” in Miami, have long peddled the fable that Cuba is a “capitalist dictatorship,” explicitly rejecting the Trotskyist characterization of the regime as a bureaucratically deformed workers state. The Morenoites are *gusano* “socialists,” out-and-out counterrevolutionaries and camp followers of U.S. imperialism.

Then there is the Trotskyist Fraction (FT in Spanish and Portuguese), represented in the United States by the media outlet Left Voice (LV). The FT split from the LIT not long after Moreno’s death in 1988 and claims to have broken politically with Morenoism. While the Morenoite LIT praised the July 11 protests, the FT called them “contradictory” but when the chips were down lined up with imperialism, denouncing Cuban government “repression” and calling for “freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, freedom of trade unions” for all – i.e., including counterrevolutionaries and pro-imperialist forces.⁸ Like its own track record

of backing counterrevolution in the former Soviet bloc, the FT’s zigzagging can be traced back to Moreno, a political quick change artist, whose trademark was posing as the left wing of whatever movement was in vogue.

On the November 15 action, the FT/LV declares:

“We repudiate the repressive and authoritarian policies of the [Cuban President and Communist Party leader Miguel] Díaz-Canel government and, specifically, the prohibition of the demonstration. At the same time, however, we have differences with the organizers, whom we do not support politically.”⁹

So, once again, the FT/LV strikes a “third camp” posture – neither Havana nor Miami, so to speak.¹⁰ But while having their political “differences” with the counterrevolutionary organizers, and including ritual calls against the economic blockade and for a “revolutionary solution,” these “post-Morenoites” end up on the side of U.S. imperialism and its Cuban *gusano* agents. The FT provides no revolutionary leadership – they don’t say, for example, whether they believe that anyone in Cuba who might be following their cyberpress should participate or not in the November 15 march, as the Morenoite LIT baited them over July 11. Even worse, playing with their “neither-nor” policy while condemning the prohibition of the U.S. imperialist-promoted demonstration, the “Trotskyist” Fraction is facilitating the counterrevolutionary provocation. And while piously invoking “workers’ self-organization,” it uses the same terms as the U.S. State Department. For example:

“We support ... the rights of the Cuban people ... to exercise their freedoms of expression, their ability to assemble peacefully.” (State Department press briefing, 26 October)

“We must defend the right to freedom of assembly, to meetings and deliberations in workplaces, to demonstrate, to strike, to freedom of the press....” (*Left Voice*, 5 November)

“Freedom” for all assemblies, marches, demonstrations, press, etc., in a workers state? Lenin continually exposed how the bourgeoisie used verbiage about freedom “in general” as a weapon against the struggle for workers rule.¹¹ The near-identical language is not because the FT is copying the State Department, but because it is basing its denunciation on

⁹ “November 15 March in Cuba: Against Government Repression, For a Revolutionary Solution to the Crisis,” *Left Voice*, 5 November.

¹⁰ During the anti-Soviet Cold War, the classic slogan of “third camp” renegades from Trotskyism, followers of both Tony Cliff and Max Shachtman, was “neither Washington nor Moscow.” But key was their refusal to defend the USSR, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, and with their “neither-nor” rhetoric, they in fact supported U.S. imperialism.

¹¹ For example: “Let the liars and hypocrites ... the bourgeois and their supporters hoodwink the people with talk about freedom in general, about equality in general, about democracy in general.... Ask them: ‘Equality between what sex and what other sex?’ ‘Between what nation and what other nation?’ *Between what class and what other class?*’ ‘Freedom from what yoke, or from the yoke of what class? Freedom for what class?’ ‘Whoever speaks of politics, of democracy, of liberty, of equality, of socialism, and does not at the same time ask these questions, does not put them in the foreground, does not fight against concealing, hushing up and glossing over these questions, is one of the worst enemies of the toilers, is a wolf in sheep’s clothing, is a bitter opponent of the workers and peasants, is a servant of the landlords, tsars, capitalists’ (“Soviet Power and the Status of Women,” 1919).

⁷ See “A polémica com o stalinismo sobre Cuba e o 15N,” LIT-QI, 1 November.

⁸ See the section on “Left Voice/Trotskyist Faction: Zigzagging Across the Class Line” in the article “Cuba Protests: Litmus Test for the Left.”

⁵ CubaDebate, 10 November.

⁶ See “Cuba Protests: Litmus Test for the Left,” *The Internationalist*, October 2021.

bourgeois-democratic norms. Nowhere in its shameful statement does it refer to Cuba as a workers state, however bureaucratically deformed, nor does its piece call to defend Cuba against imperialism and counterrevolution. This, despite the fact that the *Left Voice* statement (translated from the FT’s *Izquierda Diario*, 1 November) notes that the Archipiélago call for the 15N march does not condemn the U.S. embargo/blockade, and that the signers of its appeal include members of the “Council for Democratic Transition in Cuba,” that this Council calls for a “market economy” (capitalism) and compensation for expropriations by the Cuban Revolution, and is presided over by Daniel Ferrer (a notorious U.S.-funded *gusano*).

So the FT/LV opposes Cuba’s prohibition of a mobilization of forces that it admits are “pro-imperialist” and in favor of “capitalist restoration.” Thus they are providing a “democratic” cover for those who would make Cuba a U.S. neocolony, as it was for over half a century before the 1959 Revolution that dealt imperialism a blow it has never forgiven. While the mainline Morenoites are flat-out counterrevolutionaries, the post-Morenoite FT is acting as *lawyers for the counterrevolution*, insisting on a supposed “right” of forces mobilizing to overthrow the workers state and bury the Cuban Revolution. As we have shown, this is the anti-Trotskyist line the FT took in East Germany (1989) and the USSR (1991-92). Genuine Trotskyists know that claims of a “right” to counterrevolution are among the oldest social-democratic dodges in the book, evoked to give “democratic” alibis for opposing or evading the *class* interests of defending the dictatorship of the proletariat embodied in the state that resulted from smashing the dictatorship of Yankee capital in Cuba.

The imperialists and their frontmen keep repeating self-serving lies, claiming that Cuba can’t feed its own people, when the U.S. has done everything to asphyxiate the island’s economy for six decades. They pretend that Cuba’s vaunted medical system has collapsed in the COVID-19 pandemic, when Cuba has now fully vaccinated more than 70% of the population – more than almost every other Latin American country – with vaccines it developed and produced amid the U.S. blockade. Moreover, Cuba has also vaccinated 96% of all children and youth, from ages 2 to 18, something that is only beginning in most capitalist countries. On the basis of this stunning achievement, Cuba is reopening schools for in-person classes and reopening tourism, both on November 15 – the very day the counterrevolutionaries have chosen for their provocation.

As Trotsky defended the Soviet Union in World War II, despite and against Stalin, *genuine Trotskyists defend Cuba and all the remaining deformed workers states (China, Vietnam and North Korea) against imperialism and counterrevolution*. We call to replace the stultifying Stalinist bureaucracies, whose pro-capitalist policies undermine that defense, with organs of soviet democracy in a proletarian political revolution led by a genuinely communist, egalitarian and internationalist party like the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky. This means fighting for the program of *permanent revolution* throughout the continent, extending socialist revolution to the imperialist monster. Our watchword: *Proletarians of all countries, unite!* ■

Kenosha...

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BS that this murder spree was, or could have been, a case of “self-defense” by the teen killer. While the victims were white, this travesty of a trial has been a horror show of the *racist* injustice meted out in the courts.

