Response to U.S.-backed coup regime

Political strike shuts down Bolivia

By Michael Otto
Ibarra, Ecuador

Do Bolivian lives matter? The Bolivian masses are experiencing a perfect storm of social, health and economic crises. A U.S.-backed military coup overthrew President Evo Morales Ayma in November 2019 — Morales called it a lithium coup.

To Wall Street, only the great reserves of Bolivian lithium matter.

Once again, a scenario of multiple crises that began with the November coup defines Bolivia’s future. De facto President Jeanine Áñez’s main achievement was to unleash a shameless wave of racist repression against Morales’ Movement for Socialism (MAS) and the Aymara and Quechua Indigenous peoples.

Áñez kept none of the promises she made to pacify the people after the November coup, nor did she offer any assistance to the poor during the twin crises of COVID-19 and the ensuing economic collapse.

First there were a series of election postponements. The Supreme Election Tribunal’s (TSE) ultimate unilateral reset of the presidential election to Oct. 18 was the final straw for the masses. Their Aug. 3 general strike with at least 75 roadblocks shut all the country’s major highways.

“The general strike and roadblocks were decided upon at a town hall meeting held in the city of El Alto, La Paz, on July 28 where social organizations from the nine departments of the country gathered for a massive protest march. The social movements reject the postponement of the election until Oct. 18 as announced by TSE President Salvador Romero.” (resumen-english.org, Aug. 3)

MAS candidate for president, Lucho Arce, said in a radio interview, “Neither the MAS, nor Evo Morales nor I are behind the mobilizations against the illegalities of the TSE. Bolivia is mobilizing itself.” He said that shrinking family resources due to massive unemployment and wage cuts forced the action by the Central Labor Council of Bolivian Workers (COB) and the Unity Pact, which includes social organizations, among them Indigenous bodies, that lead resistance to the coup government.

“It is not MAS that is mobilized, but the people who have grown tired of the arbitrariness and looting of a government whose only task was to call for elections,” said Arce. (kawsachuncoca.com, July 25)

Repression and violence continue

The unwillingness or inability of the government to communicate without threats, arrests and violence continued unabated on Monday, Aug. 10, after the COB and Unity Pact negotiated unsuccessfully with the TSE and the Plurinational Legislative Assembly on Saturday night until dawn on Sunday morning, Aug. 9.

Bolivia has arrived at a moment of truth. Many believe the hated Áñez will stop at nothing to hold onto power. TeleSUR English reported that two U.S. war planes were delivered to the government.

Government ministers are making ominous threats. Motorcycle gangs of fascists, supported by the police and the army, are raiding some roadblocks around Cochabamba much as they terrorized urban Indigenous people last November. This all fits with the government that engineered a savage regime change and massacred Indigenous people who protested the coup.

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Unions push back

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BOSTON SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

‘No reopening without safety first!’

On July 29, the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, United Steelworkers Local 8751 issued the statement below, which President Andre François read on the August 6 Workers World Party webinar:

Boston school bus drivers say, “No school reopening without union-planned and designed health and safety procedures!”

Teachers, nurses, bus drivers and monitors, custodians, paraprofessionals, food workers demand a seat at the planning table, now!

First step: Nurses in every school, bus yard, and food and nutrition facility to ensure front-line Emergency COVID-19 Worksite Standard Operating Procedures.

Transdev: Stop the fraud! Hire professional bus and facility disinfecting companies, now!

Transdev/Boston Public Schools: Hire more bus drivers and monitors! Impact bargaining for full hazard pay and benefits for all school workers, now!

For weeks in February and early March 2020, United Steelworkers Local 8751 published demands to our private employer, Vedia/Transdev, and to Boston Public to professionally disinfect our bus yards and buses, to institute emergency Health and Safety Protocols, such as providing masks and other personal protective equipment, temperature screening, strict outdoor physical distancing, touchless hand sanitizers, etc.

As the pandemic spread worldwide, our employer and responsible parties failed to act, and in April, Local 8751 suffered deaths by COVID-19 of four drivers who were active in the city’s food-hotel delivery program to thousands of BPS children.

Only the union’s forceful onsite intervention and job actions to enforce Emergency COVID-19 Worksite Standard Operating Procedures stopped infections among our members until Transdev dumped us all onto the unemployment line in late-June.

Local 8751 pledges to our members and the children, families and communities we serve: Not One More Death!

Local 8751 applauds the Boston Teachers Union’s front-line, essential, and in our opinion, nonnegotiable demand for union nurses in every school. As the school bus is first daily contact with tens of thousands of Boston’s most precious cargo, Local 8751 also demands BTU nurses be stationed at the bus yards to assist Local 8751 with ensuring and enforcing Emergency COVID-19 Procedures.

Local 8751 raises 1,000 fists of solidarity with the American Federation of Teachers’ July 28 powerful commitment and warning to federal, state and local governments that “safety strikes” will be the result if the workers’ health and safety demands remain unmet. No reopening without safety first!

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational, and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogynoir, LGBTQ+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class.

It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you.

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In honor of Negro National Leagues...

In the U.S.

Boston school bus drivers demand safety.
Utah teachers challenge state’s reopening plans.
Cops out of union.
California child care workers unionize.
On the picket line.
Face to face with Mumia in 1996.
Rally on anniversary of police attack on MOVE.
Student-athletes organize for health, social justice.
A voice from New Orleans schools.
In honor of Negro National Leagues.
Testing and insurance: a profitable disaster.
Illegal terror against im/migrants continues.
Mumia: A literal matter of history.

Join us in the fight for socialism!

Left to right, USW Local 8751 Chief Steward Franky Casta, Trustee Frankie Flores, and President Andre Francois at May 14 action in conjunction with Haitian Flag Day. The union protested recent unjust firings of their members and demanded enforcement of Local 8751’s COVID-19 Emergency Standard Operating Procedures.

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Cops out of unions! Solidarity with the righteous rebellion!

On July 7 the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, United Steelworkers Local 8751, passed Resolution in solidarity for Teachers' Rights Movement, the largest nationwide movement and support for its demands, and Be It Further Resolved that USW Local 8751 give to brother

Whereas, USW Local 8751 has a proud history of demonstrating our “Solidarity in action” in the struggle for racist police brutality and unlawful racial profiling. Our members helped to organize the historic Dec. 14, 1974, 25,000-strong “Boston March Against Racism” and have brought our union voices, resources, sound systems, and numbers to countless rallies, picket lines, and marches from those days to the present. We marched for Justice for Amadou Diallo, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Freddie Gray, George Floyd, and Terrence Coleman, Brionna Taylor, and countless Black, Brown, Indigenous, migrant and LGBTQ2S+ victims of homicide by police, ICE agents and prison guards, and Whereas, The cruel and calculated police murder of George Floyd provided the spark that lit the powder keg, this rebellion is addressing historic and current white supremacy in all forms and of the most broad and comprehensive character, framing the national and international dialog and winning important concessions. Racism, anti-Black, anti-Asian, and anti-immigrant morality from Confederate soldiers to Columbus are tumbling down; Jim Crow-era product marketing symbols are being trashed; all variety of degrading and demeaning stereotypes are being challenged. Entertainers and sports figures across the spectrum are making their pro

Be It Therefore Resolved that Local 8751 dedicate our active solidarity to this righteous rebellion and call on others within the labor movement to join the struggle and give aid and resources to the building of this historic movement and support for its demands, and Be It Further Resolved that Local 8751 give to brother Kaepner’s National Know Your Rights Legal Defense Fund and the defense of local protesters falsely arrested during demonstrations following George Floyd’s murder, and that we give resources to local leadership of these protests in all of their glorious expressions, including to Black Lives Matter Boston, @BlackBoston2020, Mass Action Against Police Brutality, United American Indians of New England, FIRE Boston, National TPS Alliance and its affiliates, the Greater Boston Marxist Association’s “Health & Safety Kit” mutual aid campaign, For the People (#FTPBoston), Community For Us, By Us, Collective, etc., and assist with sound, trucks, media and other logistics as needed, and Be It Further Resolved that USW Local 8771 join the Martin Luther King Labor Council of King County, Washington, Writers Guild of America, East, and other unions and tens of millions of workers, organized and as yet unorganized, and call on the Greater Boston Labor Council, Massachusetts AFL-CIO and the National AFL-CIO to immediately expel the International Union [sic] of Police Associations and all other organizations of police, ICE agents and prison guards from its member

