Z

April 2021



Photo by Eve Orea/Shutterstock.com

APRIL 2021 TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMENTARY/1

Women In Crisis: Will the Violence Ever Stop?/1
Saskia Hostetler Lippy on a groundbreaking week for women

Tuberculosis, Income Inequality & the Depression/3
Ken Bank looks at who dies

Growing Up Ecologically/8
Robert Koehler on Deb Haaland's differnt view of earth

What You Call Love is Unpaid Work/12
Vijay Prashad on care work

International Women's Day Lecture/18
Nomsa Sizani on women's determination and courage

FEATURES/28

A Global Green New Deal/28
CJ Polychroniou interviews Noam Chomsky & Robert Pollin

Ten Problems with Biden's Foreign Policy/37
Medea Benjamin & Nicolas J.S. Davies offer a solution

Fighting the Royals/37
Jonathan Cook looks at the royal family and racism



Photo by Vincenzo Lullo/Shutterstock.com

Photo by John B Hewitt/Shutterstock.com



Women in Crisis: Will the Violence Ever Stop?

By Saskia Hostetler Lippy

This past week has been a groundbreaking week for women the world over.

On Saturday, March 8, we celebrated International Women's Day and the accomplishments of women worldwide.

And then last Sunday, March 9, the Duchess of Sussex did something I never thought I would see, ever, on a national TV program. She talked about suicidal ideation and the feeling that she wanted to die and might even act on it if left alone. It was a profound moment for me not only as a woman but also as a psychiatrist and mental health activist.

I felt a tremendous sense of empathy and compassion for her and her mental anguish but also felt a freedom, a lift from her revolution against the taboo. One of the most beautiful women in the world admitted publicly that appearances are never what they seem. As a wounded healer, this is something I have always had to carry—the heavy burden of the secrets of others behind closed doors.

But Meghan Markle freed me from it by speaking truth to power. Only truth will set us free. If you are having sui-




END
VICTIM
BLAMING!
ROSA
Socialist Feminist
Movement
NOT O
MOR

cidal thoughts, talk to someone about it. Don't let it stay a secret. You can call for help here.

Just two days later reporters began telling us of the "sarong revolution" in Myanmar. Women are rising up together against oppressive political violence and the patriarchy by hanging clothing and sanitary pads in the street, scaring superstitious police and military soldiers. Young girls are giving their lives for the cause of democracy and nonviolent resistance. These brave women are showing the world the awesome power of female solidarity and how to win nonviolently. May we all be as strong as them when the time comes.

And yet, at the exact same time and on the exact same day, the World Health Organization released its report on violence against women. An alarming 30 percent of women worldwide have experienced physical or intimate partner violence in their lifetime. Of all murders of women, 38 percent are committed by intimate partners, and 6 percent of women report being sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner. Not only are these numbers staggering but they have profound implications for the long-term mental health of survivors.

Over the years, I have accumulated a lifetime of secondary trauma from the stories I have heard from women in my practice. I have heard stories of rape, incest, psychological and physical abuse. I have helped women to leave their violent partners, praying in the night that they make it until morning. I have helped adult women to confront the internalized abuser within, to tell their secrets--first to me, then to trusted others on the path to healing which is now more needed than ever.

This week, I took my own personal step on the path to healing the violence wound—by helping those who need it most—the indigenous women of the world. I partnered with Physicians for Human Rights to do my first psychiatric assessment of refugees in danger of deportation through Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The story I heard confirmed what I already knew. Some women live in constant fear of death and torture. Some women know that when they die, no one will remember them. I will not let this be.

The United Nations outlines seven strategies for prevention of violence against women: relationship skill strengthening, empowerment of women, ensuring services, reducing poverty, preventing child abuse, enabling transformational environments and finally, transforming beliefs.

Transforming the belief that nothing can be done is what makes me feel best in my own healing journey. My own privilege means nothing if others cannot share in it. Malala Yousafzai says it best, "I raise up my voice—not so that I can shout, but so those without a voice can be heard…We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back." ***Z***

Saskia Hostetler Lippy, MD, syndicated by PeaceVoice, is a writer, psychiatrist, and activist in Portland, Oregon. She is a member of the Portland Peace Team and a field reporter for the TRUST network.

Tuberculosis, Income Inequality and the Great Depresion

By Ken Bank

We now know from significant statistical evidence that the recent coronavirus pandemic has had a disproportionately adverse



Photo by Damien Storan/Shutterstock.com


END THE
PANDEMIC
OF WHITE
SUPREMACY

impact on poor people and even more on communities of color. This is not surprising given the fact that throughout history plagues and pandemics have affected lower income people in relatively greater numbers than individuals and families with higher income. This was true about tuberculosis which, until the 19th century, had been the deadliest disease in human history, killing an estimated one in seven people who had ever lived. Although the rate of infection dropped during the 19th and early 20th century, the disease continually ravaged low income communities, especially poor laborers who had to work in oppressive conditions in order to support themselves and their families. When the Great Depression struck in the early 1930s conditions became even worse for families struggling to support themselves, and the spread of tuberculosis among the poorest people made the struggle to survive even more difficult.

The disparity in illness and fatalities from tuberculosis was not limited only to income. During the 19th century the death rate from TB per 1,000 among black people varied between 2 and 4 times the rate of fatalities among whites. This disparity continued throughout the 19th century and persisted into the 20th century. The spread of infection and subsequent fatalities was disproportionately high especially among workers in factories and sweatshops like the garment industry. There were few if any regulations regarding proper sanitation and health protocols to protect workers from TB and other contagious diseases.

While tuberculosis rates had dropped to 71.1 per 100,000 by 1930 from 200 per 100,000 in 1900, health departments still considered it to be the "Great White Plague" which was particularly devastating to the working poor and their families. While it is true that improvements in treating tuberculosis did have an impact on the overall decline in the mortality rate from the disease, these benefits were largely available to wealthy and upper-middle class people while the working poor, unemployed individuals and their families continued to suffer greatly. Sick people unable to afford adequate medical care or access to charity had to deal with the effects as best they could until they eventually succumbed to the disease.

When the Great Depression hit hardest from 1930 to 1933, the ability of poor people to manage the impact of tuberculosis became even more difficult than it was in the previous decade. With millions of people unemployed access to affordable healthcare was practically nonexistent. While family members were unemployed, many workers with symptoms of the disease had to keep working to support those who were unable to support themselves. There was no unemployment insurance and universal healthcare coverage to take care of those who were sick, out of work and could not take care of themselves much less their dependants.

With millions of workers unemployed and their families living in poverty with no access to health care it wouldn't be surprising that many cases of TB went unreported. Forced out of their homes millions of people had to live in shantytowns or "Hoovervilles," living and sleeping in cars, tents, or whatever they could find and no health care available. Lack of sanitation and adequate public facilities exacerbated the crisis, contributing to the spread of the disease. Victims of TB literally coughed themselves to death and their bodies dumped in a makeshift or pauper's grave.

Despite improvements in treatment, these benefits failed to reach the poorest and most vulnerable individuals as the impact of unemployment and poverty worsened

Photo by Allison C Bailey/Shutterstock.com

during the first few years of the Depression from 1930 to 1933. Prior to the Depression charitable institutions which had been treating indigent TB patients without charge suddenly found that their financial support from wealthy patrons was severely reduced at the same time as demand for treatment increased from the number of indigent and unemployed sick people who could no longer pay for access to healthcare. From lack of financial support and increasing demand for treatment hospitals could no longer provide the same level of care as they did before.

With the election of Franklin Roosevelt and the promise of his "New Deal" policies there was optimistic hope that government intervention and support would provide the means by which public health in general and TB mortality rates in particular might be improved. Charity would no longer be the only option available to poor people with no access to affordable health care and treatment for deadly diseases such as TB. The long road to economic recovery and healthcare aid for the poor began with the Federal Emergency Relief Act of 1933 which provided for the first significant federal role in assisting states and local governments with monetary grants specifically allocated for medical and public health services. The passage of the Social Security Act of 1935 not only provided direct relief to elderly persons unable to pay for healthcare but also provided increasing amounts of aid and support to private institutions and public agencies dealing with TB and other serious diseases. Federal aid also funded policies and programs that contributed significantly to improvements in public sanitation, health and education which further reduced the spread of infection from TB.

As the country recovered from the Great Depression with higher rates of employment and improved living standards, the rate of infection from TB as well as mortality declined significantly. The coming of the Second World War also contributed to lower unemployment and poverty, which in turn led to lower infection and better treatment of TB victims. However, poor people and other minority groups such as African-Americans and Latinos continued to lag well behind the recovery rate from TB as that of higher-income Americans from European descent. Even though TB was largely eradicated as a significant threat to public health by the 1960s there is still some residual rate of infection among the poor, homeless, and those affected by addiction to drugs.