All the talk of “self-defense” by Rittenhouse is a blatant cover for the fact that the killer was part of a *swarm of fascistic, gun-toting militia members whose very presence was a deadly provocation* aimed at the hundreds of unarmed protesters against racist injustice who marched that night, and against any and all black people in Kenosha. Rittenhouse menacingly brandished the AR-15 semi-automatic rifle he was carrying, pointing it directly at demonstrators. If Joseph Rosenbaum pursued the killer, trying to take his gun away, as the defense argued, *he had every right to do so* – although it was deadly dangerous to attempt it – as *Rittenhouse was an immediate deadly danger to the protesters*. Yet the *prosecution* grotesquely accepted the possibility of claiming “self-defense” even as it charged Rittenhouse with homicide (murder).

There should have been mass protests around the country against this fake trial that has been rigged from the outset in favor of the murderer, the fascistic militias he joined with as they went gunning for anti-racist protesters, and the police they worked in collaboration with. But while there has been plenty of media coverage, and some protests by local groups in Kenosha, the left nationally has not been seen. It’s another example of the “Biden effect.” When Republican racist-in-chief Donald Trump was in the White House, millions took to the streets to protest racist terror. But now that the Democrats control the presidency and both Houses of Congress, whether it’s a matter of protesting mass deportations of Haitians or judicial racism, the left is almost entirely missing in action.

The sham trial in Kenosha is an example of what is now standard operating procedure for district attorneys around the country dealing with racist killings post-George Floyd. No longer can D.A.s get away with simply refusing to indict kill-crazed cops, as they did in the case of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and Eric Garner in Staten Island, New York. Now they bring murder charges to get the heat of public anger off their backs, and then argue the cases in such a way that the trigger-happy gunmen get off, or at most receive a greatly reduced sentence. The same is happening in the Georgia trial of the racist murderers of Ahmaud Arbery. And if one individual has to take a fall for the team (“law enforcement”), as we wrote of Derek Chauvin, who murdered George Floyd:

“[E]veryone knows the conviction of one killer cop won’t stop racist police murder.... [T]he conviction of one murdering police officer does not alter the system of racist repression that is integral to American capitalism.”¹

Today the authorities worry that Kenosha could explode in the wake of a verdict. Wisconsin Democratic governor Tony Evers has activated 500 National

¹ “One Year After George Floyd, Racist Killer Cops Keep Killing,” *The Internationalist* No. 63 (April-June 2021).

OUTRAGE! KILLER VIGILANTE WALKS

KENOSHA / NEW YORK, November 19, 2 p.m. – Minutes ago, the jury in the Wisconsin trial of teenage killer Kyle Rittenhouse handed in a verdict of not guilty on all counts. Letting this vile murderer of two anti-racist protesters walk is proof positive that there is no justice in the capitalist courts. Rittenhouse was not a lone killer. The gunman was part of a swarm of white supremacist vigilantes who infested Kenosha that night in August 2020, working in tandem with the police. This hideous verdict will embolden murderous fascist thugs and killer cops everywhere. This is the trial of George Zimmerman, the vigilante murderer of Trayvon Martin, all over again. All opponents of racist terror should protest this atrocity. **For Worker/Black/Immigrant Action Against Racist Terror!**

Guardsmen, and Democratic Kenosha mayor John Antaramain’s police say they have “improve[d] response capabilities to large scale events,” meaning they are ready to crack down even harder on any protests.² Facing the threat of a new wave of racist repression, there should be *mass worker/black/immigrant action* – mobilizing the power of labor from Chicago to Milwaukee – to *defend the hard-hit African American and Latino population of Kenosha and Racine*.³ Against the fascistic militias, as we wrote in a leaflet for at a 30 August 2020 Internationalist protest in New York City:

“As revolutionary Marxists, we uphold the *right of armed black self-defense* and have called for the formation of *workers defense guards, based on the mass organizations of the working class, against racist and fascist threats*.”

–“Cops, Feds and Fascists Unleash Racist Terror in Kenosha, Wisconsin” (28 August 2020), reprinted in *The Internationalist* No. 61, September-October 2020

Travesty of a Trial: The Racist Injustice System at Work

Even before the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse got underway, the stage was being set for judicial fraud in Kenosha. Much liberal media attention has focused on the judge, Bruce Schroeder, who is certainly a real piece of work.⁴ Early on, he ruled that the prosecution could not refer to the people the defendant shot (and in two cases killed) as “victims,” saying it is a “loaded term,” but he declared that the defense could refer to them as “rioters,” “looters,” and “arsonists”! This is a bald statement of the almost universal tactic in trials of racist killings – putting the victims on trial instead. Schroeder also refused to allow a video by Rittenhouse of himself watching people he called looters leave a CVS pharmacy, saying he wished he had a gun to shoot them. The judge justified the exclusion precisely because it showed that Rittenhouse was prone to deadly violence:

“You know why it was excluded in the first place? Because it was propensity evidence.... You’re talking about his attitudes? His attitude is he wants to shoot people.”

In other pre-trial rulings, Schroeder set bail for the shooter at \$2 million, which was quickly paid by right-wing supporters,

² See “With new SWAT team in place, KPD to purchase armored vehicle, high-tech robot in 2022,” *Kenosha News*, 10 November.

³ Nearby Racine, Wisconsin has been rated the third-worst city for black people in the United States by *USA Today* (16 November 2018).

⁴ “The Kyle Rittenhouse Judge Is the Actual Worst,” *Vanity Fair*, 10 November; “I Hope Everyone Is Prepared for Kyle Rittenhouse to Go Free,” *The Nation*, 27 October; “The people Kyle Rittenhouse shot can’t be called ‘victims’, a judge says. Surprised?” *Guardian*, 31 October.

with a big chunk from Trump megadonor and My Pillow CEO Mike Lindell. (The teen gunman was an avid Tumper who had a front-row seat at a January 2020 MAGA rally in Iowa. In turn, after his fan’s August 2020 shooting spree, Trump justified the murders.) When the D.A. asked to up the bail after Rittenhouse skipped town without giving an address, the judge refused. He also refused to permit photos or videos of Rittenhouse giving the “white power” hand signal at a bar event organized in his honor by the Proud Boys, or evidence that this fascist outfit flew the teenage killer to Miami to meet their leader.

During the trial, Schroeder frequently berated the prosecutor, threatening to call a mistrial. He reviewed videos seated right next to Rittenhouse, and called on everyone in the courtroom, including jurors, to applaud a defense witness on Veteran’s Day. It was expected that jury selection would be lengthy, but the judge rammed it through in a day, including the selection of one man who said he couldn’t be an impartial juror because of his fervent support for the Second Amendment. Yet even one person dead-set on getting Rittenhouse off could prevent a guilty verdict. The judge also played a mock Jeopardy game with jurors and, bizarrely, had Rittenhouse, in front of the jury, pull six potential jurors’ names out of a lottery tumbler; they then became alternates.

Rittenhouse’s defense portrayed the wanton murderer as a do-gooder youth, who started his day in Kenosha by scrubbing graffiti off a school building, and who desperately defended himself against threatening demonstrators. It repeatedly tried to exclude evidence showing him pointing his semi-automatic rifle at protesters. The high point of its presentation was a staged scene with Rittenhouse on the stand where he breaks down weeping, describing his terror at thinking that the unarmed demonstrators might grab his AR-15 and shoot him. There were no tears of remorse

for the three men he shot, however, as the prosecution pointed out. The cynical display worked: as the jury returned from a break, some showed sympathy for the cry baby, baby-faced killer.