Be It Further Resolved that USW Local 8751 call on Mayor Walsh and the Boston City Council to defund the Boston Police Department, to enforce the demand and give aid and resources to the building of this historic movement and support for its demands, and Be It Further Resolved that Local 8751 give to brother Kaepner’s National Know Your Rights Legal Defense Fund and the defense of local protesters falsely arrested during demonstrations following George Floyd’s murder, and that we give resources to local leadership of these protests in all of their glorious expressions, including to Black Lives Matter Boston, @BlackBoston2020, Mass Action Against Police Brutality, United American Indians of New England, FIRE Boston, National TPS Alliance and its affiliates, the Greater Boston Marxist Association’s “Health & Safety Kit” mutual aid campaign, For the People (#FTPBoston), Community For Us, By Us, Collective, etc., and assist with sound, trucks, media and other logistics as needed, and Be It Further Resolved that USW Local 8751 join the Martin Luther King Labor Council of King County, Washington, Writers Guild of America, East, and other unions and tens of millions of workers, organized and as yet unorganized, and call on the Greater Boston Labor Council, Massachusetts AFL-CIO and the National AFL-CIO to immediately expel the International Union [sic] of Police Associations and all other organizations of police, ICE agents and prison guards from its member

Whereas, For many weeks a tidal wave of youth-led protests have swept through the country and around the globe protesting the brutal police murder of George Floyd and other Black, Brown and Indigenous communities, and Whereas, Labor leadership and rank and file have – like Local 26 UNITE HERE! – its splendid defense of its members against racist police arrest and brutalization of its Black members in Lynn, MA – and must continue to “stand in the gap” against these brutal attacks.

Black lives matter! Justice for George Floyd and all victims! Reopen the cases! De-escalate police violence! Community control of safety and health, now! Expel all so-called “police unions” from the AFL-CIO! Whereas, For many weeks a tidal wave of youth-led protests have swept through the country and around the globe protesting the brutal police murder of George Floyd and other Black, Brown and Indigenous communities, and Whereas, Systemic, institutional racism victimizes the families and Black, Brown and Indigenous communities again and failing to bring the racist perpetrators to justice. The peoples’ Movement for Black Lives, the largest in the history of the country, is proclaiming in many lan

Utah teachers challenge state’s reopening plans

By Alyssa Faith and Summer Autumn

School districts across Utah are planning to open with in-person classes for the start of the new school year, despite the state having twice the number of confirmed cases of coronavirus as it did when schools closed in March. Governor Gary Herbert requested school districts open for in-person learning, while planning to change and procedures up to individual school districts. School boards have been making minimal changes without input from teachers and parents.

The Granite Education Association, representing teachers in Utah’s largest school district, held a rally outside the district offices during a school board meeting on Aug. 4. They demanded the board listen to workers and do more to keep employees and children safe.

The rally was attended by approximately 500 workers. They demanded the school board listen to workers and do more to keep employees and children safe.

The state’s plan to offer both in-person and virtual learning, with no plan to hire more teachers – effectively doubling teachers’ work- load without compensation or support. Workers have expressed concern about returning during the pandemic, either due to being high-risk or having high-risk loved ones at home, have been offered no alternatives other than to return to work or take Family and Medical Leave Act unpaid time off.

Members of the union are debating whether or not involve face-to-face in-person education is not implemented. It would be the first Utah educators’ strike in three decades.

Openings schools to force parents back to work

Recent comments from Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, labeling the reopening of schools as an “experiment” to see how many children will get Covid 19, has raised alarms among parents and workers in a school setting. This suggests the powers in charge are not opening schools due to a belief that it is safe to do so, but rather to use the schools as a means of child care in order to send parents back to work.

It is an abuse of the working class for the ruling class to force parents to risk their children’s lives in order to return to work. This is an affront to the entire class who will have other options for safer child care or alternativa- tive incomes, while the majority of workers will have no choice but to send their children into unsafe schools in order to maintain housing and income – placing entire communities at risk of illness or death.

When school districts in Chicago announced a return to in-person schooling, the teachers’ union there held a meeting and announced an intent to strike, and the gov- ernment announced the next day that schooling would continue to be remote. As the urgent and existential crisis for the power to protect its workers’ rights and, in times such as now, perhaps the safety and lives of entire communities.

Teachers are fighting for the safety of the children in their communities. Act in solidarity with teachers and workers!
California childcare workers celebrate growing union power.

By Kathy Durkin

In a stunning victory for the U.S. labor movement, childcare workers in California voted nearly unanimously to unionize. The successful election came after public sector unions conducted a 17-year campaign aimed at pressuring state legislatures to permit these workers to bargain collectively. Election results were announced July 27.

The workers chose to establish a union named Child Care Providers United, a collaboration among United Domestic Workers of America/American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3930 and Service Employees Union Locals 99 and 521.

Already a membership organization, the group will now form a bargaining unit with the election’s landslide victory. Some 45,000 publicly funded childcare providers will be represented in contract negotiations.

This workforce is composed primarily of women — Black, Latinx and immigrant —making this victory even more significant as part of the overall fight for racial and economic justice and gender equity. Although these workers do the vital job of nurturing and educating children, their work is severely undervalued, and they are super-exploited in this racist, sexist, anti-poor economic system.

Many of these workers earn $12 an hour or less, and some as little as $5. They have no paid sick leave and must fund their own healthcare. One-fourth of them live under the official poverty line, and 60% depend on some form of public assistance, such as food stamps.

“We can fight for respect and dignity!”


Workers at nonprofit join union Aug. 5

Staff at the Congressional Progressive Caucus Center joined the Nonprofit Professional Employees Union on Aug. 5. When the CPC Center requested voluntary recognition from management, it agreed to move forward with the process. “We believe in unity and equity and have dedicated our careers to serving and fighting for justice,” said representatives of the CPC Center Union. “We believe that unionizing will help uphold the CPC Center’s values and commitment to empowerment and strengthening communities of all backgrounds across the nation.” The CPC Center states that it works to “identify and develop solutions to build a more just, equitable and resilient nation.” (NPEU, Aug. 5)

Solidarity with Philadelphia sanitation workers

Even though trash has been piling up on Philadelphia streets during this steamy summer, there’s acknowledgment among city officials and the sanitation workers’ union, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Local 427 of the Sanitation Council, that it’s because many workers have been out sick because of COVID-19. Some have tested positive; others have been quarantining due to on-the-job exposure; others don’t have reliable childcare. Or there may just be more household trash now.

Juliana Feliciano Reyes pointed out in an Aug. 4 Philadelphia Inquirer article that the workers were fighting for hazard pay and better protective equipment even before the pandemic. But now people are acting in solidarity with them — randomly passing out water as trucks come by, buying T-shirts to help workers purchase protective equipment and cleaning supplies, and posting signs supporting them.

Reyes observed, “It’s a sign of how the narrative around work has shifted, especially during the pandemic. Americans have been witnessing the reality faced by many workers — low wages, few protections — as those risking their lives on the job speak out about unsafe working conditions.”

She added, “Sanitation workers in particular have been at the forefront of this moment. Like their counterparts in Philadelphia, workers have protested in Pittsburgh and in Raleigh, N.C., in New Orleans. Sanitation workers have been on strike for nearly three months. The Black Lives Matter uprisings have only bolstered the efforts, as many sanitation workers are Black men.”

California workers demand testing before Disney parks open

The Coalition of Resort Labor Unions, an alliance of 12 unions representing 13,000 workers at Disney theme parks in Anaheim, Calif., has been carrying on a struggle for months over safety measures for its members who were furloughed March 13. It sent Gov. Newsom a compelling letter protesting the July 17 reopening of Disneyland Park and Disney California Adventure Park. That has since been delayed indefinitely.

