



Follow us!

@WorkersWorld

/WorkersWorldParty

workers.org

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



Strike Aug. 3 in Bolivia. Sign reads, ‘Long live democracy. Hold elections on Sept. 6.’

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.

Continued on page 11



PHOTO: UDW/AFSCME LOCAL 3930

Historic landslide vote gives 45,000 California childcare workers union protection. More on p. 4.

## Unions push back

- No school reopening 2, 3, 6
- Unions say: ‘Cops out!’ 3
- On the picket line 4

TEAR DOWN THE WALLS

1978 attack on MOVE remembered

WW interview with Mumia Abu-Jamal

5

- Student-athletes organize 6
- Honoring Negro National Leagues 7
- A profitable disaster 8
- Editorial Anti-racist vote for class unity 10
- Terror against im/migrants 10
- Mumia: A matter of history 10

## Lebanon in crisis 11



# 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, Veolia/Transdev, and to Boston Public Schools 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 restroom facilities, 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 home-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.



Left to right, USW Local 8751 Chief Steward Frantz Cadet, Trustee Fred Floreal, and President Andre François 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.

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! □

# MUNDO OBRERO

## WORKERS WORLD

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, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ 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

# Join us in the fight

## for socialism!

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. □

### If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact: 212.627.2994

#### National Office

147 W. 24th St., 2nd floor  
New York, NY 10011  
212.627.2994  
wwp@workers.org

#### Atlanta

PO Box 18123  
Atlanta, GA 30316  
404.627.0185  
atlanta@workers.org

#### Austin

austin@workers.org

#### Bay Area

P.O. Box 22947  
Oakland, CA 94609  
510.394.2207  
bayarea@workers.org

#### Boston

284 Amory St.  
Boston, MA 02130  
617.522.6626  
boston@workers.org

#### Buffalo, N.Y.

335 Richmond Ave.  
Buffalo, NY 14222  
716.883.2534  
buffalo@workers.org

#### Cleveland

216.738.0320  
cleveland@workers.org

#### Dallas

dallas@workers.org

#### Durham, N.C.

804 Old Fayetteville St.  
Durham, NC 27701  
919.322.9 970  
durham@workers.org

#### Houston

P.O. Box 3454  
Houston, TX 77253-3454  
713.503.2633  
houston@workers.org

#### Pensacola, Fla.

pensacola@workers.org

#### Philadelphia

P.O. Box 34249  
Philadelphia, PA 19101  
610.931.2615  
phila@workers.org

#### Portland, Ore.

portland@workers.org

#### Salt Lake City

801.750.0248  
slc@workers.org

#### San Antonio

sanantonio@workers.org

#### West Virginia

WestVirginia@workers.org

# MUNDO OBRERO

## WORKERS WORLD

### this week

#### ♦ In the U.S.

Boston school bus drivers demand safety . . . . .	2
Utah teachers challenge state’s reopening plans. . . .	3
Cops out of unions! . . . . .	3
California child care workers unionize . . . . .	4
On the picket line. . . . .	4
Face to face with Mumia in 1996 . . . . .	5
Rally on anniversary of police attack on MOVE . . .	5
Student-athletes organize for health, social justice .	6
A voice from New Orleans schools . . . . .	6
In honor of Negro National Leagues . . . . .	7
Testing and insurance: a profitable disaster . . . . .	8
Illegal terror against im/migrants continues. . . . .	10
Mumia: A literal matter of history. . . . .	10

#### ♦ Around the world

Political strike shuts down Bolivia. . . . .	1
India: Fed-up women health workers lead strike . . .	8
Why Cuba is winning the fight against COVID-19 . .	9
Palestinian Liberation Movement day of action . . .	9
Beirut mega-blast unleashes political tsunami . . . .	11
Venezuela: U.S. mercenaries sentenced . . . . .	11

#### ♦ Editorial

An anti-racist vote for class unity. . . . .	10
--	----

#### ♦ Noticias en Español

Un problema para el movimiento . . . . .	12
--	----

Workers World  
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.  
New York, NY 10011  
Phone: 212.627.2994  
E-mail: ww@workers.org  
Web: www.workers.org

Vol. 62, No. 33 • August 13, 2020  
Closing date: August 12, 2020

Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, Martha Grevatt,  
Monica Moorehead, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt

Web Editors: ABear, Harvey Markowitz, Janet Mayes

Prisoners Page Editors: Mirinda Crissman, Ted Kelly

Production & Design Editors: Gery Armsby, Sasha  
Mazumder, Scott Williams

Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy Colligan,  
Sue Davis, S. Hedgecoke