Predictable as the defense ploy was and grotesque as the judge’s actions were in eliminating any pretense of a “fair” trial before an “impartial” jury, the prosecution was even worse. A right-wing site wondered at the “bizarre” approach of Kenosha assistant district attorney Thomas Binger, saying, “It’s almost painful listening to Binger present testimony that builds the case for acquittal.”⁵ An Associated Press (10 November) “Explainer” citing legal experts headlined “Did state’s own witnesses hurt Rittenhouse case?” Repeatedly calling witnesses who said that the victims did not pose a “serious” threat to the killer, the prosecutor reinforced the bogus claim that the issue was “self-defense,” when Rittenhouse was clearly itching to use his gun on “looters.”

“Bizarre” is one way to describe the fact that the prosecution put fascists and far rightists on the stand who were at the scene that night to go after anti-racist protesters. A videographer for the Daily Caller web site, who was close by when Rittenhouse shot Rosenbaum, claimed that the victim lunged for the killer’s gun. Another was Army veteran Ryan Balch, a white supremacist who has disseminated Nazi propaganda featuring Hitler and who was a self-identified “Boogaloo Boi” – fascist provocateurs who attended Black Lives Matter marches for the purpose of setting off a race war. Rittenhouse spent much of the night on which he carried out his killings tagging along with Balch (see photo), who testified, for the prosecution, claiming that Rosenbaum shouted threats against the menacing militia thugs.

Then in the summation, assistant D.A. Binger went on about how chaotic the night was. He *viciously attacked the victim*, saying that Rosenbaum had overturned a dumpster and set it alight, was yelling at the (heavily armed) vigilantes, but was like “a little dog that barks a lot.” The prosecutor *approved the presence of the fascistic militias*, as they were on private property, and said it was “OK” for police to give water to these racist thugs and say (over a loudspeaker), “We appreciate you guys, we really do.” He excused the police not arresting the killer on the spot, although as cops talked with Rit-

⁵ “Rittenhouse Prosecutor Makes Case for Self Defense,” *Wisconsin Right Now*, 4 November.



Murderer Rittenhouse with fascist “Boogaloo Boi” Ryan Balch in Kenosha, 25 August 2020. Vigilantes were deadly threat to anti-racist protesters. Police pushed demonstrators toward militias to let racist gunmen “deal with them.”

Adam Rogan / Journal Times [Racine]

Honor Anthony Huber and Joseph Rosenbaum

Internationalist photo



Internationalist Group and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth called protest in New York City, 30 August 2020, in solidarity with Kenosha anti-racist protesters.

tenhouse, protesters were shouting that he had just killed people. *Binger's prosecution spit on the memory of Anthony Huber and Joseph Rosenbaum.*

One could argue that the prosecution deliberately threw this case, intentionally undercutting the charges. But it's more fundamental than that. District attorneys, like judges, are part of the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state, working directly with the police as part of the "law enforcement community." In fact, Binger is also prosecuting several of the anti-racist protesters arrested that night, and one can bet that he won't make so many supposed "unforced errors" of putting exculpatory witnesses on the stand in those cases. The fact is that on the night of 25 August 2020, and in general, the fascists and fascist militias which have been proliferating are seen by the cops as their reserves. "Stand back, and stand by," Trump said to the Proud Boys, reflecting this.

As Fascistic Militias Proliferate – For Workers Defense Guards!

This whole fraudulent trial has been presented as if it's all about a 17-year-old kid run amok. It is not. Kyle Rittenhouse was there because of, and was working directly with, fascistic militia types like Ryan Balch, who were prowling the city that night, looking to take out anti-racist demonstrators. The Kenosha authorities were well-aware of the presence of the armed vigilantes (one of whose leaders had emailed the police chief, whom he knew well), and city police and county sheriff's deputies coordinated with the fascistic militias, using armored vehicles to push the multiracial groups of protesters in their direction so that the white gunmen could "deal with them." This fact was entirely left out of the phony trial.

Kenosha residents and even current and former police officials say that the city's non-white people (about a fifth of the 100,000 total population) have long suffered "indignity at the hands of an overwhelmingly White police force that

has long drawn charges of targeting the city's Black and Latino communities."⁶ Only 4% of the local police are African American, and racial profiling ("pulling someone over because they're Black and driving a nice car") as well as racist abuse are common. Kenosha's police chief in August 2020 said the victims were themselves partly to blame because they were out after curfew. County sheriff David Beth said that the presence of militias "wasn't a violation of the law,"⁷ although they were out after curfew also.

The mobilization of armed militia supporters in order to repress and terrorize anti-racist demonstrators was the elephant in the room that was not raised in the Rittenhouse trial. These gunmen were a deadly threat to the protesters. An article by the Digital Forensic Research Lab (27 August 2020) reported that the "Kenosha Guard" Facebook page issued a call the night before the killings urging its members to "take up arms and defend out [sic] City tonight from the evil thugs." The Guard, a creation of former Kenosha council member Kevin Mathewson, also created a Facebook event, "Armed Citizens to Protect Our Lives and Property," which by the next night had hundreds saying they would go and some 5,000 "interested."

Soon after this posted, a second Facebook group was created, "STAND UP FOR KENOSHA!" and a user created another RSVP event page, "Citizen Brigade ... Stand Up Kenosha." A user posted, "Shoot to kill folks." And another: "Armed and ready. Shoot to kill." Rittenhouse carried out their call.

On the afternoon of August 25, a user on a Kenosha Reddit thread posted a warning:

"ATTENTION ALL NON-WHITES AND DEGENERATES OF KENOSHA. YOU HAVE UNTIL SUNDOWN TO PACK UP YOUR BELONGINGS AND LEAVE THE AREA, AFTER

⁶ *Washington Post*, 23 September 2020.

⁷ "Reconstructing the Rittenhouse Shootings: How Kenosha Echoed America's Polarization," *New York Times* video (transcript), 26 October.

THAT ANYTHING THAT HAPPENS TO YOU OR YOUR CHILDREN WILL BE YOUR FAULT!"

Later that afternoon a Facebook user identifying himself as a state officer of the Three Percenters Original sought to coordinate with the Kenosha Guard. On Reddit someone posted that 75 Proud Boys were on their way from Green Bay. And the Hitlerite "Boogaloo Boi" Balsh showed up, claiming to have 30 of his "friends" there. He also reported the presence of a group of bikers.

Balsh is captured on a video shortly before the crime saying to protesters, "Do you know what the cops told us today? They were like, 'We're gonna push them down by you, because you can deal with them, and then we're going to leave.'" He repeated this to a journalist for the independent news site *The Rundown Live*. That reporter said in an interview with the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism that it did appear that police pushed protesters "right down the militia's throat."⁸ In a lengthy internet post Balsh wrote: "a KPD Officer approached us and this is where they told us that they were going to be pushing the protesters towards us because we could deal with them." He added: "We never agreed to this."

Whatever the reality of these online postings and reports, the fact is that on the night of August 25, downtown Kenosha was crawling with armed white supremacists and fascistic militia of various brands terrorizing protesters and communities. In lily-white suburbs, some of these types set up roadblocks based on reports that Black Lives Matter was supposedly coming to "attack." There was plenty of hysteria and hype, but the result was deadly. This militia scene was what Kyle Rittenhouse was engaged in before he shot the three protesters, killing two, yet this was left unmentioned during the trial, particularly the role of the police. Why? Because the role of the prosecutor was above all to defend the machinery of state repression, and its auxiliaries.

Last August, the family of Anthony Huber filed a civil suit in federal district court against the Kenosha chief of police and sheriff, and against the city and county. They charged the officials with Huber's death, for having effectively "deputized Rittenhouse and other armed individuals ... and ratified their actions by allowing them to patrol the streets illegally with deadly weapons and shoot and kill innocent citizens." The suit cites much of the information related above, noting that many of the armed vigilantes were "avowed racists," and stating that if a black youth had done what Rittenhouse did, instead of being told to go home, "he would have been shot dead." A similar suit was filed in mid-October by Gaije Grosskreutz, the sole survivor of the bloodbath.