Disney did agree to certain ground rules — two weeks sick pay for confirmed cases of COVID-19, though workers have to apply for state disability after that; workers must conduct a daily at-home coronavirus assessment with a thermometer supplied by Disney; members who must work within 6 feet of visitors will be provided a plastic face shield. (Orange County Register, June 25)

But the company refuses to do daily testing for cast members, claiming, “The existing COVID-19 testing is not viable as a screening tool and not recommended by the Food and Drug Administration to be used in this way,” according to Disney Labor Relations Director Bill Pace.

But, as an Aug. 3 Daily Beast article points out, that’s totally opposite the testing regime used in the National Basketball Association’s Bubble at Disney World in Orlando. Players and select staff are given daily COVID-19 tests that can catch and contain any outbreaks; so far they’ve been very effective. While not commenting on the NBA Bubble, another Disney spokesperson noted, “We’ve adopted new protocols for face coverings, health screenings, cleaning and disinfecting, training and more.”

Meanwhile a select number of “veteran members” returned to their jobs July 9 in Anaheim’s downtown Disneyland District, an outdoor shopping and dining complex, even though they are uncertain about their safety. One District worker has tested positive since the reopening, according to Andrea Zinder, president of the Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 324, which represents Downtown Disney employees. The worker began self-isolating after receiving the news on July 24.

The situation calls for the longterm union slogan, “An injury to one is an injury to all.”

Workers at nonprofit join union Aug. 5
Revisiting a historic interview

Face to face with Mumia in 1996

By Ted Kelly

On March 28, 1996, Workers World Party leading members Monica Moorehead and Larry Holmes traveled to a remote rural township in central Pennsylvania to pay a visit to the dungeon within a dungeon, a death row. For at least 25 years, Mumia Abu-Jamal was shackled in a holding cell in Sing Sing prison, where he remained until his death in 2013.

The interview took place less than a year after the state signed a death warrant for Aug. 17 — the birthdate of Black Nationalist Marcus Garvey — to execute this wrongly imprisoned Philadelphia journalist, revolutionary and former Black Panther. An estimated 10,000 people held an emergency protest in the streets of Philadelphia on Aug. 12, 1995, that helped stop this legal lynching. Mumia was eventually taken off death row at Greene state prison in December 2011 thanks to the power of the people. He still remains, after 39 years, in a Pennsylvania prison fighting for his release.

The following excerpts are from that interview, originally published in the pamphlet entitled, “Mumia Speaks.”

When we were young back during the Vietnam war, we used to talk about the military-industrial complex. Now you have the prison-industrial complex. And you have what is the ultimate solution to America’s economic problem: those who are poor, those who are powerless, those who have no access to the resources one needs to survive.

In an area where there is corporate downsizing and there are no jobs and there is only a service economy, in a ghetto. There’s enough wealth so that every person can make sure that no one has to live in a shack, in a hovel, in a prison cell, that every child is educated, truly educated, with life education, so forth.

And it is so naked now, so negative now, that as Monica said — you can have more than 1.1 million people in this prison, in these prisons and you have people saying “Well, they need to lock up more people.” You have people actually saying that.

The real secret is I’m free now

Of course they don’t know what they’re talking about. But they are just following a script that has been laid down to them by the media, by the politicians.

When you spoke about that [prisons] I thought about a recent article that was in the New York Times — you may have seen it — by So1 Wachtler, who used to be the presiding judge of the New York Court of Appeals. I laughed when I read it, I had a belly laugh, because here’s a guy who was for all intents and purposes a hanging judge. And if somebody made a claim before his court, well, “No, he gets nothing. Cut.” Those people down as if it was fun.

But in his article he talks about the difference between reading a brief about an inmate who sued about the humiliation of strip search and going through that experience himself, and how devastated he was by it. But even one of those 1.1 million people — and if you look across the country now, you don’t have to go through the prison to go through that humiliation, you can go to your average police department down the block. Someone gets arrested for a traffic violation, a ticket, and men and women are being strip searched in every city in America. You see what I’m saying?

So what he was in a position of power and he could have said this is unconstitutional, or it violates this, “Well, no, doesn’t make a claim, next, denied.” And he didn’t sense how wrong, how wrong, how cold-hearted that was — until it was him that had to spread his buttocks, until it was him that had to pull his penis back. You understand what I’m saying? It became a whole other reality.

The Jamaicans have a saying: “Who feels it knows it.” Well, now he knows it. A little too late, though, ain’t it?

For at least two hours, they interviewed a shackled Mumia, which people can climb – the only growth industry in this part of Pennsylvania, in the eastern United States, in the southern United States, in the western United States, is “corrections,” for want of a better word.

The corrections industry is booming. And I mean, this joint here ain’t five years old. Some corporations made a mint off this thing. This thing cost millions of dollars to be constructed.

And to second that you have across the United States for the first time in modern history, small rural counties and districts begging the government to build a prison in their area, to have someone who has nothing.

But in his article he talks about the difference between what you see in Congress and what you see in the statehouses, and districts begging the government to build a prison in their area, to have someone who has nothing.

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Stop the racist attacks!

Black Incarcerated Lives Matter!

California statewide action
August 22nd 11 am PST
at Soledad State Prison (CTF)

Rally marks 42nd anniversary of police attack on MOVE

Hundreds rallied at the Philadelphia Museum of Art on Aug. 8 to mark the 42 years since a police riot at the MOVE house in Powelton Village. Demonstrators demanded the release of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The attack on the MOVE organization ended in the destruction of the family’s house and the fraudulent arrest of nine MOVE members. Decades of protests and movement pressure have not moved in making this the 42nd anniversary of the attack since nine MOVE 9 members have been released. However, Phil and Merle Africa were killed by the prison system. Michael Jr., Debbie, Janet, Janine, Eddie and Chuck were all released on parole after 40 years of incarceration. Delbert Africa, who was brutally beaten by police on Aug. 8, 1978, was released early in 2020 but died in June from health problems caused by his 43 years of incarceration.

--- Report and photo by Ted Kelly
Student-athletes organize for health, social justice, labor rights

By Monica Moorehead

Since March 12, the coronavirus has impacted every sector of U.S. society, not only health but also social life. With all the suffering going on and with no national public health care system in the U.S., different sectors of society are seeking to protect themselves by preventing the spread of the virus as best they can, especially considering the extremely anti-scientist president in the White House. At the same time they are organizing around unifying political demands.

One such group that is organizing are college football players under the auspices of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The NCAA is a not-for-profit institution that promotes "nearly half a million college athletes" that make up the 18,886 teams that send more than 57,661 participants to compete each year in the NCAA’s 90 championships in 24 sports across three divisions. (ncaa.org)

The top 15 college football programs in the country are worth anywhere between $471 million to $1.1 billion if each program were to be sold on the open market, according to the Wall Street Journal. (April 1, 2019)

The NCAA has averaged over $31 million in TV and marketing right revenues from college football games, since at least 2017. Mark Emmert, the current NCAA president, pocketed almost $4 million in combined salary and compensation in 2019. The $25 highest paid college football coaches in 2019 each made between $4.1 million and $9.3 million in salary. (Fan Buzz, Aug. 9)

While all these millions of dollars were being exchanged between the NCAA, coaches and other big business interests, the obvious losers were the student-athletes who do not get paid one red cent for providing their labor that produces this wealth on the playing field and fills stadium seats in the tens of thousands.

In an unprecedented move last month, the NCAA Board of Governors approved a law that all student-athletes would be allowed to be financially compensated for use of their image and likeness on merchandise for sale like T-shirts and video games. This came on the heels of the Fair Pay for Play Act passed by the California legislature, allowing college athletes in that state to sign endorsement deals and licensing contracts starting in 2023.

This was an important piece of legislation, leading other states to debate similar acts, considering the fact that 35% of college football players are African American and come from lower-income families.

#WeAreUnited formed

These super-exploited student-athletes have begun to assert their rights, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic in March, the Black Lives Matter struggle in late May, and their ongoing fight for economic justice. The Northwestern University football team attempted to unionize in 2015 and was rejected by the National Labor Relations Board.