The same discrepancy with infection rates and fatalities from TB that differentiated poor people and minorities from wealthy individuals and those with European ancestry during the first half of the 20th century exists today with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Like most pandemics throughout history, poor people and minorities are most at risk. Although elderly people with underlying conditions are the most vulnerable, there is also a discrepancy between infection rates and fatalities among patients on Medicare and Medicaid, mostly poor and people of color in substandard hospitals and nursing homes, than there is among white, wealthier individuals in superior facilities. Just as "Hooverville" shantytowns in the 1930s contributed to the spread of TB, we see the same thing happening today in crowded, substandard living conditions that characterize poverty-stricken inner-city neighborhoods. The massive New Deal relief program, along with the coming of the Second World War, became necessary to improve living conditions and hence reduce the spread and impact of TB. A similar effort today is also required to alleviate the pain and suffering caused

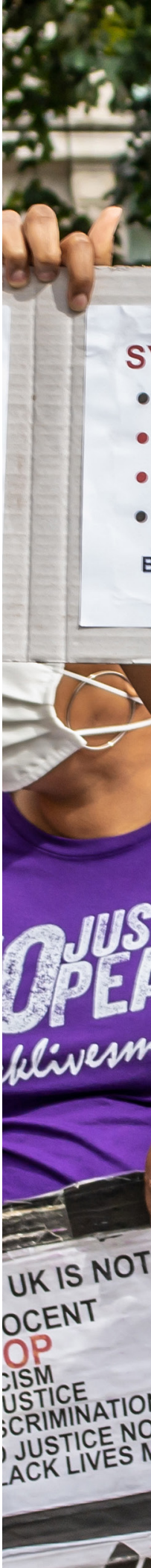


Photo by JessicaGirvan/Shutterstock.com


YSTEMATIC RACISM
POLICE
MAINSTREAM MEDIA
POLITICIANS
JUDGES
BEING BLACK IS NOT A CRIME
BLA
PEACE
MATTER



Activists paint on a banner during a demonstration a "Fridays for future" organised by Youth for Climate Belgium in Brussels, Belgium on March 19, 2021.

Photo by Alexandros Michailidis/ Shutterstock.com

by the coronavirus which is experienced by the most disadvantaged persons in our society. Z

Growing Up Ecologically

By Robert C. Koehler

Is it possible that the country is truly rebuilding itself . . . from the soul up?

Deb Haaland has been confirmed as head of the Department of the Interior. A Native American congressperson and, as she describes herself, 35th-generation New Mexican, has been given the reins of the department that has es-



sentially been at war, not simply with her people but with the planet itself and, therefore, all of us, pretty much since its inception. That is to say, the department's values are those the European colonialists brought with them to the new continent: steal the land from those who live there, then proceed to exploit it.

The Department of the Interior manages nearly 500 million acres of public lands and coastal waters, approximately one-fifth of all land in the U.S. "The extraction and use of fossil fuels from those public lands account for about one-quarter of the country's greenhouse gas emissions," according to NPR.

Haaland brings a different


ES GIBT
KEINEN
PLAN B
!!!



set of values, and a different understanding of Planet Earth, into the game.

"The department has a role in harnessing the clean energy potential of our public lands to create jobs and new economic opportunities," she said during her confirmation hearing, adding that "America's public lands can and should be engines for clean energy production."

In other words, she comes into her new job representing interests other than corporate ones. That doesn't mean corporate political clout or the power of money have suddenly vanished from government, but rather that a different sort of voice is now present as well, and no longer marginalized. Haaland's appointment transcends mere "historical significance." Her presence—so millions of people want to believe—is a step toward profound change: perhaps the United States has begun to grow up ecologically.

When Haaland's nomination was announced in December, Simon Moya-Smith, an Oglala Sioux, wrote at NBC News: "A new scintilla of hope has bloomed among us in part because Haaland, like millions of Indigenous peoples, strongly believes in and practices the Seven Generation rule. The rule says that all significant decisions must be made with the next seven generations in mind, and includes preserving and protecting the water, the earth and the two leggeds and the four leggeds for people you will never meet—at least in this life. . . .

"Native Americans have survived 528 years of violence, racism, hatred and even genocide on this land. Prompted by bigotry and shame, America has sought to keep Native Americans as relics of its past rather than welcoming us into its present and allowing us to help lead this country into a shared future."

Is this what has changed? Has the nation opened itself to a larger wisdom? If so, there will be plenty of pushback against it from the fossil fuel industry. Deb Haaland was definitely not their choice. In the past, decisions involving tribal lands have usually been made with minimal, or no, tribal consultation, which is one reason many Native peoples pushed Joe Biden to counter the corporate status quo in his choice for interior secretary.

One Haaland supporter is the Yurok Tribe of Northern California, whose life and livelihood has been connected to the Klamath River and its salmon population. Government decisions over the past several decades—in particular, the establishment of a huge system of dams and irrigation canals called the Klamath Irrigation Project—have drained, warmed and, good God, poisoned the river, killing many of its salmon. The tribe has been struggling with the federal government for years to save the river.

Salmon have been the center of the tribe's culture and economy "since time immemorial," according to Martin Do Nascimento at Earthjustice. "But in recent decades, the river's salmon population has plummeted."

In recent years the Klamath River has gotten polluted with algae that releases deadly toxins when it dies. "The cause of the deadly algae," Nascimento writes, "is well known: large-scale agricultural runoff combining with unnaturally warm water. And recent decades have turned the Klamath River, once one of the highest salmon-producing rivers on the West Coast, into a breeding ground for the toxic gunk."

The Irrigation Project causing the devastation is upstream from the Yurok, in the Klamath Basin. It consists of "more than 700 miles of canals, seven dams, and 28 pumping stations . . . [and] annually drains as much as half of the water from the Klamath River.

"The lower the river gets, the harder it is for adult salm-

Braunschweig, Germany,: Fridays for the future emonstration

Photo by geogif/Shutterstock.com

on fish to make their way upstream to spawn, and the warmer the water running in the river becomes."

The purpose of the Irrigation Project is to make it easier for farmers in the Klamath Basin area to irrigate crops "in a climate that otherwise couldn't support the production."

What all this sounds like is more of the same. While the farmers being supported by the Irrigation Project—the first dam of which was constructed in 1906—have a point of view in this as well, it's pretty clear the project was approved and developed by the federal government with zero concern for the Yurok point of view, or, for that matter, for the river itself and its salmon. This was just another example of white guys exploiting the environment for their immediate benefit, with no attention given to the possible consequences.

Indeed, as Nascimento points out, the Yurok have been fighting to protect their way of life for centuries. Back in the California Gold Rush days, the unregulated mining and logging operations also decimated the river's salmon population. By the 1850s, three-quarters of the Yurok tribe members had been killed either by disease or violent conflict with the settlers.

I don't remember that being taught to me in my history classes.

It's definitely time for an enormous shift in the consciousness of those who see themselves as exceptional and believe they're in charge of the planet. Environmental exploitation has profound consequences. No one is going to survive if we don't begin sharing the future. ***Z***

Robert Koehler (koehlercw@gmail.com), syndicated by PeaceVoice, is a Chicago award-winning journalist and editor. He is the author of *Courage Grows Strong at the Wound*.

What You Call Love Is Unpaid Work

By Vijay Prashad

Women around the world spend an average of four hours and twenty-five minutes per day on unpaid care work, while men spend an average of one hour and twenty-three minutes per day on the same kind of work. This was the finding of an International Labour Organisation (ILO) study from 2018. What is care work? The ILO study defines care work as "consisting of activities and relations involved in meeting the physical, psychological, and emotional needs of adults and children, old and young, frail and able-bodied."

There are two main kinds of care work, as described by the ILO. The first is characterized by direct care activities (sometimes referred to as "nurturing" or "relational" care), such as "feeding a baby, nursing a sick partner, helping an older person to take a bath, carrying out health check-ups, or teaching young children." The second is characterized by indirect care activities, "which do not entail face-to-face personal care, such as cleaning, cooking, doing the laundry and other household maintenance tasks (sometimes referred to as 'non-relational care' or 'household work'), that provide the preconditions for personal caregiving." Direct and indirect care work operate in tandem, the physical and emotional labor that holds together the fabric of society.

Women and girls, the ILO study shows, carry out three quarters of the unpaid care work that is required to maintain families and society. If those who perform unpaid

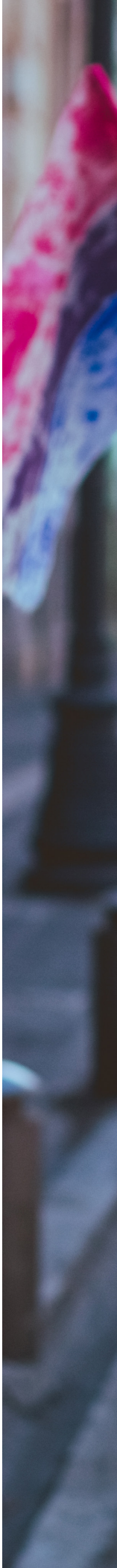


Photo by Alejandro_Munoz/Shutterstock.com



care work received the minimum wage in their respective countries, the wage bill would amount to US$11 trillion (or up to roughly 15% of global Gross Domestic Product, the size of the total digital economy). The necessity of this unpaid care work—including taking care of children and the elderly—has prevented women, and some men, from entering the paid workforce. In 2018, according to the ILO, 606 million women said that unpaid care work meant that they could not seek paid employment outside the home; 41 million men said the same thing.

During the pandemic, 64 million women lost their paid jobs, while most women found themselves spending more time on unpaid care work than before the Great Lockdown of 2020-21. In our study "CoronaShock and Patriarchy" (November 2020), we note that during the pandemic, "care work has increased exponentially, and the extra burden continues to fall on women." It is largely women who are overseeing the education of their children, maintaining households that struggle with diminished incomes, and taking care of the elderly in times when they are most susceptible to the dangers of COVID-19. UNICEF reports that 168 million children have not been in school for almost a full year.