These lawsuits are important and could conceivably elicit additional damning information. But the basic facts about the intertwining of the official repressive organs of the state and the white racist, fascistic and outright fascist squads are utterly clear. They will not be altered by the courts, which are part and parcel of the same machinery which enforces the laws and injustice of the racist

⁸ "Militia member says Kenosha police sought to push protesters toward them on night of deadly shootings," *Wisconsin Watch*, 9 September 2020.

capitalist state, as it defends the interests of the bourgeois ruling class. *The murderer Rittenhouse pulled the trigger, and should be behind bars. But it was the capitalist state and its fascistic auxiliaries that were ultimately responsible for the death of Joseph Rosenbaum and Anthony Huber.*

All the talk at the Kenosha trial of "self-defense" is a replay of the trial of the racist vigilante George Zimmerman who stalked and murdered Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida in February 2012. Like the three protesters shot by Rittenhouse, Trayvon was demonized in the trial and in the media, leading to a pre-determined outcome of Zimmerman getting off.⁹ Now it is even worse, as the teenage murderer will be widely hailed, no doubt appearing on talk shows, while fascists and racists with itchy trigger fingers may be emboldened to take aim at anti-racist protests.

The fight against racist repression is a political struggle against all the parties and politicians of capital. Republican Trump visited Kenosha after the killings, suggested that the killer acted in self-defense and denounced "anti-police and anti-American riots." Democrat Biden came to town a couple of days later, met with black activists and the family of Jacob Blake and talked of confronting the "original sin of this country, 400 years old ... slavery and all the vestiges of it." But when Trump declared about protests over the cop murder of George Floyd that "when the looting starts, the shooting starts," Biden responded urging police to "shoot them in the leg." And the killing in Kenosha took place under police and National Guard commanded by Democrats.

As we have written, in the cities of the U.S., big and small, *Democrats are the bosses of the racist killer cops*. The fight against the "systemic racism" baked into the institutions, structures and daily life of American capitalism can only be ended by a revolution that brings down the whole oppressive edifice, replacing the dictatorship of the bosses by the liberating rule of the working class and the oppressed. The Internationalist Group calls for the right of armed black self-defense, for building workers defense groups, for worker/black/immigrant action against racist terror, and for black liberation through socialist revolution. As we wrote in August 2020 ("Cops, Feds and Fascists Unleash Racist Terror in Kenosha..."):

"The triple pandemic of economic crisis, COVID-19 and incessant racist police murder casts a stark light on the fact that the ruling class of this country is increasingly desperate to maintain its decaying social order. Both Republicans and Democrats have decided that this means increasing reliance on the forces of repression to head off and suppress unrest, rebellion and revolt. *Capitalism is killing us*. To defend our lives and the most basic rights of all, to unchain the power of the working class in the fight against racist repression, it is urgently necessary to *break with Democrats, Republicans and all capitalist parties and politicians! Build a revolutionary workers party to fight for a workers government! Only revolution can bring justice!* ■

⁹ See "Lynch Law U.S.A.: State Defends Murderer of Trayvon Martin," *The Internationalist*, May 2012.

After Court Orders Partial Legalization

Mexican Trotskyists Call for Free Abortion On Demand

The following article is translated from *Revolución Permanente* No. 11, October-December 2021, published by the Grupo Internacionalista, Mexican section of the League for the Fourth International.

Last September 7, the Mexican Supreme Court of Justice declared “absolute criminalization” of abortion unconstitutional throughout the country. The high court invalidated Article 196 of the Penal Code of the state of Coahuila which mandated that a woman who had a voluntary abortion and all those involved in the procedure be punished with jail time. The Court also invalidated a portion of Article 198 of the same code that prohibited medical personnel from assisting women who wished to terminate their pregnancy, and of Article 199 which made abortion a crime and set the limit for terminating a pregnancy in cases of rape at 12 weeks. With the unanimous vote of the justices, this ruling applies everywhere in Mexico.

Two weeks later, on September 20, the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional Article 10-B of the General Health Law of the Mexican Republic, which allowed medical and nursing personnel of the National Health System to use “conscientious objection” to justify refusing to perform health procedures permitted by law. The president of the Supreme Court, Minister Arturo Zaldívar, pointed out that the “conscientious objection” clause must not be “a blank check with which to deny health services, particularly the right to abortion” (*El País*, 21 September 2021). Although the court invited legislators to formulate another clause that does not touch on abortion, we insist that any provision of “conscientious objection” is a religious intrusion that undermines the obligation to care for patients.

The first of these judicial decisions represents a *partial* decriminalization of abortion, which should be performed free

of charge in public hospitals. It is an important step that will bring a sigh of relief to many women seeking to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. The second, by eliminating “conscientious objection,” removes a very real barrier to carrying out abortions. However, these are limited measures: voluntary abortion will only be permitted in the first 12 weeks of gestation, while it will remain a crime in the second and third trimesters. Contrary to what many feminists have claimed, the rulings do not mean a “decriminalization of abortion” as such. The possibility of having an abortion in safe sanitary conditions without having to pay impossible sums will remain a dream for thousands of women in the context of Mexico’s dilapidated public health system.

Until this year, abortion has been considered a crime in Mexico, except in Mexico City (since 2007) and more recently in the states of Oaxaca and Colima. But according to estimates by the Observatory of Maternal Mortality in Mexico, there are between 750,000 and one million clandestine abortions each year in the country. The vast majority are performed in appalling sanitary conditions, a reflection of the poverty and lack of support for the women involved. Moreover, according to official statistics, cited by IPAS Mexico, between 2010 and 2018, 90,562 women between 10 and 40 years of age died – more than 10,000 per year – “from causes related to abortion performed in unsafe conditions.” Yet there has not been a single maternal death from abortion in Mexico City’s legal abortion services in 14 years. *Abortion rights save lives.*

Despite their limited nature, the recent Supreme Court rulings have been the target of attacks by reactionary anti-women’s rights groups, some of which are openly fascist. They have marched in several cities around the country with large images of the Virgin of Guadalupe and the slogan “Long live Christ the King,” the battle cry of the Cristeros who impaled and mutilated communist teachers in the 1920s and ’30s. Shouting “yes to life, no to abortion,” reactionary crowds tried to intimidate women with green bandannas¹ for the decriminalization of abortion demonstrating outside the Supreme Court. The clerical-reactionary National Action Party (PAN) proclaimed its “defense of life from conception,” and the

¹ The green bandanna became the symbol of the Argentine feminist movement from 2018 leading up to the partial legalization of abortion there on 30 December 2020, which has had a great impact throughout Latin America.

Mexican Episcopal Conference (of the country’s Catholic bishops) called to maintain the criminalization of abortion.

It is worth asking what they mean when they speak of “preserving life.” An epitome of the perspective of the “pro-life” reactionaries came from a priest in Monclova, Lázaro Hernández, who declared in his homily on September 12 that women who abort “are good for nothing.” He then asked the following question: “Why don’t we kill the mother who is not going to be good for anything either?” (*La Jornada*, 13 September 2021). This is by no means the first time that the Catholic Church and its henchmen have openly called for the death penalty for women who have abortions.