One of the most powerful Division I conferences in the NCAA is PAC-12, with teams based on the West Coast. Football players, along with players in other sports in this conference, presented a set of demands on Aug. 2 in the sports publication, The Players Tribune, that reflected concerns on health and safety dealing with the coronavirus, social injustice and the right to organize.

Jake Cunihan, a redshirt senior at Cal who helped organize the players, stated, "When we first got started, our only thought was coronavirus. We started talking to some of our teammates, and they said, 'What about the Black Lives Matter issue? We don’t want to detract from their issue.' The more we started talking with them, it became clear the two were the same issues." (thetheseeded. com, Aug. 3)

Andrew Cooper, a cross country runner and co-president of Cal’s student-athlete advisory committee, stated two important lessons in the same article, “I learned how this system will never change from within. Ever. The only way a labor movement can be started is with a work stoppage.”

Players in the Big Ten conference have already come together to develop their own set of demands. Big Ten and PAC-12 have cancelled their seasons until next year. Other conferences could do the same.

The players in PAC-12 put out a #WeAreUnited resolution that reads: “To ensure future generations of college athletes will be treated fairly, #WeAreUnited.

Because NCAA sports exploit college athletes physically, economically and academically, and also disproportionately harm Black college athletes, #WeAreUnited.

Because the NCAA’s claim that #BlackLivesMatter, while also systemically exploiting Black athletes nationwide, #WeAreUnited.

Because our system will never change from within, because any player who does not feel safe on the playing field and fills stadium seats in the tens of thousands.

‘Are we gonna be alive?’

By Big E

New Orleans

This slightly edited talk was given at the Aug. 6 Workers World Party webinar: “Workerizing the Class: the Socialist Response,” which featured education workers from five states across the U.S. Big E is an activist with New Orleans Workers Group.

Thank you, everybody out there, and much love to workers of the world as well.

To touch on our situation here in Jefferson Parish and in the New Orleans area, what we’re looking at is: The capitalist class has an agenda. And that’s to put the workers back to work — they need glorified babysitters; that’s the way they view us as teachers. To push the kids back to school, get the parents back to work and keep this capitalist machine rolling.

I’m saying that’s their objective. It’s on us to put up as much of a fight in resistance as we can.

‘Our life here, right now’

To point out a few more of the issues:

Our population here is majority Black, about 56% or so, and the rest Latinx, white and Asian. There’s also some undocumented. But everybody’s poor — you know what I’m saying. It’s not the uniting fact. It’s poor kids, poor teachers, right? Title I schools. [Title I is the largest U.S. federal aid program for public schools, begun in 1965 as part of the "War on Poverty."]

And the undocumented students, they don’t have access to the free internet or the low-cost internet or the free laptops that some schools have been offering. They also don’t have the ability to go get tested.

The [school systems] are doing this hybrid thing. They’re not teaching people how to teach digitally. Nobody has taught you the process. They don’t have the software together, because they had a contract with whatever company. Now they’re competing with Google, with Google. If you’ve got Google email. Now as Google sees the hustle of Zoom, they’re jumping into the distance learning thing and yet it’s not ready. But we are still expected to learn it as the [children] learn.

The kids are coming next week. [The state has started PAC-12 fall camp and game participation unless the following demands are guaranteed in writing by our conference to protect and benefit college athletes.]

#WeAreUnited

Because eliminating lavish salaries and facility expansion goes to serve all sports must be prioritized, #WeAreUnited.

Because the NCAA has failed us and we are prepared to ensure that our conference treats us fairly whether or not it continues its NCAA membership, #WeAreUnited.

In forming alliances with college athletes from other conferences to unite with us for change, #WeAreUnited.

#WeAreUnited in our commitment to secure fair treatment for college athletes. Due to COVID-19 and other serious concerns, the pandemic and game participation unless the following demands are guaranteed in writing by our conference to protect and benefit both scholarship athletes and walk-ons."

To read the PAC-12 Unity demands, go to tinyurl.com/y6aaa9rR. □
In honor of Negro National Leagues
Only the ball was white
By Gloria Rubac

This year, 2020, is the 100th birthday of the Negro National Leagues. Not Major League Baseball’s National League, but the Negro National Leagues. I’d like you to meet some of my heroes: Cool Papa, Peach Head, Double Duty, Satch, Buck and Peanut. Even if you are a sports fan, you may not have heard of them, but if you’re a baseball fan, you really need to know them. They were some of the hundreds and hundreds of players who played professional baseball for the Negro baseball leagues from 1920 until 1950.

All of baseball has been honoring this 100th anniversary—from the Negro League Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Mo., to Major League Baseball, to the Society for American Baseball Research. The museum’s celebrations, along with MLB’s countrywide celebration at every major league ballpark scheduled for June 27, had to be postponed due to the pandemic.

Making the history of the Negro Leagues even more famous, Bob Kendrick, the museum’s president, came up with an idea. He wanted to have celebrities, dignitaries, athletes of all sports and anyone else who wanted to join in to tip their cap to the Negro Leagues players who were not given a chance to play in the Major Leagues until 1947, when Jackie Robinson broke into MLB with the Brooklyn Dodgers.

From the four living former U.S. presidents, National Baseball Hall of Famer and former Indiana Governor Michael Jordan, former tennis star Billy Jean King, current African American MLB players, and the manager of the Houston Astros, Dusty Baker, many have tipped their hats to pay tribute to the players in the Negro leagues. If you’d like to tip your cap, take a photo or video and send to Photos@tippingyourcap.com and then post your photo or video on social media with the hashtag #TipYourCap2020. You will see yourself tipping your hat at tippingyourcap.com.

Progressive on women and anti-lynching
Way ahead of the MLB, the Negro leagues had three women players over the years: Toni Stone, Mamie “Peanut” Johnson and Connie Morgan.

Kendrick said Stone’s career “deserves to be more than just a footnote in both baseball and in American history.” (New York Times, June 11, 2019)

Also, there were a number of women owners, managers and coaches of Negro League teams. The most well-known was Effa Manley with the Newark Eagles. As a child, she decided her goal was to give back to her community. She hosted anti-lynching days at the ballpark. She was involved in picketing and boycotts businesses that did not hire African Americans in the 1950s. Manley is the only woman elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. She was inducted in 2006.

The Negro League first began in 1920 because racism and some laws prevented Black players from playing in Major League Baseball. They had played on company teams, military teams and formed their own teams starting in the 1880s. They barnstormed around, across different cities and states, to find competition.

Finally, Rube Foster, who had played ball and managed teams, got a group of Black team owners together in the Proctor YMCA in Kansas City in February 1920, and the first Negro National League was formed.

The creation of the Negro Leagues proved that Black players could play on even terms with their white counterparts and attract just as much interest from baseball fans.

Life was not easy, however, with Black players sleeping in buses and having to send one player to the back of a restaurant to buy takeout food for the whole team. Sometimes they wouldn’t be able to bathe for two or three days due to segregated hotels.

Eventually Black teams would play exhibition games against MLB teams, attracting large crowds and showing that the Black players were just as competitive as those on white teams—and in many cases were better.

In 1945, a player named Jackie Robinson was playing baseball for the Kansas City Monarchs. He was approached by the owner of the MLB’s Brooklyn Dodgers and became the first Black player to sign with a major league team. He played for the Dodgers AAA team in 1946, the Montreal Royals. In 1947 he moved up to the Dodgers and the rest is history.

But it would take 24 more years for the Baseball Hall of Fame to induct its first Negro League star. That changed after Boston Red Sox star Ted Williams was inducted in 1966. He told the crowd at the induction ceremony, “I hope that someday the names of Satchel Paige and Josh Gibson can be added to the symbol of the great Negro League players that are not here only because they were not given a chance.”