At the same time, many of the frontline care workers in our societies, from nurses to cleaners, are women. It is these women who find themselves being applauded as "essential workers" at the same time as their working conditions deteriorate and their wages stagnate, putting them at risk of contracting the virus. Last June, in a dossier called "Health is a Political Choice," we documented how women health workers in Argentina, Brazil, India, and South Africa are struggling to improve their working conditions and to earn enough to care for their families. Our 16-point list of demands that ends the dossier came out of the struggles of unions in these countries, demands that remain as fresh now as they were last June. This pandemic has uncovered and sharpened our sense of how patriarchy blocks the advance of social progress.

Our team in Argentina, along with the collective Mapeos Feministas ("Feminist Mapping"), developed a podcast to explore the uneven impact of the pandemic through a feminist lens. This work of documenting the crisis and the struggles of people in Argentina led to the publication of our recent dossier, "Uncovering the Crisis: Care Work in the Time of Coronavirus" (dossier no. 38, March 2021).

The pandemic has put immense pressure on families, with women at the center of the increased workload. This pressure is the result of a long period of austerity cuts made to state institutions, which has resulted in a deterioration of social wages (including pre-school care for children and nutritious food in school). This long-term problem is captured in the phrase "care crisis" (crisis del cuidado), coined by the UN's Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) in 2009. Due to the austerity regime, the notion of family has been broadened as caregivers draw resources from others in their community. These wider networks of family surpass kinship, emerging as an essential foundation for survival during the pandemic.

Luz Bejerano of the Transgender Movement of Argentina reports that a transgender comrade opened an outdoor kitchen to feed people, which also provides snacks for children. Silvia Campo of Encuentro de Organizaciones explains how her organisation is working to trace cases of COVID-19 and disseminate information to the public about health clinics and services. María Benitez of the Federation of Grassroots

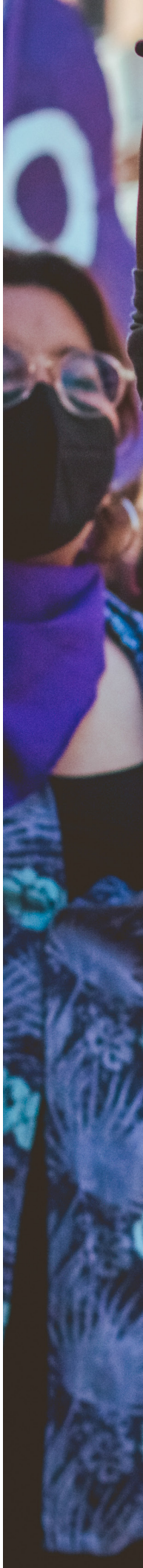


Photo by Alejandro_MunozShutterstock.com


Campaña por el Ab
Legal, Seguro y Gra

Organisations organized her neighbors to go to the landlords and tell them—successfully—that they cannot evict families during the pandemic. Against all the odds, Luz, Silvia, María, and their organizations have held the social fabric together. Their stories are inspirational and instructive.

Elizabeth Gómez Alcorta is the first Minister of Women, Gender, and Diversity in the Argentinian government. In December 2019, her ministry set up the National Directorate of Care (Dirección Nacional de Cuidados), which has worked along four main axes. First, to draw up a federal map of care and training facilities for care work. Second, in February 2020, the Directorate instituted an Inter-ministerial Roundtable on Care Policies (Mesa Interministerial de Políticas de Cuidado) to bring together 14 ministries whose agenda intersects with care work. Third, in August 2020, the Directorate started a campaign, Caring with



Equality: Necessity, Rights, and Work, which holds "Parliaments of Care" to listen to the care workers and care givers to get their perspective on the key issues. And, lastly, in October 2020, Gómez Alcorta's team formed a drafting commission comprised of nine experts who will write a bill for a comprehensive care system for the country.

"The slogan of the campaign—'care with equality' (Cuidar en igualdad)—seems to me to summarise a large part of our concept of care," Gómez Alcorta told me recently. "Care is a necessity, since all of us need to be cared for at some point in our lives, and if it is a necessity, then there must be rights for the care givers. We have before us the great challenge of laying the foundations for a comprehensive care system with a gender perspective," she told me, and this system must take into account the "complex and heterogeneous reality" of Argentina. That is why, she said, "the dialogue



ISTANBUL, TAKSIM, TURKEY - MARCH, 8, 2021: Feminist Night March and protest in Taksim Square on March 8, International Women's Da

Photo by Gokce Atik/ Shutterstock.com

being carried out by the drafting commission is so important. … We know that the current composition of families is diverse, so on the one hand, we work in terms of the diversity of families and identities, trying to contemplate all situations. On the other hand, our country has a great social debt, we have high poverty rates, and we know that women are the most affected by economic crises. That is why we maintain that a better redistribution of care tasks not only generates greater gender equality but also results in greater social justice."

Patriarchal systems and customs are "breaking down," Gómez Alcorta said, but "there is still a long way to go." Shared responsibility for care work is seldom a reality, which is why "men have to be more involved, but we also know that deconstructing habits and stereotypes can take time." Nonetheless, Gómez Alcorta told me, "We have the strong conviction that we are moving towards a scenario in which care is better distributed and socially recognised and valued for what it is: the work that makes the world work."

In a recent newsletter, I highlighted the assembly election campaign in Kerala. Now that the manifesto of the Left Democratic Front has been released, there is a point that bears special mention: that if the Left returns to power, it would institute a pension for housewives. "The value of domestic labour will be recognised, and pension will be instituted for housewives," says the manifesto. The implications of this pension plan are enormous; it recognises that domestic labour has value and shakes the foundations of patriarchy, which is built on the financial dependence of women.

These struggles in Argentina and Kerala echo the words of the poet Alaíde Foppa (1914-1980), a poet and activist who was murdered in Guatemala in 1980:

Through flowering meadows
my light foot ran,
left its mark
in the damp sand,
looked for lost paths,
trampled the hard sidewalks
of cities
and climbed stairs
that it did not know where
they led.

The Publication of Origin for this article is *Tricontinental*.

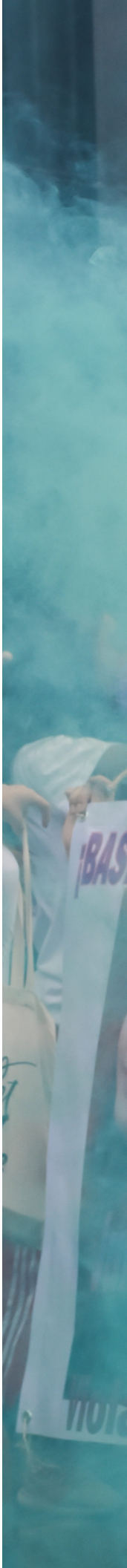
Thuli Ndlovu Lecture For International Women's Day

By Nomsa Sizani, General Secretary of Abahlali baseMjondolo

Thank you to Pan-Africanism Today for the invitation to speak today. We appreciate all organizations that work to build living solidarity between progressive forces. We also appreciate the opportunity to be part of this discussion on International Women's Day, which is a day that comes out of women's struggles and is used to celebrate women in struggle around the world.

Women's determination and courage are the foundation of our movement, and we are committed to building women's power in struggle. Thuli Ndlovu was one of the bravest women in our movement. She was born in February 1978, in a semi-rural area called KwaNdengezi .

Thuli joined Abahlali baseMjondolo in 2012. She was elected as a branch chairperson in her community, and



Mexico City, Mexico;March 8 2021: Thousands of women protest in the streets for safety and better living conditions

Photo by Eve Orea/Shutterstock.com


HUAWEI
ES UN PELIGRO PARA MUJERES
desaparición forzada es realidad
FEMINISMO POPULAR
¿A Ferrarse a Imponer a un VIOLADOR es Parte de la 4ta. transformación O es una DECISIÓN MACHISTA DE 4ta?
NUESTRAS VOCES

later she was also elected as a National Council Member of the movement. Thuli was an honest, bold, genuine and fearless person. She was a straightforward person. She understood the necessity and power of inkani. She was committed to ipolitiki ephilayo, to living politics, and to ubuhlali.

She fought for the dignity of the oppressed, and for our right to participate in all decision making that affects us. She fought the struggle for participatory development. She stood up to a gangster councillor and his committee and bodyguards. She stood up to men who were always armed and who were very dangerous.

She was assassinated in her home in KwaNdengezi on September 29, 2014. A man burst into her home and shot her seven times while she was carrying her one-year-old son Freedom in her arms. Her son survived but she died on the scene. Sphe Madlala, an 18-year-old neighbor, was also in the house. He had come to the house to help Thuli's 17-year-old daughter, Sli, with her matric studies in math and science. Sphe was also shot twice in the stomach but he survived. Sli was in a separate room and was unharmed.

An hour before the incident Mduduzi Ngcobo, the local councillor who is known as Nqola, was moving around near Thuli's home in his car. When she saw Nqola near her house Thuli told her mother that "today we are going to be shot." She also called one of her comrades in the movement to express her concerns.

Thuli had often been intimidated and threatened by Nqola. The local police always sided with Nqola. This is typical. The police often take orders from councillors instead of following the rule of law. This is one reason why our movement stands for community control of the police.

KwaNdengezi is like a rural area and people live in their own houses and not in shacks. They have an iNkosi and iziNduna. Land is allocated by the iziNduna and is not paid for. The problems in KwaNdengezi started in 2010 when Nqola called a meeting to announce that a housing project would be taking place in the area. Before accepting the project, the community raised concerns about their families' grave yards. They said that a housing project should not frustrate people but improve people's lives. It was agreed that before the project starts another community meeting would be called to discuss how it should be structured. It was also agreed that as this is a community project therefore it should be driven by the community.