Contributing Editors: LeiLani Dowell, G. Dunkel,  
K. Durkin, Sara Flounders, Teresa Gutierrez, Joshua  
Hanks, Makasi Motema, Gloria Rubac

Mundo Obrero: Teresa Gutierrez, Carlos Vargas

Supporter Program: Coordinator Sue Davis

Copyright © 2020 Workers World. Verbatim copying  
and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium  
without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly  
except the last week of December by WW Publishers,  
147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone:  
212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$36; institu-  
tions: \$50. Letters to the editor may be condensed and  
edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to  
Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY  
10011. Back issues and individual articles are available  
on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing,  
Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998.  
A searchable archive is available on the Web at  
www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription.  
Subscription information is at workers.org.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to  
Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.  
New York, N.Y. 10011.





# 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 Hubert requested school districts open for in-person learning, while leaving planning and procedures up to individual school districts. School boards have been making minimal changes without input from teachers, school employees 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. The rally was attended by approximately 600 workers. They demanded the school board listen to workers and do more to keep employees and children safe.

They also expressed concern over the district’s plan to offer both in-person and virtual learning, with no plan to hire more teachers — effectively doubling teachers’ workload without compensation or support. Workers who 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 resign, retire or take Family and Medical Leave Act unpaid time off.

Members of the union are debating striking if an education plan that does not involve face-to-face in-person education is not implemented. It would be the first Utah educators’ strike in three decades.

Utah is an anti-union “right-to-work” (for less) state. Many workers are hesitant or unsure about how to speak out, in fear of losing their jobs. Utah has the lowest rate of educational funding per child in the country. The lack of funding has led employees to doubt the district’s ability to provide proper personal protective equipment and cleaning materials.

Teachers have expressed concerns and doubts about the practicality of expecting younger students to maintain social distancing in schools and classrooms not spacious enough to accommodate social distancing with large class sizes.

### Opening schools to force parents back to work

Recent comments from Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, labeled the reopening of schools as an “experiment” to see how the virus would spread among children 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 for the capitalists. The affluent classes will have other options for safer child care or alternative incomes, while the majority of workers will have no choice but to send their children into unsafe schools in order to maintain income and housing — placing entire communities at risk of illness or death.



WW PHOTO: SUMMER AUTUMN

Teachers demonstrate outside school board meeting, Aug. 4.

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 government announced the next day that schooling would take place entirely online. A strong union has 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! □

# 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 with the righteous rebellion against racism, police brutality and white supremacy.” Included was a demand to “Expel all so-called ‘police unions’ from the AFL-CIO!”

This resolution is one of many initiatives to kick cop associations and cop units of major unions out of the labor movement. Police, sheriffs, prison guards and agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Patrol (ICE/CBP) currently belong to various unions, including American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Service Employees (SEIU), Communication Workers (CWA) and the United Auto Workers (UAW).

Labor organizations that have passed resolutions for police expulsion include the Writers Guild of America, East (WGAEast) and Seattle-based MLK Labor Council. SEIU activists have brought the issue to their union via #SEIUDropTheCops.

The California Labor Federation did not vote to expel cops from the labor movement, but its pledge to “expel from this body any member or affiliate who is a member of any Fascist or White Supremacist organization or member or affiliate who pursues policies and/or activities directed toward the purposes of any Fascist or otherwise White Supremacist Ideology” could be used for that purpose. In any case it opens up the conversation at the statewide level. The federation passed four anti-racist/anti-police brutality resolutions and stated it “will push for and support efforts to ensure economic justice and equity for Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities, including but not limited to defunding local police departments to redirect funds to social services and education.”

Here is the USW Local 8751 resolution.

Black lives matter! Justice for George Floyd and all victims! Reopen the cases!

Defund/abolish the police! 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 righteous rebellion has flooded cities and towns across the country and around the globe protesting the brutal police murder of George Floyd and other Black, Brown and Indigenous victims of the long, cruel, vicious history of racist violence, police and fascist lynchings, and

Whereas, systemic, institutional racism victimizes the families and Black, Brown and Indigenous communities again by 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 languages but one voice “enough is enough!” “Reopen the cases!” White supremacist institutions from the White House to the State House, to City Hall, to the Court House, to the playhouse, to the schoolhouse must be

USW Local 8751  
Trustee Fred  
Floreal speaking  
at Mass Action  
Against Police  
Brutality’s  
June 20, action  
“Funk the  
Police.”  
PHOTO:  
HOWARD ROTMAN



abolished now!, 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. Racist, reactionary, pro-slavery, and pro-colonial monuments 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 protest heard and are now following in the vanguard footsteps of Colin Kaepernick, NFL quarterback who four years ago took a knee to protest police brutality and systematic racism, and