Five years later, the legendary pitcher Paige was inducted into the Hall of Fame. Paige is remembered for his very long baseball career and his colorful antics. He began playing in the 1920s. When he got to the major leagues in 1941, he was already 42 years old. He helped pitch the Cleveland team to a World Series win that year. He pitched until his mid-60s. Then late in the 1945 season, the Kansas City Athletics signed him for one game. He became the oldest player to pitch in a major league game at age 59. He pitched three innings against the Boston Red Sox, allowing only one hit. Between innings he relaxed in a rocking chair!

It is said that baseball is as “American” as apple pie. In the history of U.S. baseball, racism is also as “American” as apple pie. Because of their courage and determination, and for their love of the game, Black players played baseball successfully in their own leagues and finally in the major leagues.

Major League Baseball has now set Aug. 10 to celebrate the 100-year anniversary at every major league game. The Society for American Baseball Research and the International Women’s Baseball Center are hosting a Women in Baseball Conference in September and the theme this year is Celebrating African American Women in Baseball. It will be a virtual event that you can register for at sabr.org/women-in-baseball-conference.

Why Colin Kaepernick is right
Pamphlet of articles from Workers World/Mundo Obrero Newspaper on the intersection of sports, race and politics. Available as free download from workers.org/books

The great Satchel Paige
A voice from New Orleans schools
‘Are we gonna be alive?’
Continued from page 6

Bycapitist, it is a racist, divided city and always has been. Don’t let what they sell you on TV confuse you. You know—t’s true we all knew this already—but even if you have Black faces and whatnot in different government places, they’re puppets. They’re controlled by the rich ruling class, whether it’s oil barons they got downing class here.

Kids who are with it [and have money], they’re not going to be creating separate but equal all over again! Kids who are with it [and have money], they’re not going to miss their education—but those without, they are clearly going to miss out.

They have full undercover police out there! And they had two drones following me and John Guzda around. So it’s a real impactful and intense situation, but we ain’t gonna back down! You know we’re gonna keep the struggle alive, and we’re gonna keep fighting. This thing ain’t going away. Much love. All power to the people!
Workers who travel to low-income, rural areas to provide essential health care, such as maternal care and vaccinations, where there is little to no access to medical facilities.

Although they play a vital role in the country’s underfunded public health system and are on the front lines in the effort to contain the pandemic, the government has ignored these workers’ demands. Treated as “honor volunteers,” they are not even covered by state minimum wage laws.

The tremendous cost of an infrastructure for military and police repression, alongside the lack of any health care infrastructure, becomes more dangerous with every passing day.

Health care in the U.S. is a patchwork that is unresponsive to the individual needs of travelers from the U.S. because conditions here are so out of control.

Wrong kind of infrastructure

The United States is a technologically and scientifically advanced, modern, industrial society. But the overwhelming majority of the people are without basic health protection. Why does this glaring contradiction exist?

The U.S. does not lack infrastructure; it has just the wrong kind of infrastructure. It lacks a coordinated, national public health infrastructure.

But it does have pre-existing infrastructures that make it incapable of dealing with health, social or environmental crises.

A majority of the federal budget’s discretionary spending goes to the largest, most sophisticated and expensive military infrastructure in world history — over 3.5 trillion dollars connected to biotech, pharmaceutical and insurance companies.

Meanwhile, the top positions are full of political appointees. The head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has left hundreds of positions unfilled.

A hiring freeze at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has left hundreds of positions unfilled. The tremendous cost of an infrastructure for military and police repression, alongside the lack of any health care infrastructure, becomes more dangerous with every passing day.

India: Fed-up women health workers lead strike of 3.5 million

India was ranked the largest maker of casual labor in the United States and Brazil. The number is growing daily. Battered by the Narendra Modi-led government’s inadequate response and failure to contain the pandemic, 3.5 million workers, led by health care workers, struck for two days, Aug. 7-8. They called for higher and timelier pay, a guaranteed minimum wage and a pension.

The U.S. has the world’s highest number of COVID-19 cases, over 5 million, and the highest number of deaths. In addition, millions of laid-off workers are losing health insurance.

The profits of medical insurance companies are supposed to be capped and rebates provided to those paying health premiums. But it turns out no rebates are planned.

Testing for the coronavirus has become another profitable disaster. Shares in the two major COVID-19 testing companies — Quest Diagnostics and Laboratory Corporation of America — are soaring.

The fact that it can take two weeks and even longer for COVID-19 test results, and that results that are not coordinated nationally, makes testing irrelevant. Nevertheless, it is very lucrative. Quest will earn $1 billion this year, much more than 2020. As Marri Guinan explained, detecting COVID-19 brings “good margins.”

“(How U.S. made Covid-19 tests a profitable disaster,” Reuters, July 23.)

Every enterprise in a capitalist system exists to make a profit. If it doesn’t make a profit, it has no purpose. A company that makes profits, especially in the midst of a capitalist crash, is considered a healthy investment — even if it is costing tens of thousands of lives.

Medical insurance conglomerates are profitable — even if millions are left uninsured and don’t get to see a doctor because co-payments are too high. Some 41% of the population can’t afford to visit an emergency room.

Big Pharma, the largest drug companies, are enormously profitable. So drugs, rather than health programs, are promoted for every possible condition. Mergers of hundreds of hospitals into giant conglomerates are profitable, even if medical staff are laid off, laboratory and medical protective and other equipment are short-listed, and thousands of hospital beds are lost. Because of this, the U.S. has fewer hospital beds per person than 80% of the world’s nations and is in the bottom 5.

Profits first at labs, too

Quest and Lab Corp are profitable precisely because these giant lab corporations are unwilling to invest in equipment and labs they might not need six months from now.

Since insurers will pay even when tests are so late as to be useless, this gives big labs an incentive to keep piling up the tests as long as share prices keep rising, regardless of how long patients and doctors are kept waiting for the results. Even though other, much faster tests are easily available in the U.S. and around the world, these two lab conglomerates have contracts locked in with the big hospital and insurance corporations for almost all lab tests.

Hospitals can most profitably use the interconnected software of the big corporate labs. In the pressure to maximize income, both for-profit and nonprofit institutions consistently push for greater privatization and the elimination of competitors.

Public health has become an unprofitable shambles

Because U.S. health care operates on an uncoordinated, for-profit basis, it is one of the most expensive and unequal systems in the world. Of the more than $3.5 trillion that the U.S. population spends annually on health care, a meager 2.5% goes public health. ("COVID-19 and Underinvestment in the Public Health Infrastructure of the United States," Milbank Quarterly, June 2020)

Public health is just not profitable. Despite its importance, U.S. expenditures on public health have steadily been cut at all levels, especially since the 2008 capitalist crash. Local health departments have lost more than 35,000 staff members.

Since the coronavirus pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has left hundreds of positions unfilled. Meanwhile, the top positions are full of political appointees connected to biotech, pharmaceutical and insurance companies.

Public health funding for preparedness and disease surveillance has been on a downward trend for decades. The CDC budget was cut another 17% in 2018.

Now the CDC issues only vague guidelines and recommendations, and its advice is watered-down or worthless. It took three months into the pandemic for it to even recommend that people wear masks.

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Cleveland, August 9.

This article is a lightly edited version of a talk given Aug. 6 during the Workers World webinar entitled, “War on the Working Class: A Socialist Response.”

I’d like to talk about another country’s response to the new coronavirus. The steps it has taken to protect its workers’ health show what that we’re going through now in the United States and what so many people on this webinar have already spoken of very eloquently don’t have to be this way. It’s not necessary; it’s not inevitable. It could be another way.

This is how about Cuba is handling the COVID-19 crisis. As of today, Aug. 6, Cuba has had 88 deaths from COVID-19. Not 8,800 or 88,000. Just 88. The U.S. has had more than 160,000 deaths.

For every million people in Cuba, 8 have passed away from COVID-19, while for every million in the United States, 488 people have died. This makes the U.S. death rate 61 times higher!

That’s a pretty incredible disparity, especially when you consider that the U.S. is one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Cuba, on the other hand, is not a terribly wealthy country. It has endured decades of economic privation, due to the U.S. blockade that prevents Cuba from conducting trade with not only the U.S. but many other countries around the world. That’s because of the extraterritorial nature of the blockade and the influence the U.S. holds in the international banking system.