However, no further meeting was called and the project was imposed on people from above. Many attempts were made to meet with the Councillor but when meetings were scheduled he did not attend them. When this housing project started RDP houses were just built anywhere and without any discussion or consultation. Some people found that two or three houses were suddenly being built in their yards. Fences were just destroyed and houses were built on their gardens and even next to or over their family graves. There was no respect for the dead.

When people complained about these houses being built in their yards and on their gardens and graves they were told that their houses were shacks and that therefore they have no ownership or say—no rights at all. However, their houses are not shacks. They were built on properly allocated land and are solid structures having as many as five rooms in some cases.

Nqola was also having a corrupt relationship with the housing contactors. He suddenly became very rich, and was driving a black Navara SUV car.

In October 2012, the community of KwaNdengezi held a protest blockading the main road going straight to Kwan-



ISTANBUL, TAKSIM, TURKEY - MARCH, 8, 2021: Feminist Night March and protest in Taksim Square on March 8, International Women's Day

Photo by Gokce Atik/Shutterstock.com


Pandemi
"evin bütün yükünü bize yıkmanın bahanesi"
değil!


ERKEKLİĞİ
YIKIP YERİNE
KADIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ
DEĞİL
GÜVENLİ KAMPÜS
İSTİYORUZ!



dengezi Police station. The road blockade was organized after they were ignored by the ANC Ward Councillor while demanding answers to their list of grievances. Thuli Ndlovu was the one who was leading that protest. She was deliberately singled out for personal intimidation and assault. Police who were carrying big guns accompanied Nqola to the protest and assaulted protesters. That night Nqola went to Thuli's house shouting threats and shooting a gun outside her house.

Thuli was very brave. You would hear her saying the chant "Qina Mhlali qina!" meaning be strong, Mhlali, be strong. This is the chant we say in Abahlali when situations are tough. We say this chant when we are facing the brutality from the police, the brutality from the state, and also when we are facing brutal evictions from private security companies.

Then one night they killed our brave Thuli. Her "crime" was to speak the truth and only the truth. The only problem is that when you speak the truth you become a threat to the gangster politicians who always want to enrich themselves out of the poor. They will always make sure they find a way to remove you when they think that you are disturbing them. Thuli died because of exposing corruption.

On May 20, 2016, Velile Lesheku and Mduduzi Ngcobo—both ANC councillors—and their hitman Mlungisi Ndlovu were all sentenced to life imprisonment.

The movement made sure that Thuli was buried with all the honor of a hero of the oppressed. We made sure that she was laid to rest in a grave that acknowledged her dignity. Along with other fallen comrades she is remembered in our songs. The community hall at the eKhanana land occupation, which is also a commune, is named after her. The eKhenana comrades have also developed a play which tells Thuli's story. Each year our movement hosts a lecture in her honour. We are also proud that we have managed to support Sli to get a higher education. Now she is a graduate, with a degree in teaching

Thuli's spirit will live within us as women of Abahlali forever. We will carry on where Thuli Ndlovu left off. The struggle for land and dignity continues. The struggle against gangster politicians and capitalism continues. The struggle to build women's power form below continues. The struggle for participatory development continues. The struggle for the dignity of all people to be recognized continues. The struggle for land, wealth, cities and power to be fairly shared continues. The struggle for radical democracy and a living communism built from below continues.

Ababhlali women have never stopped despite this assassination, despite losing husbands, brothers and sons, despite being tortured in police stations and despite facing too many violent evictions for us to be able to keep count. We have continued where Thuli Ndlovu's life stopped. We are still fighting against all forms of violence against women and other kinds of abuse of women. We are still fighting patriarchy, and all the oppressions forced on women. Abahlali women are still occupying land, building communities and resisting evictions even though the price for land continues to be paid in blood. We will not stop organizing and resisting because there is no true revolution without the full liberation of all women.

I am speaking about the Thulis of today. I am speaking about the 29 brave women of the Azania land occupation who were arrested for resisting evictions during the first lockdown. Their "crime" was to sleep outside while their homes were destroyed. I am speaking about Phumelele Mkhize, the young and very, very brave woman of the eKhenana occupation who

International Women's Day, feminist night march was organized to protest violence against women and defend women's rights. Turkey Istanbul Beyoglu March 8, 2021

Photo by okanozdemir/Shutterstock.com


Ratify
ILO
Convention-190
GBGWF NWUC
Stop
Women
Violence
GBGWF NWUC
Ratify
ILO
Convention-190
GBGWF NWUC


...government after government has taken refuge in undemocratic behavior. For example, the farmers and agricultural workers in India continue their months-long protest against three anti-farmer laws pushed through by the extreme right Indian government
Photo by Rahul Sapra/Shutterstock.com
Ratily ILO Convention-190
GBGWF NWUC
রাষ্ট্র ও সমাজে নারীর সম অধিকার নিশ্চিত কর।
GBGWF NWUC
Unconditional Promtion for the female Workers
GBGWF NWUC
Ratify ILO Convention-190
GBGWF NWUC

was brutally beaten by armed men hired by the state when she was resisting evictions. I am speaking about Melita Ngcobo, who was arrested in Gauteng after her ANC ward councillor accused her of being an "anti-developmental." This was after she fought the reblocking that was imposed on the people of Tembisa.

Though Thuli died a horrible death, the women of Abahlali are still standing strong. We have many woman branch chairpersons and many women on the national council. These women continue to insist that their dignity is non-negotiable and to organize and struggle. They continue to stand up the councillors, the police and the security companies that are paid to attack us and destroy our homes.

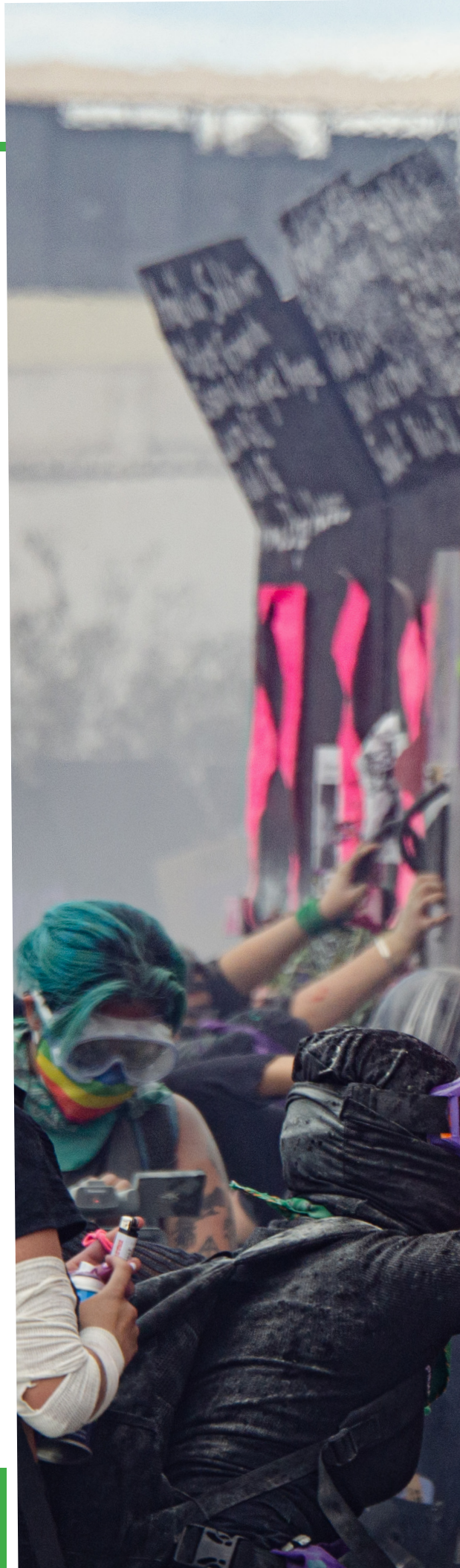
We stand with all women who are organizing and struggling to humanize the world where ever they are. We stand in solidary with all women facing repression. We send our love and solidarity to the families, neighbors, friends and comrades of all the women around the world who have been murdered for insisting on their humanity.

We are all Thuli Ndlovu.

THULI NDLOVU SHALL FOREVER BE OUR HERO

LONG LIVE THE SPIRIT OF THULI LONG LIVE

AMANDLAAAAA!!!!!!!!



Mexico City: Feminist march against gender violence, March 8 in Mexico

Photo by clicksdemexico/Shutterstock.com



A Global Green New Deal Is the Only to Avert Disaster

Noam Chomsky and Robert Pollin interviewed by C.J. Polychroni





C.J. Polychroniou: Noam, the outgoing Trump administration was the worst thing that could have happened for the environment. Trump rolled out dozens of deregulation policies. His administration reversed the Obama rule on methane emissions, even though methane, the natural ingredient in natural gas, is 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Meanwhile, he denied the science of climate change and withdrew the United States from the Paris climate agreement. What can we expect from the Biden administration on the climate emergency, especially now that the Senate is under Democratic control, and why is it so important that the U.S. should rejoin the Paris Agreement?