We communist internationalists fight for the unrestricted right to free abortion, based exclusively on the decision of the woman or other pregnant person, at any time during pregnancy and with access to medical and health care of the highest quality. We also demand full free access to contraceptive measures, including those that can terminate an incipient pregnancy. This perspective is opposed not only to that of misogynist reactionaries, but also to that of timid bourgeois reformers. Ultimately, women’s oppression is rooted in private property and class society. The liberation of women from the burden of their centuries-old oppression can only be achieved with the overthrow of capitalism and the socialization of housework. This is a necessary precondition for freeing women from the domestic slavery to which the bourgeois family condemns them, and for their full and equal integration into social labor outside the home. *For women’s liberation through socialist revolution!*

Capitalism Kills

The Mexican Supreme Court ruling does not settle the matter. After the adoption of the law partially legalizing abortion in Mexico City in 2007, there was a reactionary barrage against abortion rights across the country. Between 2008 and 2017, under the guise of “protecting life from conception on,” 17 of the 32 state legislatures responded by imposing reactionary counter-reforms prohibiting termination of pregnancy in almost all cases (except, and to a limited extent, in cases of rape or risk of death of the mother). The Court’s recent ruling could lead to the dismantling of these measures, but this battle will be fought on a state-by-



Grupo Internacionalista, Mexican section of the League for the Fourth International, at May Day 2021 march in Mexico City.

state basis. Being primarily the result of decisions of the august justices, it is quite possible that they will be overturned by future federal legislatures or by new, more reactionary Supreme Court justices.

It is striking that the partial liberalization of abortion in Mexico is *not* coming from the bourgeois populist government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador and his National Regeneration Movement (MORENA). AMLO has been silent on the matter, and has on several occasions expressed his opinion that the right to abortion should be submitted to a popular vote. In a highly religious country, this is a way of opposing this elementary democratic right of women, in this case in accordance with the evangelical Christian views of the president.

This is not an irrelevant or anecdotal matter. The bourgeois feminist movement in Mexico is divided over the bourgeois populist president. Several feminists who support his government repeat the slogan that “the Fourth Transformation (as AMLO’s government calls itself) will be feminist or it will not be”. However, there are bourgeois politicians, including PAN members, who pronounce themselves feminists and come out for the right to legal interruption of pregnancy, even if only for electoral reasons; and there is an appreciable number of “progressive” bourgeois feminists who disdain López Obrador and therefore support the opposition PRD-PAN coalition or the reactionary Movimiento Ciudadano.

Like all bourgeois politicians, AMLO



“For the socialization of domestic labor.”

Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!



Internationalist contingent at 12 September 2021 NYC protest against Texas abortion law.

upholds the family as the fundamental nucleus of society. Thus he affirms the traditional role of women as “caregivers” in the framework of the traditional family: “So, we take care, by tradition, by custom, because the Mexican family is the most important institution of social security that exists,” and that the “tradition in Mexico is that daughters are the ones who take care of the parents” (*Animal Político*, 25 June 2020).

The fragility of the new legal provisions in Mexico can be seen in the mirror offered on the other side of the border. In Texas, the state legislature has imposed a new abortion regulation that makes it virtually impossible for women to terminate a pregnancy. The U.S. Supreme Court, now with an insuperable majority of reactionary and ultra-reactionary justices, refused to block implementation of the Texas law that prohibits almost all abortions after the sixth week of gestation, the time when most women learn they are pregnant. According to Texas clinics, 85 to 90 percent of the abortions they perform are performed after the sixth week.

In addition, the new law encourages third parties to sue medical and health care personnel who perform abortions by promising to pay \$10,000 and full restitution of legal fees if they win their lawsuits. It is feared that the Texas law and another

Mississippi law could pave the way for the repeal of the *Roe v. Wade* ruling that effectively legalized abortion in the United States in 1973. At a New York protest against the Texas law, held on September 12 shortly after the Mexican Supreme Court ruling, our comrades of the Internationalist Group/U.S. carried a sign with the slogan, “Workers Revolution Will Return South and West Texas to a Red Mexico, Where Women Can Get an Abortion.” This, they said, would include the return of the Alamo.

Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The struggle to make abortion an effective right cannot be limited to legislative reforms, much less can it depend on decisions by the high and mighty ministers of a reactionary court set up as the unappealable arbiter of what is permissible under the bourgeois “rule of law.” In particular, the possibility of terminating an unwanted pregnancy or giving birth in safe conditions is affected by the collapse of the public health system in Mexico. Devastated after the privatization process of Seguro Popular,² which continues to this day under the leadership of the AMLO government, the inability of this system to meet the needs of the population has been highlighted in the COVID pandemic, in which some 300,000 people have died.

² Popular Insurance. In Mexico, free health care for the population is supposedly guaranteed by Article 4 of the Constitution. This has been undermined for decades as private clinics, hospitals and medical insurance for more affluent sectors of the population proliferated. In 2003, the government of the right-wing PAN, as part of its program of privatizations, introduced the *Seguro Popular* to supposedly overcome inequities in health care delivery. The new program of private insurance expanded rapidly but was rife with corruption and actually limited health care for many poor families. From 2020 on, the present government replaced the *Seguro Popular* with the Institute of Health and Welfare.

Feminist groups responded to the partial decriminalization of abortion by the Supreme Court with exultant declarations, overlooking the serious limitations of its provisions. The Grupo de Información en Reproducción Elegida (Information Group on Reproductive Choice) declared: “the highest court in the country reaffirmed reproductive autonomy,” and “We in GIRE celebrate this ruling, a reflection of a historic struggle of the feminist movement for legal, safe and free abortion.” Marea Verde (Green Tide) effusively quotes the words of Chief Justice Zaldívar, who describes his decision as “a watershed in the struggle for women’s rights.”

On the left, the Movimiento de Trabajadores Socialistas (MTS, Socialist Workers Movement), affiliated internationally with the Fracción Trotskista current, writes: “Legal Abortion in Mexico: Our Rights Are Won in the Streets” (*Izquierda Diario*, September 27). It affirms that the Supreme Court ruling “can be a strong point on which the women’s movement can base itself and continue to advance.” They add a hodgepodge of other demands, such as free contraceptives, “integral, non-sexist and non-heteronormative sex education,” day care centers, wage increases, canteens, laundries, etc. But all without mentioning, even inadvertently, socialist revolution, nor touching the sensitive issue of the family. Thus their program is presented as a series of reforms under capitalism.

That women are not able to make the decision to give birth or not is only one of the most odious aspects of the oppression they suffer in class societies. It is a reflection of the role assigned to women in the bourgeois family. Ultimately, women’s liberation is impossible through the reform of capitalism because it is incompatible with preserving the family and domestic slavery. The family has the function of reproducing a new generation of exploited and of transmitting the ideological poisons of nationalism, machismo and the values of submission and discipline necessary to maintain wage slavery. For the woman worker, in addition to her oppression as a woman, she faces exploitation, in addition to anti-indigenous and anti-black racism, homophobia, etc.

The Internationalist Group fights for the unrestricted right to abortion, free and on demand, as an integral part of the struggle for a revolutionary workers and peasants government which by expropriating the bourgeoisie and establishing a socialized economy would lay the material basis (24-hour day-care centers, popular restaurants and high-quality housing, an education system genuinely open to all) to overcome the reactionary institution of the family. As we wrote in 2007 regarding the partial decriminalization of abortion in what was then the Federal District:

“The liberation of women requires the abolition of private ownership of the means of production through a socialist revolution which, in turn, will establish the material conditions for genuine emancipation.”

Women’s liberation requires abolition of private property in the means of production through a socialist revolution, which in turn will establish the material conditions for genuine emancipation.