So why is it that this small, relatively poor country has such a lower rate of deaths from COVID-19 than the U.S.? The answer is simple. It’s because Cuba is a socialist country. Instead of the anarchy of capitalist production we have in the U.S., Cuba has a planned economy—one organized for the benefit of its people.

It means that during the coronavirus pandemic, Cuba can shut down international flights. Almost no international flights are going into Cuba right now. The government has decided to prevent the substantial tourist industry from bringing COVID-19 cases onto the island in large numbers.

That’s a real sacrifice because tourism is a major component of the Cuban economy and it just happens to be one of the busiest tourist seasons. But Cuba was able to do that while providing for its people because it had a adequately planned for the benefit of its people.

When more than 5 people on a block contract COVID-19, that block and all the blocks around it are put under quarantine. As it’s a small village, the entire village is quarantined. Food, personal protective equipment, medical supplies and whatever else is needed are delivered to the people affected. Everything is provided for.

If people in a large city fall ill, they can go to quarantine centers where they and their families can live safely and receive retrovirals such as Interferon alfa 2b, which Cuba produces itself. Workers World Party supports international solidarity and the right to health. Whereas here in the United States, the ruling class demands government resources be invested in 800 military bases around the world.

Collective action is needed to fight pandemic

Fighting the pandemic, the U.S. promotes a culture of individualism. But we need to take collective action to fight this pandemic. We all have to wear masks; we all have to be responsible. We all have to be conscious of how we’re interacting with other people.

This kind of collective action is often aggressively rejected in the United States with its hyper-individualistic culture. Whereas Cuba is literally built on a culture of collective action, devoted to creating a better society for all in the face of continuous economic, political and even military attacks from U.S. imperialism.

Right now in many parts of the U.S., 30% to 40% of renters are behind on the rent. An enormous, really inconceivable number are facing eviction in the coming months.

In Cuba, zero people are facing eviction. Why? Because in 1959, after the victory of the Cuban Revolution, land reform ensured not only that the landless peasants in the countryside would receive the land they had worked for wealthy landowners (who now live in Miami), but that all the people in the cities would receive ownership of their housing. The vast majority of Cubans see their housing situation is not a matter of some worker who’s lost his job. Nobody is worried about an eviction, and if anybody falls ill, a system is in place to care and provide for them.

We need to demand free health care for all. Nationalize the health care system under community control. Build emergency hospitals. Full payback and guaranteed income for all.

Food, housing, medical supplies and utilities, including internet, for all. Universal access to the internet is a major issue as the necessity of long-distance learning goes forward.

We need to suspend rent, evictions, mortgages, utility shut-offs and all debt.

We need to prioritize resources for communities of color—and for the migrant community, which has received none of the stimulus benefits, meager as they are, that have been doled out by the government to LGBTQ+2 people, seniors, youth and people with disabilities.

A lesson for the world is that some societies have to be prioritized in response to the pandemic; not ignored.

We need to empty the prisons and detention centers right now. A prison sentence is a death sentence during a pandemic. We need to shut down Immigration and Customs Enforcement and end racist attacks.

We need community control, not the cops and the military running everything. The $2 trillion the government handed to banks must be given instead to the workers. And finally, we need to end U.S. wars, sanctions and environmental destruction.

Cuba’s socialist health care system is not a fantasy. The Cuban Revolution is real and happening 90 miles off the coast of Florida. If it’s possible there, it’s possible here.

By Nathaniel Chase

This is a lightly edited version of a talk given Aug. 6 during the Workers World webinar entitled, “War on the Working Class: A Socialist Response.”

why cuba is winning the fight against covid-19

Cleveland, August 9.

August 26 is the 100th anniversary of the day that the Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network called for global Days of Resistance and self-determination. Members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly publication that promotes revolutionary change. Members receive a year’s subscription to WW as a monthly publication that promotes revolutionary change.

The Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network called for global Days of Resistance from Aug. 7 through 9 to protest the ongoing conquest of Palestinian land by Israeli occupation forces. In a statement announcing the action, the organization said, “Today, the program of Israeli annexation continues to threaten Palestinians in the West Bank, including the most fertile agricultural land of the Jordan Valley, which is still slated for Israel’s latest land grab. Of course, this is simply the continuation of over 72 years of land theft, dispossession, apartheid and genocide – but it requires continued mobilization and action to confront, alongside the siege on Gaza, the mass imprisonment of the Palestinian people. Whereas here in the United States, the ruling class demands government resources be invested in 800 military bases around the world.

The best way to celebrate this victory for women is to continue the fight to make Black Lives Matter and eradicate all forms of inequality and injustice, once and for all.

If you want to champion working-class truth, join the Workers World Supporter Program, set up 43 years ago to help WW promote revolutionary change. Members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and free subscriptions to give to friends—all for a donation of $75. Or $100, $300, or even $1,000 can! Donations can be made annually or monthly to reach $75 a year supporter minimum.

Frigate workers world! Build Workers World!

Amendment— in 1984!

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An anti-racist vote for class unity

Rashida Tlaib of Detroit made history on Nov. 7, 2018, when she became the first Palestinian-American woman elected to Congress. This year, in the weeks leading up to the Michigan Democratic Party primary on Aug. 4, the capitalist media questioned whether she would get a shot at reelection. “Congresswoman Tlaib faces a rematch with her closest challenger [in 2018], City Council President Brenda Jones, who finished the term of John Conyers,” wrote the Associated Press on Aug. 4. The Hill on Aug. 3 called Jones a “strong primary challenger.”

The media pointed out that the Detroit Council president, an African American woman, was running in a Congressional District where 56.5% of the voters are African American. But polarized Tlaib-leading. On Aug. 5 she blew away all naysayers, winning with a 2-to-1 margin. “We have a resounding mandate to put people before profits,” Congressperson Tlaib said following the results. “Let it be known that in the 13th District, just like in communities across our country, we are done with establishment politics.”

The vote and the movement behind it

The multinational working-class voters in the 13th Congressional District have the right to be screened for an opportunity to eventually be able to see their family and friends again. This unprecedented vote for a Palestinian Muslim woman, by mostly non-Muslim voters, took place in the context of the Black Lives Matter upsurge that has united working-class and oppressed youth since the lynching of George Floyd.

The brave congressperson has herself participated in and spoken at BLM protests in Detroit, which have taken place every single night since the end of May and gained momentum after Detroit police killed Hakim Littleton on July 10.

Elections: form vs. content

- Marxists have long appreciated the dialectical relationship between form and content (or essence). As Workers World Party’s late founder and Chairperson Sam Marcy wrote in 1984 — arguing for critical support for Rev. Jesse Jackson’s presidential bid — “Program, personal qualifications, and so on, have their place in this type of struggle, but that is not what is decisive. What is decisive are the social, class, and racial relationships which govern the struggle.”

- The setting of the historic vote on Aug. 3 — the Democratic Party — is part of the capitalist “two-party” system in the U.S. This form is in itself reactionary. But the “people before profits” content behind Tlaib’s win is wholly progressive. Tlaib — a “democratic socialist” like Bernie Sanders and the three other members of that Squad — unified Black, Arab, Latinx and white workers around her campaign of “people before profits.”

- This is not to suggest that the working class can ever end corporate domination by electing progressive or even “socialist” Democrats to Congress. Far from it. But a vote for anti-racist, anti-Islamophobic unity is a huge step forward in the development of consciousness and class solidarity. Revolutionaries should read its content for what it is.

Illegal terror against im/migrants continues

By B.L.S.
San Antonio, Texas

They told me not to tell my family where I was,” a Haitian asylum seeker recounted. “I heard people being taken away in the half [of the hotel] screaming, ‘I’m not going! I’m not going!’”

In the month of July, Immigration and Customs Enforcement held nearly 300 immigrant children, including babies and toddlers, in hotels in El Paso and McAllen, Texas, as well as Phoenix, Ariz. This violates decades of U.S. court precedent that was meant to protect children from poor conditions in detention and also limit the length of time that a child is held in ICE custody. After 180 days, children are supposed to be released to a family sponsor if a worker is living in the U.S. More often than not, this settlement is discounted by ICE.