Noam Chomsky: Rejoining the Paris Agreement is imperative, but only a bare beginning. The Agreement was an important step forward. It is, however, very weak, not even close to what has to be done. It also has no teeth: it is voluntary, no binding commitments. The primary reason for the weakness is the U.S. Republican Party, which would not permit anything that went much beyond symbolism. The Party is still there. In fact, it just achieved overwhelming success in the November 2020 elections, winning at every level except for the White House, where distaste for Trump's antics prevailed. That victory is quite astonishing if only in light of the fact that the Party's leaders were responsible for killing tens if not hundreds of thousands of Americans in the preceding months—not to speak of racing to the abyss of environmental catastrophe, a fact that scarcely registered.

The Party is still there, a dominating force, poised to ensure that the country is ungovernable, a specialty of Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell as he proclaimed with pride during the Obama years and demonstrated with considerable success.

And Trump is not gone, far from it. A large majority of the Republican voting base regards him as their leader, if not savior. They can be whipped up to threaten any Republican officeholder who dares to depart from Trump-McConnell malevolence, much as the Tea Party was organized and used for that purpose, with plenty of funding from powerful concentrations of capital. It may be recalled that as recently as 2008, during the McCain campaign, Republicans were willing to entertain the thought that there might be some problem about destroying the climate that sustains life. With virtual unanimity, they succumbed to a juggernaut launched by David Koch to extirpate that heresy, a victory that remains in place. With Trump setting himself up as the "true victor" in the elections, stirring up poisons in the ways he masters very well, there will be serious barriers to returning the country to a moderately civilized course.

How serious the barriers are we saw right before our eyes on January 6, a fateful day.

Ever since he gained office, Trump has been working hard to turn the country into a tin-pot dictatorship under his rule, a process we have been discussing regularly in this forum as it has unfolded.

To repeat briefly, there have been three prongs to the assault against the world by this miserable creature:

1. Destroying the environment that sustains life;
2. Sharply increasing the threat of terminal nuclear war;
3. Dismantling formal democracy.

The first one alone suffices to establish him as arguably the most dangerous political figure in human history, a truism that has been hard for many to contemplate.

Photo by Mixtra Images/Shutterstock.com


LIFE IN PLASTIC
IS NOT
FANTASTIC



Photo by Mixtra Imagest/Shutterstock.com

Right now we are witnessing the next step in his dedication to destroy American democracy. He has been bragging for years about the "Tough Guys for Trump"—his Black and Brown Shirts.

On January 6, he unleashed them, encouraging their violence and destruction as they broke into the Capitol Building to prevent formal ratification of his electoral defeat, which, it seems, he will never acknowledge no matter how much destruction is caused by his malevolence.

In his disgraceful performance calling on his tough guys to go home—for now—he could not refrain from stirring up more poisons with brazen lies about how his "landslide victory" was stolen by evil forces, doing what he can to ensure maximum damage to the country to which he intends to return triumphantly to complete the wreckage.

Every place does matter if we really are going to hit the target of net zero global emissions by no later than 2050. Zero emissions does mean zero, everywhere.

That is only one force the Biden administration will have to overcome to save the country, and the world, from environmental catastrophe. Another is the Democratic National Committee (DNC)—Clintonite, neoliberal, oriented to Wall Street and the donor class. The intraparty conflict began to emerge even before the election. One central element was global warming. Under significant popular pressure, the Biden-Harris environmental program moved in a fairly progressive direction; insufficient, but a considerable step beyond predecessors. As we've discussed before, the DNC reacted by cutting it back.

The impediments to the urgently needed policy are extreme, but there are also popular forces that cannot be ignored. They are imposing what the powerful call "reputational risks" that have to be dealt with, sometimes in meaningful ways. And power does not make those who wield it totally impervious to human concerns. Whatever the mix of factors may be, there are changes taking place within the institutions that dominate the society. European-based fossil fuel companies are shifting toward sustainable energy. Bank of America, the last holdout, joined other major banks in refusing to join Trump's last-ditch effort to destroy the Arctic nature reserve. Popular activism can influence those who own the country…. And it can influence the government as well, despite the impediments over a spectrum from the DNC to the far right.

The outcome of this struggle for survival will determine what we can expect from the Biden administration.

Polychroniou: Bob, you have made a strong case that any Green New Deal must be global in nature and scope if we are serious about addressing the climate emergency. How do you envision such an undertaking taking place, and what should be done with the less developed countries that don't have the resources to embark on a transition to clean and renewable energy systems?

Robert Pollin: The Green New Deal must be global in scope, whether we like it or not. This is the only possible way to have a chance of bringing global carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions down to zero by 2050, which is the goal that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has set as the requirement for moving onto a climate stabilization path.

The fate of the planet depends on whether we can put in place just transition policies for workers and communities that will be negatively impacted by the decline and shuttering of the fossil fuel industry.

The evidence on current global CO2 emissions makes this clear. Thus, China and the U.S. are by far the biggest sources of emissions, with China at 27 percent and the U.S.

at 15 percent. So adding emissions from China and the U.S. alone gets us to 42 percent of the global total. But we can also look at this same statistic from the opposite direction: even after combining the emissions levels for China and the U.S., we still haven't accounted for fully 58 percent of the global total. We can also push the individual country emissions figures a bit further, and include all 27 countries of the European Union (EU) along with the United States and China. This adds another 10 percent to current total emissions, getting us to 52 percent of global emissions with China, the United States and the 27 EU countries combined. Therefore, if we only pay attention to China, the U.S. and all EU countries, we still are neglecting the countries responsible for generating nearly half of current total global emissions. The point is that every place does matter if we really are going to hit the target of net zero global emissions by no later than 2050. Zero emissions does mean zero, everywhere. If we let some small countries, or low-income countries, off the hook, then where do we draw the line and still get to the zero emissions goal?

This is especially true if we are also serious about raising mass living standards in low-income countries. In areas such as rural Africa and India, roughly half of the population has no access to electricity at present. Raising living standards in low-income countries will entail providing affordable energy, for people to light and heat their homes, for cooking and to improve transportation systems. It will also mean that, especially in rural areas of the developing world, women will be able to stop spending hours every day gathering wood to burn for cooking and heating. The energy supply that will deliver this rise in mass living standards will need to be renewable energy, provided at high efficiency level —solar and wind energy primarily, but also some geothermal, small-scale hydro and low-emissions bioenergy.

Developing countries therefore need large-scale investments to build clean energy infrastructures. By my estimates, this will cost about 2 to 3 percent of overall spending (GDP) in these economies every year between now and 2050. That is not an overwhelming amount of money; it means that 97 percent of the economy's overall spending can be devoted to other things, like growing food in abundance, creating good-quality housing, transportation, education, healthcare, as well as producing some local manufactured goods. Still, that 3 percent of total spending needs to come from somewhere. As a basic standard of fairness, most of the funds should be provided by the high-income countries. This is because the high-income countries, starting with the U.S. but also including Canada, Western Europe, Japan and Australia, are primarily responsible for loading up the atmosphere with greenhouse gases and causing climate change. There are straightforward ways for the high-income countries to raise these investment funds, including cutting military spending, eliminating fossil fuel subsidies and having the major central banks, starting with the U.S. Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank, purchase Green Bonds from the governments of low-income countries at zero- or near-zero interest rates.

That said, it should also be clear that in the low-income countries, as well as the high-income countries, clean energy investments will pay for themselves over time. This is because investing in dramatically raising energy efficiency levels will mean that people will be able to, for example, heat and light their homes with much less energy. In addition, investments in renewable energy will mean lower prices for the energy you do have to buy. It is already the case that, in both low- and high-income economies, average prices for renewable energy are comparable to or



Photo by Mixtra Images/Shutterstock.com


#FRIDAYS FOR FUTURE
TIME IS ALMOST OVER. SO IS MY PATIENCE
NO PLAN(et) B

lower than those for fossil fuels and nuclear power, and these renewable energy costs are also falling.

Polychroniou: The Global Green New Deal that you have proposed makes top priority a just transition for the workforce employed in the fossil fuel economy. Can you talk a bit about this issue?

Pollin: Investments to build a clean energy economy will be a major source of job creation in all regions of the world. Countries at all levels of development will experience significant gains in job creation relative to maintaining their existing fossil fuel infrastructures. Research that I have conducted with co-workers has found this relationship to hold in Brazil, China, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Puerto Rico, South Africa, South Korea, Spain and the United States. As a rough approximation, I estimate the increase in employment worldwide would be in the range of 160 million jobs per year on average between 2021 and 2030.

A human emergency is an issue for labor by definition. Overcoming this emergency will require great changes in the kinds of work that people do, over a very broad range.

At the same time, workers and communities throughout the world whose livelihoods depend on people consuming oil, coal and natural gas will lose out in the clean energy transition. It is only a modest exaggeration to say that the fate of the planet depends on whether we can put in place just transition policies for these workers and communities that will be negatively impacted by the decline and shuttering of the fossil fuel industry. Just transition policies are certainly justified according to any standard of fairness. But they are also a matter of strategic politics. In the absence of such adjustment assistance programs operating at a major scale, the workers and communities facing retrenchment from the clean energy investment project will, predictably and understandably, fight to defend their communities and livelihoods. This in turn will create unacceptable delays in proceeding with effective climate stabilization policies.

Considering the U.S. economy, co-workers and I have estimated that a rough, high-end figure for such a program would average less than $1 billion per year over 2021 to 2030—that is, well below one one-hundredth of 1 percent of U.S. GDP. This level of funding would provide strong support in two areas: (1) income, retraining and relocation support for workers facing retrenchments; and (2) guaranteeing the pensions for workers in the affected industries. Comparable programs will of course need to be implemented in other country settings. The proportional costs as a share of GDP in all other economies is not likely to be much higher than the U.S. figure. In short, generous just transition policies for workers and communities that are currently dependent on the fossil fuel industry need to be included as a centerpiece of all Green New Deal programs throughout the world.