—“Mexico: For Free Abortion on Demand!” *The Internationalist* No. 26, July 2007

While feminists and reformists of all stripes sink into a swamp of sectoralism, we communists struggle to forge a revolutionary workers party as the champion of all the op-

pressed. A Bolshevik vanguard party must be a true “tribune of the people” as V.I. Lenin stressed, armed with Leon Trotsky’s program and perspective of permanent revolution. At this time, when women’s rights are under frontal attack in the heart of U.S. imperialism, the struggle for the full right to abortion in Mexico and everywhere in Latin America can be a spark to unleash a revolutionary conflagration throughout the Americas.

This is what the Grupo Internacionalista, Mexican section of the League for the Fourth International, is dedicating its efforts to. Join the struggle! ■

Cuba...

sigue de la página 24

en Cuba resultaron inesperadas (excepto para sus instigadores) y consiguieron atraer a algunos elementos desesperados por las dificultades económicas —además de granjearse el apoyo de izquierdistas oportunistas que se ponen a la cola de todo supuesto “movimiento de masas” independientemente de su política— esta vez no hay lugar para la equivocación. Estamos ante un evento bien preparado cuyos organizadores y patrocinadores tienen el propósito de derribar la Revolución Cubana. El Grupo Internacionalista y la Liga por la IV Internacional abogan **por la movilización obrera para bloquear la movilización contrarrevolucionaria en Cuba planeada para el 15 de noviembre y para dispersar a los provocadores**. Como sugirió un partidario cubano de la Revolución en una discusión en línea, si los imperialistas yanquis están tan enamorados de las protestas (supuestamente), ¿por qué no darles una: una *marcha de masas hacia la embajada de EE.UU. para protestar contra el bloqueo económico*?

¿Quién maneja los hilos?

¿Quién está entonces detrás de la provocación de noviembre? En nuestro artículo “La verdad acerca de las protestas en Cuba” mostramos en detalle que éstas no fueron “espontáneas” sino que fueron instigadas por elementos vinculados con (y en algunos casos pagados por) el imperialismo norteamericano, para luego ser potenciada en Internet por la *gusanera* de Miami y Madrid. Ahora sabemos que el administrador principal y única figura pública del tenebroso grupo de Facebook “La Villa del Humor” que inició la primera protesta en San Antonio de los Baños en las afueras de La Habana el 11 de julio, Alex Pérez Rodríguez, es un pastor de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día *que reside en el sur de Florida* (*Mint Press*, 5 de octubre). Este mismo grupo convocó más tarde a un “paro nacional en toda Cuba” para el 11 de octubre, que fracasó. Pero su foco principal ha sido la planeada acción de noviembre, y ha llamado a “pala calle hasta que se larguen”, en clara referencia al gobierno establecido en la Revolución que erradicó el dominio capitalista.

El principal portavoz de las anunciadas marchas del 15 de noviembre, Yúnior García Aguilera, es objeto de adoración por parte de la prensa imperialista, que lo describe como “un dramaturgo delgado, con anteojos, izquierdista” (CNN, 4 de noviembre). La verdad es bien distinta. En febrero de 2018, García Aguilera viajó a Buenos Aires para participar en un seminario auspiciado por un Centro para la Apertura y el Desarrollo de América Latina (CADAL), con el título de “Tiempo de Cambios y el nuevo rol de las Fuerzas Armadas de Cuba en un proceso de transición”. El CADAL es un *think tank*

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(centro de investigación) anticomunista que funciona como una “Base de Operaciones anticastrista”⁴ en Argentina, buena parte de cuyo presupuesto proviene del frente de la CIA, el National Endowment for Democracy (NED) en Estados Unidos y la Fundación Demócrata Cristiana Konrad Adenauer del imperialismo alemán.

El seminario fue organizado por Rut Diamint de la Universidad Torcuato di Tella de Buenos Aires, quien fuera funcionaria del ministerio argentino de defensa y becaria del NED, ha dado conferencias en la Escuela de Posgrado de la Marina de EE.UU. y de la Universidad Nacional de Defensa del Pentágono. También participó en ese evento Manuel Cuesta Morúa del “Consejo para la Transición” patrocinado por EE.UU. La declaración de misión del “Proyecto Tiempo de Cambios en Cuba” que auspició el seminario dice que busca “Cooperar con actores cubanos para que ellos puedan generar actividades que les permitan vincularse con miembros y ex miembros de las FAR [Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias] abiertos a los procesos de cambio”. En otras palabras, se trata de un descarado intento de “cambio de régimen” mediante la subversión del ejército cubano desde dentro.

En septiembre de 2019, García Aguilera y Cuesta Morúa participaron en una conferencia subsiguiente en el campus Madrid de la Saint Louis University, un instituto de investigación jesuita norteamericano, sobre “el rol de las fuerzas armadas en los procesos de cambio en América Latina”. Entre los conferencistas se encontraba Richard Youngs de Carnegie Europe (que se auto-describe como una “fuente confiable” para el “análisis de seguridad”) sobre “nuevas formas de activismo cívico”. Sabemos esto porque uno de los participantes en ambas reuniones fue el Dr. Carlos Leonardo Vázquez González, un oncólogo, que dejó al descubierto de qué se trataba. El Dr. Vázquez reveló en el programa “Razones de Cuba” que a lo largo de los últimos 25 años ha trabajado para la seguridad del estado cubana, infiltrándose en actividades contrarrevolucionarias. Advirtió: “en el taller paramilitar donde participamos estaban dos generales. Yúnior García Aguilera lo que está buscando es el enfrentamiento de las Fuerzas Armadas con el pueblo y eso no lo permitiremos”.

Además, el programa de TV e Internet presentó la grabación de una llamada telefónica entre García Aguilera, la figura principal de la marcha del 15 de noviembre, y Raúl Saúl Sánchez, jefe del Movimiento por la Democracia y notorio dirigente terrorista. Sánchez formó parte de los grupos terroristas contrarrevolucionarios de extrema derecha Alpha 66, Omega 7 y CORU, para especializarse más tarde en la organización de “flotillas libertad” desde su base en Miami. En la llamada telefónica, García Aguilera dice que han cambiado la fecha de la protesta. Sánchez responde que “estamos al cien por ciento con lo que diga Archipiélago” además de que alaba a Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, fundador del Movimiento San Isidro que mercedamente fue encarcelado (lo mismo que otros) por instigar la protesta promovida por EE.UU. el 11 de julio en La Habana. García subraya que “yo sí creo en el apoyo que necesitamos de todo el exilio” para la acción del 15 de noviembre. Frente a las revelaciones, él no desmintió la llamada telefónica y admitió que ha mantenido lazos con altos diplomáticos norteamericanos en La Habana y con un encargado de asuntos cubanos del Departamento de Estado.

⁴ *Página 12* (Buenos Aires), 27 de febrero de 2012.

Abogados de “izquierda” de la contrarrevolución

Mientras que las organizaciones estalinistas remanentes en el mundo siguen tras la quimera de la “coexistencia pacífica” con el imperialismo, algunas organizaciones socialdemócratas que falsamente dicen ser trotskistas se han unido a la gritería imperialista por la represión en Cuba.⁵ Después del 11 de julio, decían que las protestas habían sido heterogéneas, que no todos los que marcharon eran contrarrevolucionarios conscientes, que todo había sido causado por la escasez, aun cuando muchas de las consignas (¡Abajo la dictadura! y ¡Patria y vida!) eran las de los gusanos proimperialistas. ¿Qué dicen ahora con respecto a las manifestaciones del 15 de noviembre? Se trata de un evento planificado abiertamente con anticipación, convocado por gente directamente involucrada en operaciones de EE.UU. contra Cuba, vitoreado por reaccionarios exiliados cubanos y explícitamente alabado por Washington. Es por ello que las posiciones que ahora adoptan son doblemente reveladoras, pues iluminan aún más el significado político de lo que las tendencias de izquierda dijeron acerca de los eventos de julio pasado.