While detainees were being held in hotels, ICE allowed families to make one phone call, but instructed them not to share their number because of fear of government officials on the phone. These families were denied all information, including the name of the hotel where they were being detained and the location. They only received vague answers from the officers guarding the hallways.

A report was not provided why they were taken to the hotel or the amount of time they would be detained. Families were left anxious, not knowing if they would be deported or if they would eventually be able to see their family and friends who were waiting for them in the U.S. These families were secretly taken to deliberately undisclosed areas, making it impossible for them to receive any sort of legal services because no one knows of their location. Similar to what happened at the Portland protests, the government has intentionally used unmarked vans to transport these families. They have been taken to hotel-like facilities such as these hotels, to house them until their untraceable expulsion.

This is consistent with ICE practice; for instance, detention centers are often built in isolated areas, making it difficult for attorneys to offer their services.

Missing pandemic crisis

The current administration has abused U.S. code Title 42 amid the pandemic in order to shut down the border and turn away all immigrants. Since March, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection has expelled over 100,000 immigrants under the guise of public health concerns. (tinyurl.com/yaoest7y) This expulsion may include many refugees fleeing possible death in their home countries. Their right to be screened for an opportunity to apply for asylum in the U.S. has been disregarded by government officials.

The inequity and overpolicing that Black communities face in the U.S. has also made its way into immigrant detention. According to a study by researchers Franco, Patler and Reiter, Black immigrants are six times more likely to be sent to solitary confinement. (osf.io/preprints/necav/m7yf/) According to RAICES, an immigrant rights nonprofit based in Texas, the amount paid for an average bond was about $10,500. For Haitian immigrants, the average bond paid was much higher, about $16,170. The majority of the families who have been held in hotels have been Black immigrant families.

ICE was ostensibly formed to protect Black immigrant families. This unprecedented vote for a Palestinian Muslim woman, by mostly non-Muslim voters, took place in the context of the Black Lives Matter upsurge that has united working-class and oppressed youth since the lynching of George Floyd. The brave congressperson has herself participated in and spoken at BLM protests in Detroit, which have taken place every single night since the end of May and gained momentum after Detroit police killed Hakim Littleton on July 10.

Electors: form vs. content

- Marxists have long appreciated the dialectical relationship between form and content (or essence). As Workers World Party’s late founder and Chairperson Sam Marcy wrote in 1984 — arguing for critical support for Rev. Jesse Jackson’s presidential bid — “Program, personal qualifications, and so on, have their place in this type of struggle, but that is not what is decisive. What is decisive are the social, class, and racial relationships which govern the struggle.”

- The setting of the historic vote on Aug. 3 — the Democratic Party — is part of the capitalist “two-party” system in the U.S. This form is in itself reactionary. But the “people before profits” content behind Tlaib’s win is wholly progressive. Tlaib — a “democratic socialist” like Bernie Sanders and the three other members of that Squad — unified Black, Arab, Latinx and white workers around her campaign of “people before profits.”

- This is not to suggest that the working class can ever end corporate domination by electing progressive or even “socialist” Democrats to Congress. Far from it. But a vote for anti-racist, anti-Islamophobic unity is a huge step forward in the development of consciousness and class solidarity. Revolutionaries should read its content for what it is.

A literal matter of history

By Mumia Abu Jamal

Printed from a July 27 audio column posted on prisonradio.org.

When I was a young man — a boy really — I found barber shops to be fascinating places, for there, men gathered in an air of relaxed familiarity and discussed the things they didn’t elsewherethere. I heard tales of ancient African empires, of unknown roads of Black history and often the name of the brilliant, self-taught historian, J.A. [Joel Augustus] Johnson. I’d later search many a bookstore for his work, often without success.

I thought of those days because of a little-known quote that I read in the work of two late Black scholars and historians: Ishakabuka Barashango and Verone Bennett.

The quote was from Thomas Jefferson, president and slaveowner, and it reflected his paradigmatic nature.

Said Jefferson of African slavery in America: “One of the most odious features of slavery is the fraud with more misery than ages of that suffered under the British by white Americans who rose in rebellion to oppose them.”

This is really a quite astounding statement by not only an American slaveowner but a revolutionery.

It tells us that Jefferson knew well the miseries inflicted by him and his class. One might say, he knew them intimately.

If we take Jefferson seriously, he suggests something else: That Blacks have a greater right to revolude than did British Americans under a foreign, distant king.

Think on that: a literal matter of history.
Beirut mega-blast unleashes political tsunami

By John Catalinotto

Aug. 10 — An earthquake-size explosion in the port of Beirut on Aug. 4 killed 200, wounded 6,000 and left 300,000 people homeless. Tens of thousands of people mobbed the once bustling city. It also unleashed a political tsunami that pulsed in regional and imperialist powers as well as Lebanon’s political parties.

The first indications were that the explosion occurred when a massive amount of ammonium nitrate, stored at the port since 2014, ignited and destroyed much of the city. The explosion also destroyed a nearby grain silo holding much of the country’s food. Demonstrators in Beirut blamed the government for overall corruption and negligence regarding the explosion and clashed with the army. This year the Lebanese people have faced economic collapse, the pandemic and now the explosion.

Because Lebanon is the mass base of the liberation organization Hezbollah, the first reaction of U.S. and other imperialist parties was to blame Hezbollah for the explosion — without any evidence. Hezbollah, which participates in the current Lebanese coalition government but has no authority in the Beirut port, immediately denied any role or responsibility in the explosion and then went about organizing relief for the population. Hezbollah made no immediate charges of responsibility, but called for an investigation, as did the Lebanese Communist Party.

Over 2 million people, about a third of Lebanon’s 6 million inhabitants, dwell in or around Beirut. As of 2018, about 1.5 million Syrian and a half-million Palestinian refugees were living in Lebanon. Syrian refugees blame why Syrians made up about a quarter of those killed by the explosion.

Representing the European Union, French President Emmanuel Macron toured Beirut Aug. 9, acting like a politician running for office. Even since feudal France sent troops to participate in the Crusades, the French have had a special interest region around Lebanon. France was the controlling imperialist power in Lebanon and Syria before World War II.

Imperialist aid has strings attached

Even now, while offering emergency aid that is desperately needed, Macron pressed for EU tutelage of Lebanon’s economy. Macron demanded “reforms” and said the aid — collected through an international consortium that raised a quarter-billion dollars ($290,000,000) from imperialist countries and Gulf emirates, and said to be distributed through nongovernmental agencies. All imperialist aid has strings attached.

The U.S., which pledged only $15 million to the emergency aid package, has sanctions against Lebanon. Washington attacks Lebanon because Hezbollah’s role in the Lebanese government aids the liberation organization’s ability to defend the region against imperialism and against Israeli expansion. Iran has already said it would lift the U.S. to lift its sanctions on embattled Lebanon.

Both Macron and Trump issued statements calling on the Lebanese government to make concessions to the demonstrators. This itself raises questions about the legitimacy of the complaints of the people.

Remember that Macron used clubs, rubber-coated bullets and tear gas against the “Yellow Vest” protests for a full year in 2019, and Trump recently sent federal agents in camouflage against Black Lives Matter protesters in Portland, Ore. If the big criminals Macron and Trump take the side of the demonstrators, something is wrong. U.S. imperialism, in particular, has no legitimate role to play in the region.

Hezbollah leader Nasrallah on the crisis

The leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, adjourned a special government meeting scheduled to give Aug. 7 on current developments so he could speak exclusively to the crisis caused by the explosion. He said since Hezbollah fighters had been attacked by politicians and media who knew he were lying, he wanted to remove any doubts about Hezbollah’s role.

One participant humiliated ‘Alez by sarcastically pointing to key empty seats. Not attending were representatives from the Plurinational Legislative Assembly, the Central Labor Council of Bolivian Workers, the Unity Pact, MAS and four other invited parties.