Polychroniou: Noam, it is generally agreed that labor must play a leading role in tackling the existential crisis of global warming. What are the arguments that climate emergency is a labor issue?

Chomsky: To begin with, the climate emergency is a human emergency—in fact, an emergency for almost all living things. We are not just racing to destroy ourselves, a careening course accelerated by an array of villainous masters of the private economy and the state, but also the animal kingdom and much of the rest of the organic world. Human destructiveness, culminating in the Anthropocene, reaches levels of depravity that can hardly be captured in words, at least mine.

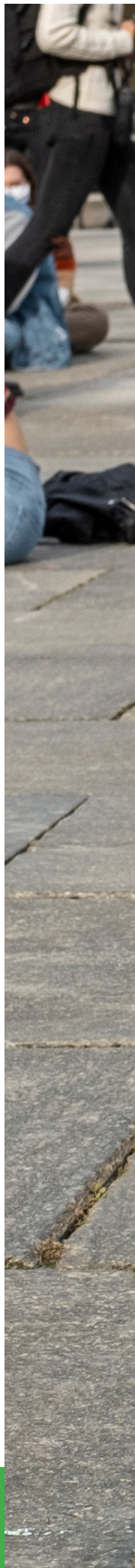


Photo by Mixtra Images/Shutterstock


TIME IS
RUNNING
OUT

Nor can words capture the failure to comprehend what is happening before our eyes.

Working people are humans, in fact the large majority of the species. A human emergency is an issue for labor by definition. More specifically, overcoming this emergency will require great changes in the kinds of work that people do, over a very broad range. One obvious case is fossil fuel workers. They will have to be helped in the transition to a new economy—one in which they can have better lives and work, a topic that Bob has studied in detail. If Democratic party leaders had cared enough about working people, they would have been organizing in oil-producing areas instead of conceding them to the Republicans with their easy and cynical tales of how Biden's goal is to take away their jobs and destroy their communities with some liberal hoax about climate. Another clear case is agricultural practices, which will have to be radically changed if we hope to survive. Constructing a new and much better society—and one that can survive—should open up a vast array of new and much better employment opportunities in manufacturing, construction, education, health, in fact, every area of life.

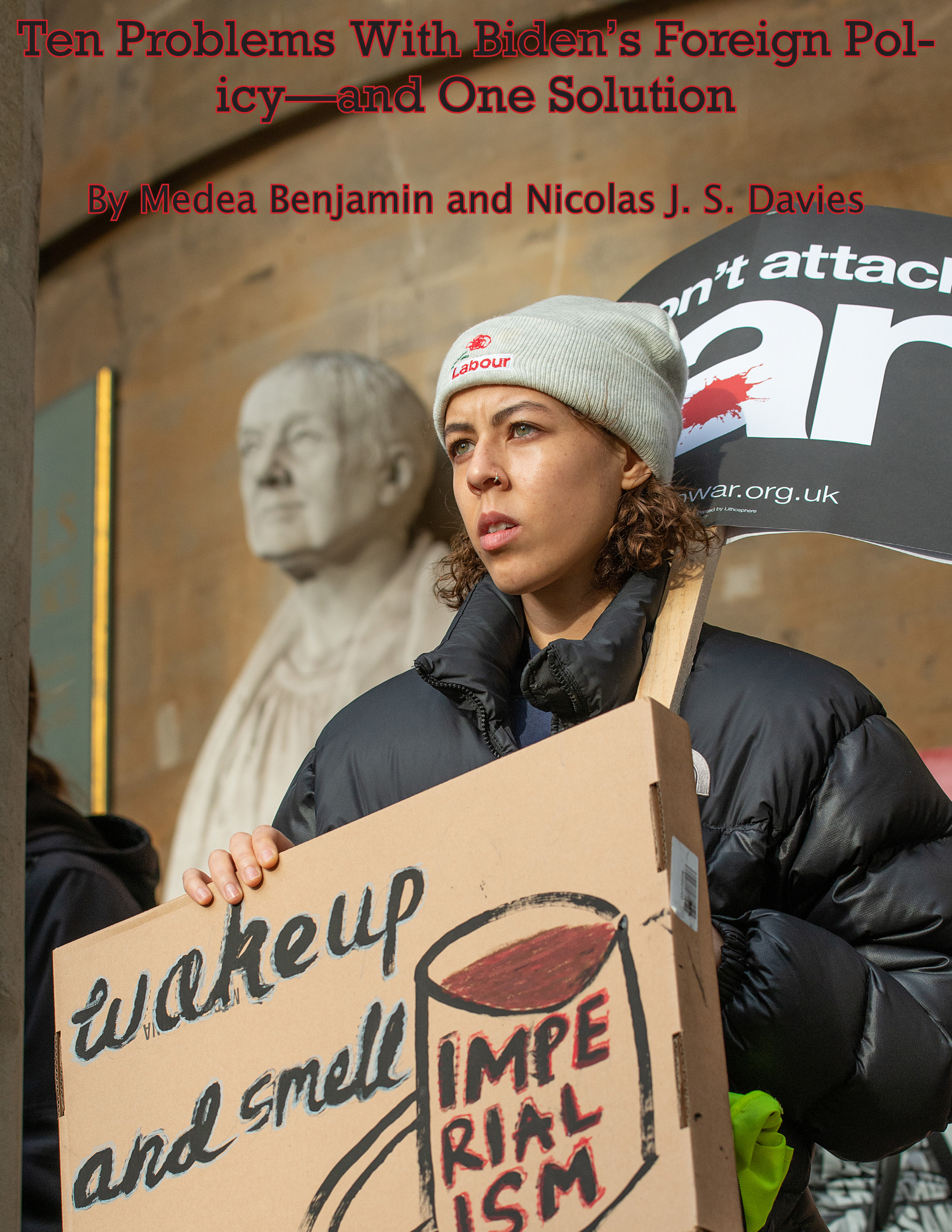
Throughout modern history, organized labor and labor activists have been in the lead in creating a better world. Reagan and Thatcher, and those behind them, knew very well what they were doing when they launched the neoliberal assault on global society by targeting unions, the main line of defense for working people in the bitter class war that they sharply accelerated. Labor has also been in the lead in the areas of our current concern. One of the earliest and most far-sighted environmentalists was the great labor leader Tony Mazzocchi, a high official of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW), workers on the front line in enduring the effects of the industrial pollution that is destroying the planet. Reviving his Labor party initiative is not an idle dream. Along with badly needed revival of the labor movement, it might be one prong in the broad effort that is imperative if we are to escape from the catastrophe we are creating and move on to a better life. ***Z***

C.J. Polychroniou is a political economist/political scientist who has taught and worked in universities and research centers in Europe and the United States. His main research interests are in European economic integration, globalization, the political economy of the United States and the deconstruction of neoliberalism's politico-economic project. He is a regular contributor to *Truthout* as well as a member of *Truthout*'s Public Intellectual Project.

Photo by John Gomez/Shutterstock

Ten Problems With Biden's Foreign Policy—and One Solution

By Medea Benjamin and Nicolas J. S. Davies




NO FLAG CAN COVER THE SHAME OF KILLING INNOCENT PEOPLE.
MY PEOPLE.
NO WAR ON IRAN

The Biden presidency is still in its early days, but it's not too early to point to areas in the foreign policy realm where we, as progressives, have been disappointed—or even infuriated.

There are one or two positive developments, such as the renewal of Obama's New START Treaty with Russia and Secretary of State Blinken's initiative for a UN-led peace process in Afghanistan, where the United States is finally turning to peace as a last resort, after 20 years lost in the graveyard of empires.

By and large though, Biden's foreign policy already seems stuck in the militarist quagmire of the past 20 years, a far cry from his campaign promise to reinvigorate diplomacy as the primary tool of U.S. foreign policy.

In this respect, Biden is following in the footsteps of Obama and Trump, who both promised fresh approaches to foreign policy but for the most part delivered more endless war.

By the end of his second term, Obama did have two significant diplomatic achievements with the signing of the Iran nuclear deal and normalization of relations with Cuba. So progressive Americans who voted for Biden had some grounds to hope that his experience as Obama's vice-president would lead him to quickly restore and build on Obama's achievements with Iran and Cuba as a foundation for the broader diplomacy he promised.

Instead, the Biden administration seems firmly entrenched behind the walls of hostility Trump built between America and our neighbors, from his renewed Cold War against China and Russia to his brutal sanctions against Cuba, Iran, Venezuela, Syria and dozens of countries around the world, and there is still no word on cuts to a military budget that has grown by 15% since FY2015 (inflation-adjusted).

Despite endless Democratic condemnations of Trump, Biden's foreign policy so far shows no substantive change from the policies of the past four years. Here are ten of the lowlights:

1. Failing to quickly rejoin the Iran nuclear agreement. The Biden administration's failure to immediately rejoin the JCPOA, as Bernie Sanders promised to do on his first day as president, has turned an easy win for Biden's promised commitment to diplomacy into an entirely avoidable diplomatic crisis.

Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA and imposition of brutal "maximum pressure" sanctions on Iran were broadly condemned by Democrats and U.S. allies alike. But now Biden is making new demands on Iran to appease hawks who opposed the agreement all along, risking an outcome in which he will fail to reinstate the JCPOA and Trump's policy will effectively become his policy. The Biden administration should re-enter the deal immediately, without preconditions.