La tendencia política de los herederos del seudotrotskista argentino Nahuel Moreno, especialmente la Liga Internacional de Trabajadores (LIT), como era de esperarse, da pleno apoyo político a la provocación del 15N, al declarar que se trata de una “movilización democrática legítima” con un “carácter democrático progresivo”.⁶ Decimos como era de esperarse, porque la virulentamente estalinófoba LIT, que abogó por que los fundamentalistas islámicos derribasen a la Unión Soviética y alabó las protestas anticastristas en Miami del “proletariado cubano en Estados Unidos”, ha diseminado desde hace mucho la mentira de que Cuba es una “dictadura capitalista”, al rechazar explícitamente la caracterización trotskista del régimen como un estado obrero burocráticamente deformado. Los morenistas son “socialistas” gusanos, contrarrevolucionarios de cabo a rabo y consortes del imperialismo norteamericano.

También está la Fracción Trotskista (FT), representada en Estados Unidos por la publicación en línea Left Voice (LV) y en América Latina por diversas versiones nacionales de La Izquierda Diario. Mientras que la LIT morenista alababa las protestas del 11 de julio, la FT las caracterizó como “contradictorias”, pero a la hora de la verdad se alineó con el imperialismo, al denunciar la “represión” del gobierno cubano y llamar por “libertad de reunión, libertad de prensa, libertad de los sindicatos” para todos, es decir, también para las fuerzas contrarrevolucionarias y proimperialistas.⁷

Sobre la movilización del 15 de noviembre, la FT declara:

“Repudiamos las políticas represivas y autoritarias del gobierno de Díaz Canel y la misma prohibición de la manifestación, a la par que planteamos las diferencias políticas que tenemos con los convocantes, y no apoyamos políticamente a los mismos”.⁸

⁵ Véase nuestro artículo “Protestas en Cuba: prueba de fuego para la izquierda”, *El Internacionalista*, octubre de 2021.

⁶ Véase “La polémica con el estalinismo sobre Cuba y el 15N”, LIT-CI, 1º de noviembre.

⁷ Véase la sección sobre “Left Voice/Fracción Trotskista: de un lado a otro de la línea de clases” en el artículo “Protestas en Cuba: prueba de fuego para la izquierda”.

⁸ “Marcha del 15N en Cuba: contra las políticas represivas del gobierno, por una salida revolucionaria a la crisis”, *La Izquierda Diario*, 1º de noviembre.

Así la Fracción “Trotskista” *facilita la provocación contrarrevolucionaria* al decir:

“Es fundamental defender ... [el] derecho a la libertad de reunión, a las asambleas y deliberaciones en los lugares de trabajo, a la manifestación, a la huelga, a la libertad de prensa...”.

¿“Libertad” para todas las asambleas, marchas, manifestaciones, publicaciones, etc., en un estado obrero? Lenin continuamente desenmascaró la manera en que la burguesía usaba la verborrea acerca de la libertad “en general” como arma en contra de la lucha por el gobierno obrero.⁹ En ningún sitio de su vergonzosa declaración se refiere a Cuba como un estado obrero, no importa cuán burocráticamente deformado, ni llama a defender a Cuba en contra del imperialismo y la contrarrevolución. Esto, a pesar del hecho de que la declaración de la FT reconoce que la convocatoria de Archipiélago a la marcha del 15N no condena el bloqueo estadounidense y es firmada por miembros del “Consejo para la Transición Democrática en Cuba”, que este Consejo está a favor de la “economía de mercado” (el capitalismo) y del pago de compensaciones por las expropiaciones realizadas durante la Revolución Cubana y es presidido por Daniel Ferrer (un *gusano* tristemente célebre financiado por EE.UU.).

De modo que la FT se opone a la prohibición en Cuba de una movilización de fuerzas que, admite, son “proimperialistas” y están a favor de la “restauración capitalista”. En consecuencia, provee un velo “democrático” para ocultar las maquinaciones de quienes pretenden hacer de Cuba una neocolonia norteamericana. Mientras que los morenistas tradicionales son completamente contrarrevolucionarios, la FT posmorenista actúa como *abogada de la contrarrevolución*, al insistir en un supuesto “derecho” a movilizarse para derribar el estado obrero y enterrar la Revolución Cubana.

Como hemos mostrado, ésta es la línea antitrotskista que la FT adoptó en Alemania Oriental (1989) y la URSS (1991-1992). Los genuinos trotskistas

⁹ Por ejemplo: “Que los hipócritas y los mentirosos ... los burgueses y sus secuaces, traten de engañar al pueblo con discursos sobre la libertad en general, la igualdad en general y la democracia en general...” Pregúntenles: “¿Existe igualdad entre un sexo y otro? ¿Entre una nación y otra nación? ¿Entre una clase y otra clase? ¿Libertad de qué yugo o del yugo de qué clase? ¿Libertad para qué clase?”

“Aquel que hable de política, de democracia y libertad, de igualdad, de socialismo, sin plantear estas cuestiones, sin dárles prioridad, que no luche contra su ocultamiento, encubrimiento y disimulo, es el peor enemigo de los trabajadores, un lobo con piel de oveja, feroz adversario de los obreros y los campesinos, un lacayo de los terratenientes, de los zares y los capitalistas.” (“El poder soviético y la posición de la mujer”, 1919).

saben que los llamados a favor del “derecho” a hacer la contrarrevolución se encuentran entre las más viejas artimañas de manual de la socialdemocracia, evocadas como coartadas “democráticas” para oponerse al (o evadir el) interés de *clase* de defender la dictadura del proletariado encarnada en el estado que resultó de la destrucción de la dictadura del capital yanqui en Cuba.

Los imperialistas y sus representantes siguen repitiendo mentiras interesadas al afirmar que Cuba no puede alimentar a su propio pueblo, cuando EE.UU. ha hecho todo lo posible para asfixiar la economía de la isla durante seis décadas. Fingen que el elogiado sistema médico cubano se ha colapsado ante la pandemia del COVID-19, cuando Cuba ha vacunado completamente al 70 por ciento de la población –más que casi cualquier otro país de América Latina– con vacunas que ha desarrollado y producido en medio del bloqueo norteamericano.

Así como Trotsky defendió a la Unión Soviética en la Segunda Guerra Mundial, a pesar y en contra de Stalin, *los genuinos trotskistas defendemos a Cuba y a los demás estados obreros deformados aún existentes (China, Vietnam y Corea del Norte) en contra del imperialismo y la contrarrevolución*. Llamamos a sustituir a las anquilosadas burocracias estalinistas, cuya política procapitalista socava dicha defensa, con órganos de democracia soviética en una revolución política proletaria dirigida por un partido genuinamente comunista, igualitario e internacionalista como el de los bolcheviques bajo Lenin y Trotsky. Esto implica luchar por el programa de la *revolución permanente* en todo el continente, extendiendo la revolución socialista a la bestia imperialista. Nuestro lema: *¡proletarios del mundo, úniós!* ■

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Marcha 15N fracasada, cómplices de izquierda al desnudo

La tan anunciada marcha de los opositores contrarrevolucionarios a la Revolución Cubana convocada para el 15 de noviembre (15N), fue un fracaso total. No hubo grandes multitudes en la calle, ni siquiera pequeños grupos cantando el himno gusano “Patria y vida” o gritando “Abajo el comunismo”. Ni siquiera hubo cacerolazos para hacer ruido y agitar el descontento. Tampoco hubo escenas de represión policiaca a gran escala (que los organizadores sin duda esperaban, y que habrían estado plenamente justificadas de haber resultado necesarias para repeler ataques contrarrevolucionarios). En definitiva, fue un gran montón de nada.