Alez’s “dialogue” was doomed because, as mentioned above, an emergency meeting between Salvador Romero of the TSE, the Plurinational Legislative Assembly, the COB and the Unity Pact that lasted until sunrise on Sunday morning ended in failure.

In recent days, the COB and the Unity Pact that lasted until sunrise on Sunday morning ended in failure.

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Venezuela

U.S. mercenaries sentenced to 20 years for invasion attempt

Telereuter published the following report Aug. 8.

Venezuela’s Attorney General Tarek William Saab reported Friday [Aug. 7] that the two former U.S. military officers, Luke Denman and Airan Berry, who participated in the failed invasion attempt in Venezuela [May 4], were sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Denman and Berry tried to force their way into Venezuela along with 50 other citizens of the Caribbean country to overthrow President Nicolas Maduro last May, 2019, and Trump recently sent federal agents in camouflage against Black Lives Matter protesters in Portland, Ore. If the big criminals Macron and Trump take the side of the demonstrators, something is wrong. U.S. imperialism, in particular, has no legitimate role to play in the region.

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Por Ben Carroll

La información está en todas partes. En el 2020, la tecnología es una parte omnipresente de la vida cotidiana de muchos trabajadores en este país y en todo el mundo. Utilizamos las redes sociales y el correo electrónico para mantenernos en contacto con familiares y amigos. Vemos transmisiones en vivo de eventos y actividades que tienen lugar en todo el mundo. Enviamos mensajes de texto y transmite mensajes de voz en nuestros viajes diarios al trabajo. La lista continúa.

En medio de la crisis global de COVID-19, la tecnología ha jugado un papel aún más importante en nuestra vida diaria como un medio para mantener el contacto social en una era de distanciamiento social.

El increíble desarrollo de la tecnología incluso en los últimos 20 a 30 años ha marcado el comienzo de grandes cambios en el capitalismo global, en gran parte en beneficio del capital (Lea ‘High Tech, Low Pay’ en ourworkers.org/books). En este libro, publicado en 1986, el presidente del Workers World Party, Sam Mitrani, mostró cómo este avance tecnológico afectó a los trabajadores y los gobiernos a nivel global.

La tecnología ha aumentado la capacidad del capital para poner a los trabajadores en competencia directa entre ellos por los puestos de trabajo, y cortar sus salarios y empeorar sus condiciones de trabajo, independientemente del país en el que residan. Ha dado lugar a una nueva ola de automatización que ha dado lugar a muchos otros desarrollos. Por otro lado, la tecnología le ha dado a la clase trabajadora la capacidad de comunicarse y organizarse a nivel global; eso no era posible ni siquiera hace poco tiempo. La redacción de los salarios y las condiciones laborales en las bases organizadas puede ser una mayor walking para la clase trabajadora multirracial.

Los cinco gigantes tecnológicos, Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Alphabet (Google) y Facebook, como nos lo concibe colectivamente, han tenido un aumento del 24% en el valor de mercado en los últimos tres años. (tynyurl.com/zzv/m3) Esto ha ocurrido mientras que el valor del resto del mercado de valores durante el mismo periodo se ha mantenido más o menos igual. A su vez, estas cinco corporaciones ejercen una increíble cantidad de poder e influencia políticas, que se entrelazan en muchas facetas de nuestras vidas de más o menos las que creemos.


desde la militarización de los departamentos de policía, se ha incrementado la dependencia y el uso de herramientas de alta tecnología para la vigilancia y la represión. Se emplean en gran parte contra la clase trabajadora y las comunidades de color, así como contra el movimiento político. Las fuerzas federales que ahora están utilizando la tecnología de reconocimiento facial en la lucha contra la supremacía blanca en Estados Unidos, una rebelión justa, tienen una batería de estas herramientas a su disposición.

Las grandes corporaciones tecnológicas no solo están fabricando software y otros productos que las agencias policiales utilizan, sino que están cooperando activamente con muchas empresas agropecuarias para desarrollar herramientas sofisticadas que son útiles para la lucha. Esta lista de colaboraciones es numerosa. Incluyen el intercambio de videos e imágenes capturadas por Amazon con sus tiendas Amazon y el desarrollo de bases de datos de Microsoft para uso en los departamentos de policía en las principales ciudades y el desarrollo de software de reconocimiento facial que las agencias policiales utilizan con el propósito de restringir a la clase trabajadora.

Al mismo tiempo, los trabajadores de estas corporaciones tecnológicas gigantes se han involucrado en una nueva ola de organización en los últimos años, no solo en su propia fuerza laboral. Se han movido a tomar el control de sus empleadores corporativos en la sociedad, desde proporcionar tecnología para el Pentágono hasta colaborar con el Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas. En cada caso, los trabajadores, en un contexto de avanzado autogobierno y la policía, ayudan a construir un futuro al cambiar cesiones de derechos humanos de las agencias de aplicación de la ley para las fuerzas federales que ahora están comprando el software y los sistemas de reconocimiento facial que son utilizados por las agencias de aplicación de la ley.

La vigilancia creciente que está desarrollando la tecnología para reconocimiento facial y otros medios para controlar nuestras vidas y nuestras actividades se ha incrementado enormemente. Incluyen a las agencias policiales de aplicación de la ley para el levantamiento de Black Lives Matter, además de la vigilancia de los agentes federales que ahora utilizan la tecnología para el reconocimiento facial y otros medios para controlar nuestras vidas y nuestras actividades. Estos ejemplos se suman a la vigilancia, el terror y la represión regulares y continuas que enfrentan todos los días las comunidades de la clase trabajadora, y también las comunidades de los trabajadores inferiores.

Evaluar los riesgos de usar la tecnología para la vigilancia

Esos son numerosos los efectos de recopilación de datos de poblaciones por parte de las agencias policiales que han usado la tecnología para el reconocimiento facial y otros medios para controlar nuestras vidas. Aunque estas agencias policiales leyeron ese uso de la tecnología por el reconocimiento facial y otros medios para controlar nuestras vidas, la tecnología ha sido utilizada por las agencias policiales para obtener datos de ubicación de teléfonos celulares, software de reconocimiento facial y otras herramientas tecnológicas o por nuestra clase trabajadora.

Un problema para el movimiento

¿Qué pueden hacer los organizadores?

Entonces, ¿qué podemos hacer con las amenazas que enfrentamos todos los días, no solo en nuestro trabajo político, sino también cuando los miembros de nuestra clase abandonan sus hogares o se conectan a Internet? ¿Son estos desafíos tan amplios que simplemente deberíamos aceptar el hecho de que nuestra información es recopilada y almacenada regularmente por las grandes agencias de tecnología y la policía por igual? ¿O deberíamos retirarnos a usar solo las últimas aplicaciones encriptadas y dejar las redes sociales por completo?

Tanto la aceptación como la retirada son respuestas incorrectas. En la era en la que el uso de la tecnología es un factor omnipresente en nuestra vida y en torno a la seguridad debemos equilibrarse con medidas de seguridad para intervenir en la lucha de clases viva y construir un movimiento que sea más eficaz y coherente. Las luchas activas de los trabajadores dentro de sus empresas mantenerse en contacto con las agencias policiales de aplicación de la ley para el levantamiento de Black Lives Matter, además de la vigilancia de los agentes federales que ahora utilizan la tecnología para el reconocimiento facial y otros medios para controlar nuestras vidas y nuestras actividades. Estos ejemplos se suman a la vigilancia, el terror y la represión regulares y continuas que enfrentan todos los días las comunidades de la clase trabajadora, y también las comunidades de los trabajadores inferiores.

El uso de la tecnología por parte de las corporaciones tecnológicas gigantes con el propósito de avanzar hacia una estrategia a más largo plazo para romper nuestra dependencia de estas corporaciones. Debemos explorar las formas en que el estado, la derecha y las corporaciones tecnológicas colaboran para vigilar e impedir nuestros movimientos, es primordial. En lugar de hacer eso, dejarnos abrumar por lo que nos rodea y por la tecnología, debemos explorar la tecnología de izquierda que pueda respaldar nuestras luchas.}

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