2. U.S. Bombing Wars Rage On—Now In Secret. Also following in Trump's footsteps, Biden has escalated tensions with Iran and Iraq by attacking and killing Iranian-backed Iraqi forces who play a critical role in the war against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Biden's February 25 U.S. airstrike predictably failed to end rocket attacks on deeply unpopular U.S. bases in Iraq, which the Iraqi National Assembly passed a resolution to close over a year ago.

The U.S. attack in Syria has been condemned as illegal by members of Biden's own party, reinvigorating efforts to repeal the 2001 and 2002 Authorizations for the Use of Military Force that presidents have misused for 20 years. Other airstrikes the Biden administration is conducting in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria are shrouded in secrecy, since it has not resumed publishing the monthly Airpower Summaries that every other administration

Photo by John Gomez/Shutterstock

has published since 2004, but which Trump discontinued a year ago.

3. Refusing to hold MBS accountable for the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khasssoghi. Human rights activists were grateful that President Biden released the intelligence report on the gruesome murder of *Washington Post* columnist Jamal Khashoggi that confirmed what we already knew: that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman (MBS) approved the murder. Yet, when it came to holding MBS accountable, Biden choked.

At the very least, the administration shcould have imposed the same sanctions on MBS, including asset freezes and travel bans, that the U.S. imposed on lower-level figures involved in the murder. Instead, like Trump, Biden is wedded to the Saudi dictatorship and its diabolical Crown Prince.

4. Clinging to Trump's absurdist policy of recognizing Juan Guaidó as President of Venezuela. The Biden administration missed an opportunity to establish a new approach towards Venezuela when it decided to continue to recognize Juan Guaidó as "interim president," ruled out talks with the Maduro government, and appears to be freezing out the moderate opposition that participates in elections.

The administration also said it was in "no rush" to lift the Trump sanctions despite a recent study from the Government Accountability Office detailing their negative impact on the economy, and a scathing preliminary report by a UN Special Rapporteur, who noted their "devastating effect on the whole population of Venezuela." The lack of dialogue with all political actors in Venezuela risks entrenching a policy of regime change and economic warfare for years to come, similar to the failed U.S. policy towards Cuba that has lasted for 60 years.

5. Following Trump on Cuba instead of Obama. The Trump administration overturned all the progress towards normal relations achieved by President Obama, sanctioning Cuba's tourism and energy industries, blocking coronavirus aid shipments, restricting remittances to family members, putting Cuba on a list of "state sponsors of terrorism," and sabotaging Cuba's international medical missions, which were a major source of revenue for its health system.

We expected Biden to immediately start unraveling Trump's confrontational policies, but catering to Cuban exiles in Florida for domestic political gain apparently takes precedence over a humane and rational policy towards Cuba, for Biden as for Trump.

Biden should instead start working with the Cuban government to allow the return of diplomats to their respective embassies, lift all restrictions on remittances, make travel easier, and work with the Cuban health system in the fight against COVID-19, among other measures.

6. Ramping up the Cold War with China. Biden seems committed to Trump's self-defeating Cold War and arms race with China, talking tough and ratcheting up tensions that have led to racist hate crimes against East Asian people in the United States.

But it is the United States that is militarily surrounding and threatening China, not the other way round. As former President Jimmy Carter patiently explained to Trump, while the United States has been at war for 20 years, China has instead invested in 21st century infrastructure and in its own people, lifting 800 million of them out of poverty.

The greatest danger of this moment in history, short of all-out nuclear war, is that this aggressive U.S. military posture not only justifies unlimited U.S. military budgets, but will gradually force China to convert its economic success into military power and follow the United States down the tragic path of military



Photo by Maria Oswalt/Shutterstock


No More War for Big Oil
Profits!
LUCHA POR SOCIALISMO
STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM
struggle-la-lucha.org
Labor donated

imperialism.

7. Failing to lift painful, illegal sanctions during a pandemic. One of the legacies of the Trump administration is the devastating use of U.S. sanctions on countries around the world, including Iran, Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua, North Korea and Syria. UN special rapporteurs have condemned them as crimes against humanity and compared them to medieval sieges.

Since most of these sanctions were imposed by executive order, President Biden could easily lift them. Even before taking power, his team announced a thorough review, but, three months later, it has yet to make a move.

Unilateral sanctions that affect entire populations are an illegal form of coercion, like military intervention, coups and covert operatio,ns, that have no place in a legitimate foreign policy based on diplomacy, the rule of law and the peaceful resolution of disputes. They are especially cruel and deadly during a pandemic and the Biden administration should take immediate action by lifting broad sectoral sanctions to ensure every country can adequately respond to the pandemic.

8. Not doing enough to support peace and humanitarian aid for Yemen. Biden appeared to partially fulfill his promise to stop U.S. support for the war in Yemen when he announced that the U.S. would stop selling "offensive" weapons to the Saudis. But he has yet to explain what that means. Which weapons sales has he cancelled?

We think he should stop ALL weapons sales to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, enforcing the Leahy Law that prohibits military assistance to forces that commit gross human rights violations, and the Arms Export Control Act, under which imported U.S. weapons may be used only for legitimate self defense. There should be no exceptions to these U.S. laws for Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Israel, Egypt or other U.S. allies around the world.

The U.S. should also accept its share of responsibility for what many have called the greatest humanitarian crisis in the world today, and provide Yemen with funding to feed its people, restore its health care system, and rebuild its devastated country. A recent donor conference netted just $1.7 billion in pledges, less than half the $3.85 billion needed. Biden should restore and expand USAID funding and U.S. financial support to the UN, WHO and World Food Program relief operations in Yemen. He should also press the Saudis to reopen the air and seaports, and throw U.S. diplomatic weight behind the efforts of U.N. Special Envoy Martin Griffiths to negotiate a ceasefire.

9. Failing to back President Moon Jae-in's diplomacy with North Korea. Trump's failure to provide sanctions relief and explicit security guarantees to North Korea doomed his diplomacy and became an obstacle to the diplomatic process underway between Korean presidents Kim Jong-un and Moon Jae-in, who is himself the child of North Korean refugees. So far, Biden has continued this policy of Draconian sanctions and threats.

The Biden administration should revive the diplomatic process with confidence-building measures such as opening liaison offices, easing sanctions, facilitating reunions between Korean-American and North Korean families, permitting U.S. humanitarian organizations to resume their work when COVID conditions permit, and halting U.S.-South Korea military exercises and B-2 nuclear bomb flights.

Negotiations must involve concrete commitments to non-aggression from the U.S. side and a commitment to negotiating a peace agreement to formally end the Korean War. This would pave the way for a denuclearized Korean Peninsula and the reconciliation that so many Koreans desire—and deserve.

10. No initiative to reduce U.S. military spending. At the end of the Cold War, former

Z MAGAZINE PAGE 42

Photo by Sandor Szmutko/Shutterstock


PEACE
IS
POSSIBLE

senior Pentagon officials told the Senate Budget Committee that U.S. military spending could safely be cut by half over the next 10 years. That goal was never achieved, and instead of a post-Cold War "peace dividend," the military-industrial complex exploited the crimes of Sept. 11, 2001 to justify an extraordinary one-sided arms race. Between 2003 and 2011, the U.S. accounted for 45% of global military spending, far outstripping its own peak Cold War military spending.

Now the military-industrial complex is counting on Biden to escalate a renewed Cold War with Russia and China as the only plausible pretext for further record military budgets that are setting the stage for World War III.

Biden must dial back U.S. conflicts with China and Russia, and instead begin the critical task of moving money from the Pentagon to urgent domestic needs. He should start with at least the 10 percent cut that 93 Representatives and 23 Senators already voted for. In the longer term, Biden should look for deeper cuts in Pentagon spending, as in Rep. Barbara Lee's bill to cut $350 billion per year from the U.S. military budget, to free up resources we sorely need to invest in health care, education, clean energy and modern infrastructure.

A Progressive Way Forward

These policies, common to Democratic and Republican administrations, not only inflict pain and suffering on millions of our neighbors in other countries, but also deliberately cause instability that can at any time escalate into war, plunge a formerly functioning state into chaos, or spawn a secondary crisis whose human consequences will be even worse than the original one.

All these policies involve deliberate efforts to unilaterally impose the political will of U.S. leaders on other people and countries, by methods that consistently only cause more pain and suffering to the people they claim—or pretend—they want to help.

Biden should jettison the worst of Obama's and Trump's policies, and instead pick the best of them. Trump, recognizing the unpopularity of U.S. military interventions, began the process of bringing U.S. troops home from Afghanistan and Iraq, which Biden should follow through on.

Obama's diplomatic successes with Cuba, Iran and Russia demonstrated that negotiating with U.S. enemies to make peace, improve relations and make the world a safer place is a perfectly viable alternative to trying to force them to do what the United States wants by bombing, starving and besieging their people. This is in fact the core principle of the United Nations Charter, and it should be the core principle of Biden's foreign policy. ***Z***

Medea Benjamin is cofounder of CODEPINK for Peace, and author of several books, including *Inside Iran: The Real History and Politics of the Islamic Republic of Iran*.

Nicolas J. S. Davies is an independent journalist, a researcher with CODEPINK and the author of *Blood On Our Hands: the American Invasion and Destruction of Iraq*.