Al otro lado de la línea de clase, los

partidarios de la revolución se reunieron frente a las casas de los instigadores más conocidos y corearon consignas contra la provocación del 15N. También idearon formas creativas de negar a los contrarrevolucionarios su deseada exposición mediática, como bajar grandes banderas cubanas desde el tejado para cubrir sus ventanas. Asimismo, se formó un “movimiento de pañuelos rojos” de jóvenes pro revolución que acamparon en el Parque Central de La Habana.

El lunes 15 de noviembre, en lugar de ser un día de contrarrevolución, se vio a millones de estudiantes ir felizmente a la escuela, asistiendo a clases presenciales por primera vez en meses. Esto fue posible gracias a la vacunación de casi el 100 por

ciento de los niños y jóvenes de 2 a 18 años contra el coronavirus, un logro del estado obrero cubano único en el mundo, y conseguido a pesar del bloqueo imperialista. Un día después, el martes 16 de noviembre, el principal organizador del 15N, Yúnior García Aguilera, sin siquiera informar a sus seguidores, se largó a España, desde donde espera hacer una carrera (bien remunerada) como figura de la “disidencia interna”.

La burbuja del 15N estalló. Al coauspicar esta provocación, notorios contrarrevolucionarios arrancaron la máscara de los apologetas de izquierda de la programada marcha, que quedan al descubierto como compañeros de ruta de la contrarrevolución. Ningún auténtico comunista debe olvidar jamás esta

traición de los falsos izquierdistas, entre los que se encuentran corrientes socialdemócratas que se reclaman como “trotskistas” aunque su accionar sea todo lo contrario de aquello por que luchó Trotsky.

Con el fracaso de la malograda acción, los defensores de la Revolución Cubana han ganado un tiempo valioso. Pero los imperialistas yanquis no descansarán. Es urgente utilizar este tiempo para potenciar el programa del núcleo bolchevique-leninista que urge cohesionar en la lucha contra las “reformas” pro capitalistas, para deshacerse de la camisa de fuerza burocrática mediante la organización de consejos obreros para defender y extender las conquistas revolucionarias. ■

Provocación contra Cuba Made in U.S.A.

¡Movilización obrera para bloquear la acción contrarrevolucionaria!

Publicamos a continuación una versión abreviada del artículo que se encuentra íntegro en línea en <http://www.internationalist.org/indice.html>.

11 de NOVIEMBRE – Fuerzas patrocinadas por EE.UU. han anunciado la realización en Cuba de una contrarrevolucionaria “Marcha Cívica por el Cambio” programada para este 15 de noviembre. La manifestación ha sido convocada por una organización de reciente fundación autodenominada Plataforma Archipiélago, que despliega un listado de rostros jóvenes en sitios web financiados por agencias imperialistas, en colaboración con los tradicionales círculos reaccionarios y ultraderechistas del exilio cubano en Miami, la *gusanera*. Como hemos escrito, aunque las protestas del 11 de julio pasado en Cuba fueron alimentadas por el descontento ocasionado por la escasez, los cortes de energía y la pandemia, “las manifestaciones fueron instigadas, manipuladas y explotadas por fuerzas que buscan derribar la Revolución Cubana”.¹ Esas y otras fuerzas procapitalistas, que se coaligaron en un frente, el Consejo para la Transición Democrática en Cuba, conformado en junio pasado, están instigando una provocación anticomunista claramente encaminada al “cambio de régimen”.

El rostro visible de Archipiélago y de la manifestación del 15N es Yúnior García Aguilera, un dramaturgo de 39 años que fue uno de los protagonistas de la protesta del 27 de noviembre de 2020 frente al Ministerio de Cultura en La Habana. Fue fundador del resultante Movimiento 27N, que llama a establecer una economía basada en la “empresa privada”, es decir, el capitalismo. Pero, como

¹ “La verdad acerca de las protestas en Cuba. ¡Defender la Revolución en contra del imperialismo norteamericano y sus testaferros!”, suplemento especial de *El Internacionalista*, julio de 2021.



Mientras que seudotrotskistas critican la prohibición gubernamental de marchas convocadas por operadores políticos auspiciados por los imperialistas, nosotros decimos: ¡Movilización obrera para bloquear la provocación contrarrevolucionaria del 15 de noviembre! Arriba: partidarios del gobierno patrullan el vecindario de Arroyo Naranjo en La Habana, 12 de julio.

informó el *Miami Herald* (13 de octubre), “Archipiélago fue creado por una coalición diversa de artistas de los grupos Movimiento 27N y San Isidro, profesionales y activistas, así como disidentes de larga data como Manuel Cuesta Morúa”.² El Movimiento San Isidro y Cuesta Morúa forman parte del “Consejo para la Transición”, organismo títere de EE.UU. que está a favor de un capitalismo de

² Manuel Cuesta Morúa es el jefe del Partido Arco Progresista (PARP), una agrupación socialdemócrata proimperialista que incluye a la Corriente Socialista Democrática Cubana, que ha recibido financiamiento de la National Endowment for Democracy (NED), la agencia suplente de la CIA en el financiamiento de “disidentes” en regímenes bajo ataque del imperialismo norteamericano.

“libre mercado” sin cortapisas y que exige el pago de compensaciones por las propiedades expropiadas durante la Revolución.

El 12 de octubre, consejos municipales en Cuba prohibieron las anunciadas marchas (que originalmente se habían planeado para el 20 de noviembre) sobre la base de que las proyecciones públicas de los organizadores vinculados a grupos contrarrevolucionarios financiados por Washington dejaban en claro que las manifestaciones forman “parte de la estrategia de ‘cambio de régimen’ para Cuba, ensayada [por EE.UU.] en otros países”. Un portavoz del Departamento de Estado de Estados Unidos efectivamente lo confirmó, al decir que EE.UU. está “profundamente

comprometido” con el apoyo a “la lucha del pueblo cubano para elegir libremente a sus gobernantes” (formulación estándar del Departamento de Estado y la CIA para referirse a golpes de estado y contrarrevoluciones auspiciados por EE.UU.). La Cámara de Representantes de Estados Unidos hizo lo mismo, al aprobar a toda velocidad una resolución en apoyo de la “manifestación pacífica” del 15 de noviembre.

Un artículo de *Mint Press News* (1º de noviembre) con el título de “Estados Unidos está organizando una revolución de colores en Cuba para el 15 de noviembre”, recuerda la manera en que muchedumbres dirigidas por “activistas” entrenados y pagados por EE.UU. derribaron regímenes inconvenientes en Yugoslavia en 2000, Georgia en 2003 (“Revolución Rosa”), Ucrania en 2004 (“Revolución Naranja”) y otros lugares.³ Funcionarios cubanos citaron la manera en que desde 2013 fuerzas patrocinadas por EE.UU. en Venezuela han montado marchas “pacíficas” que rápidamente se han convertido en violentas *guarimbas* (motines) con barricadas callejeras y decenas de muertos. Tanto si los imperialistas yanquis y sus testaferros esperan realizar un ardid semejante, como si tienen la esperanza de provocar que las fuerzas cubanas usen la fuerza (lo que no hicieron el 11 de julio), la operación del 15N es una operación clásica de “desestabilización” que debe ser frustrada.

Mientras que las protestas del 11 de julio *sigue en la página 22*

³ Hemos señalado las considerables similitudes entre estos levantamientos “espontáneos” a control remoto organizados por agentes de EE.UU. y la toma del Capitolio en Washington. Véase nuestro artículo “La democracia capitalista se desmorona. La revolución socialista es la única solución” en *The Internationalist* No. 62, enero-marzo de 2021.