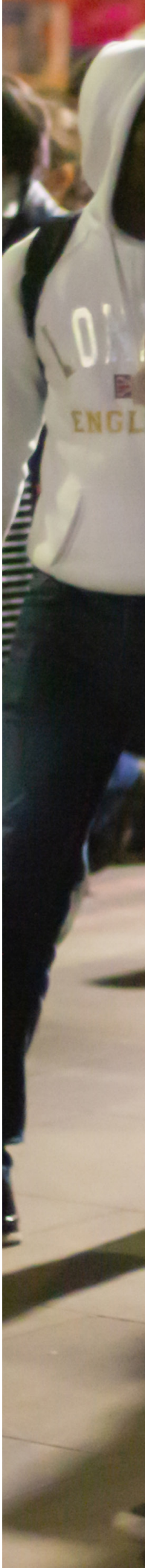


Photo by JessicaGirvan/Shutterstock


FIGHT RACISM!
FIGHT IMPERIALISM!
FIGHT
POLICE BRUTALITY
FIGHT RACISM!
FIGHT
IMPERIALISM!

Like the Diana story, Meghan's fight w the Royals will ensure nothing rea changes

By Jonathan Cook





Photo by Daniel Samray/Shutterstock.com

Oprah Winfrey's interview with Meghan and Harry is a perfect case study of how an important political debate about the corrupting role of the monarchy on British life gets shunted aside yet again, not just by the endless Royal soap opera but by supposedly progressive identity politics.

As so often, a focus on identity risks not only blunting our capacity for critical thinking but can be all too readily weaponized: in this case, as the media's main takeaway from the Oprah interview illustrates, by providing an implicit defense of class privilege.

The racism directed at Markle—sorry, the Duchess of Sussex—and baby Archie is ugly, it goes without saying (but maybe more to the point, must be stated to avoid being accused of ignoring or trivializing racism).

The concern expressed by a senior royal during Markle's pregnancy about Archie's likely darker skin color does indeed reveal how deeply ingrained racism is in the British establishment and how much it trickles down to the rest of British society, not least through the billionaire-owned media.

Princely 'birthright'

But more significant is how the racism demonstrated towards Markle and Archie has played out in the media coverage of the interview and the resulting "national conversation" on social media—nowadays, the only real barometer we have for judging such conversations.

The problem is that, via Oprah, the Sussexes get to frame the significance of the House of Windsor's racism: both in the threat that, when Charles ascends to the throne, grandson Archie will be deprived of his princely "birthright" because he is of mixed race; and in the fact that Harry and Meghan have been hounded from Palace life into celebrity-style exile in the U.S.

In the process, an important, democratic conversation has yet again been supplanted about why Britain still maintains and reveres these expensive relics of a medieval system of unaccountable rule based on a superior (if no longer divine) blood line.

Instead, the conversation initiated by Oprah is a much more politically muddled one about whether it is right that a "commoner" woman of color and her mixed-race son are obstructed from fully participating in this medieval system of privilege.

Image makeover

A real political debate about privilege—one that demands greater equality and an end to racist presumptions about blood lines—has been obscured and trivialized once again by an argument of the kind preferred by the corporate media: whether most of the Royal Family are too racist to realize that a woman of color like Meghan could help them with a 21st century image makeover.

As a result, we are presented with a false binary choice. Either we cheer on the Royal Family and implicitly condone their racism; or we cheer on Meghan and implicitly support her battle to better veil the feudal ugliness of the British monarchy.

It ought to be possible to want Archie to live a life equal to "white" babies in the UK without also wanting him to live a life of pomp and circumstance, designed to ensure that other babies—white, black and brown—grow up to be denied the privileges he enjoys by virtue of royal birth.



Photo by Daniel Samray/Shutterstock.com

Divisive and enervating

What the Oprah interview does—is designed to do—is derail the intersection of class and race in politically damaging ways.

A meaningful democratic struggle prioritizes class unity as the battering ram against establishment power that long ago learned to protect itself by dividing us through our competing identities. Class struggle does not ignore race; it embraces it and all other socially constructed identities used by power to rationalize oppression. Class subsumes them into a collective struggle strengthened by numbers.

Struggle based on identity, by contrast, is inherently divisive and politically enervating, as the Meghan Markle case illuminates. Her challenge to Royal "tradition" alienates those most invested in ideas of monarchy, "Britishness" or white identity. And it does so while offering no more than a sop to those invested in breaking glass ceilings, even of the kind that aren't worth smashing in the first place.

Meghan's fight for the first mixed-race British prince is no more politically progressive than the celebration by the media two years ago of the news that for the first time women were in charge of the military-industrial complex—the one that rains down death and destruction on "Third World" men, women and children.

Value for money

Strange as it is to recall now—in an age of social media, when anyone can comment on anything, and the "mainstream" media's billionaire gatekeepers have supposedly been sidelined—ordinary Britons discussed abolishing the monarchy far more in the 1970s, when I was a child, than they do nowadays.

Getting rid of the Royal Family—like getting rid of nuclear weapons, another topic no one talks about seriously any more—was mainstream enough then that Royalists were often forced on to the defensive. As the mood soured among a vocal section of the population, the Queen's defenders were forced hurriedly to switch from arguments rooted in deference and tradition to more utilitarian claims that the Royals offered "value for money," supposedly boosting commerce and tourism.

Prince Charles' engagement in 1981 to a beautiful, demure teenage "English rose," Princess Diana, looked to many, even at the time, suspiciously like a move to reinvigorate a tired, increasingly unpopular brand.

The media spectacle of a fairy tale romance and wedding, followed by years of controversy, disillusionment and betrayal, culminating in divorce and finally Diana's death/murder, very effectively distracted the British public for the next 16 years from the question of what purpose a Royal Family served. It became only too clear what role they played: they kept us engrossed in a real-life, better-than-TV drama.

Champions of identity

Diana's supposed struggle to grow from adolescence to womanhood in the glare of media intrusion and under the strictures of "The Firm" created the prototype for a new type of apolitical, Mills and Boon-style identity politics.

Following Diana's escapades—from the secular saint who cleared landmines to the raunchy princess who had illicit sex with her riding instructor, an army major no less—was far more thrilling than the campaign to end the monarchy and the regressive landed class it still represents.

Diana's life story helped pave the way to the

reinvention of the left through the 1990s—under Tony Blair in the UK and Bill Clinton in the U.S.—as champions of a new social issues-obsessed non-politics.

Both were ushered into power after reassuring the newly triumphant corporate elite that they would harness and divert popular energy away from dangerous struggles for political change towards safe struggles for superficial social change.

In the UK, that was achieved most obviously in Blair's assiduous courtship of media mogul Rupert Murdoch. Importantly, Blair persuaded Murdoch that, as prime minister, he would not only preserve the economic legacy of the Thatcher years but head further down the path of deregulation.

Murdoch—himself no fan of a British monarchy that had always looked down on him as a vulgar Australian—also understood that the inevitable soap opera quality of exceptional individuals battling the UK's rigid hierarchy of privilege, spurred on by Blair's New Labour, would prove great for sales of his newspapers. Just as Oprah knows that the only tangible consequence of the Harry and Meghan interview is that it will rake in many more millions for her own media empire.

Sticking It to the Man

In the new era of identity-saturated non-politics, demands for equality mean removing obstacles so that more women, people of colour and the LGBT community can participate in institutions that represent power and privilege.

These battles are not about overthrowing those systems of privilege, as earlier identity-based struggles such as the Black Panthers' were. Success serves simply to placate identity-focused groups by helping those of most "merit" elbow their way into the preserves of established power.

Those achievements started with the most visible, least significant areas of the economy, such as sport and celebrity, and led over time to greater access to the professions.

The current excitement among some on the left at Meghan's "Sticking It to the Man" appears to derive from the disruptive threat she poses to the House of Windsor—not to its economic, social and political power, but to its status as the last hold-out against Blair's identity-fuelled "revolution."

Narrative twist

Diana's emancipation story helped distract us for nearly two decades from confronting central questions about the nature and role of the British establishment in preserving and veiling power.

Now Meghan Markle is expanding the identity story in a new direction, one that once again embraces the story of a young, "headstrong" woman scorned by the Royal Family for snubbing tradition. But this time there is an alluring contemporary twist to the narrative: the Family's resistance to diversity and its refusal to own its racist past.

Unlike Diana who stood alone and seemingly fragile, Meghan and Harry offer a more relevant, modern picture of a confident, professional young couple standing and fighting together for what is fair, for what should be theirs by right.

This feels important, bold and empowering. But it is the precise opposite. It is more Mills and Boons, but this time with diversity thrown in to generate more appeal on one side and more hostility on the other.

Meghan's story will continue to work its magic: fascinating, infuriating and pacifying us in equal measure as we focus on what is private, unknowable and can be endlessly



Photo byIlyas Tayfun Salci/Shutterstock


REFUGEES
BRING YOUR FAMILIES
WELCOME

contested rather than what is universal, visible and impossible to refute.

Meanwhile, the Royal Family, the perpetuation of privilege and the erosion of democracy will march on as before, in the same long and glorious British tradition. Z



Photo by Daniel Samray/Shutterstock

This essay first appeared on Jonathan Cook's blog: https://www.jonathan-cook.net/blog/

Jonathan Cook won the Martha Gellhorn Special Prize for Journalism. His books include *Israel and the Clash of Civilisations: Iraq, Iran and the Plan to Remake the Middle East* (Pluto Press) and *Disappearing Palestine: Israel's Experiments in Human Despair* (Zed Books). His website is www.jonathan-cook.net.