Whereas, The current, deadly COVID-19 pandemic, as with all past health crises in this for-profit, capitalist healthcare system, is disproportionately impacting and killing Black, Brown and Indigenous communities, and

Whereas, Labor leadership and rank and file have — like Local 26 UNITE HERE’s splendid defense of its members against racist police arrest and brutalization of its Black members in Lynn, MA — and must continue to “walk the talk” in this critical fight, and

Whereas, USW Local 8751 has a proud history of demonstrating our “Solidarity in action” in the struggle against racism since our founding in the 1970s. 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, banners and bodies to countless rallies, picket lines, marches from those days to the present. We marched for Justice for Amadou Diallo, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Philando Castile, Sandra Bland, Usaamah Rahim, Terrence Coleman, Breonna Taylor, and countless Black, Brown, Indigenous, migrant and LGBTQ2S+ victims of homicide by police, ICE agents and prison guards, and

Whereas, The very foundation of unionism is solidarity and unity, and the very duty of union leaders is to fight against racism and all forms of oppression. The role of the police — from their “Pilgrim militia,” “fugitive slave catching” and “prison to plantation” formations only a few generations ago to their vicious attacks on the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Panther Party, the Young

Lords, and American Indian Movement, to their anti-union “Pinkerton”-style strike breaking — has been used as the bosses’ club against worker solidarity and unity.

Likewise, the police have shown themselves to be the sworn enemy of peoples’ movements — women, LGBTQ2S+, im/migrant rights, disability rights, etc. Their shameful, vicious and brutal attacks and frame-up arrests of the current wave of Black Lives Matter demonstrators continue this vile tradition. In every one of Local 8751’s eleven strikes throughout our history, we have learned the bitter lesson that we not only must fight against the corporations but also against their police. These bodies of armed troops only serve the interest of the bosses, brutalizing and intimidating our picket lines and subjecting our leaders and ranks to lockouts and false arrests on frame-up charges.

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 Kaepernick’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 membership ranks. We further call on all unions with units representing police, ICE/CBP agents and prison guards to expeditiously disaffiliate those units, and

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 mandate of the citizens of a Sanctuary City and refuse to cooperate with ICE, and to reallocate those substantial hundreds of millions of taxpayer monies to social services, including the Boston Public Schools and other youth-targeted and -directed educational, healthcare, jobs and housing programs, and rights. □



# Historic win for labor

## California childcare workers unionize

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 legislators 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 CCPU was officially recognized as a union 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, and some as little as \$5. They have no paid sick leave and must fund their own health coverage. 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!’

CCPU members celebrated in a Zoom press conference following announcement of the election results. Miren Algorri, activist and childcare provider, said from Chula Vista, “We’re educators. Essential workers. We’re putting our lives on the line to care for these kids. Our union means we can fight for the respect and dignity that we deserve.” (AFSCME press release, July 28)

Childcare workers have been categorized as “essential workers” during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this crisis, they are providing crucial services for frontline workers, who rely on them to care for their children. Even pre-pandemic, these workers were vital in the lives of working parents. But today, with the virus raging in California as in other states, both day care providers and other essential workers are risking their health every day.

This union win applies to workers who mostly provide in-home childcare, often alone or with one or two assistants, and who receive state subsidies for low-income children. But they have not been considered state employees.

As a result of the heightened union campaign, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a law on Sept. 30, 2019, giving these workers the right to unionize, organize as the CCPU and bargain together with the state for “livable” wages, pensions, more training and increased state subsidies for low-income children. Importantly during this pandemic, they can press for health insurance. To date, in-home childcare providers in 11 other states have won the right to bargain collectively with their state governments.

This victory will aid in the struggle for affordable, subsidized and accessible childcare, a necessity for millions of working parents and their children.

### A 17-year struggle!

This struggle began in 2003. During his two gubernatorial terms from 2003 to 2011, Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger repeatedly vetoed legislation allowing unionization by state-subsidized childcare providers. Then in 2011, after the California Legislature passed a law allowing them to bargain collectively, Gov. Jerry Brown, a Democrat, vetoed it.

Even Newsom was not initially averse to cutting subsidies for childcare providers. The original 2020-21 state budget cut payments by 10%, which would have been devastating! This proposal was reversed. However, the budget reduces funding for expanding state-subsidized preschool programs for thousands more children, along with other pro-child programs. It does guarantee government subsidies for frontline workers’ children for a set period of time.

Undoubtedly, the union drive by childcare providers pressured Newsom to reverse the subsidy cutbacks. This shows their movement is strong.

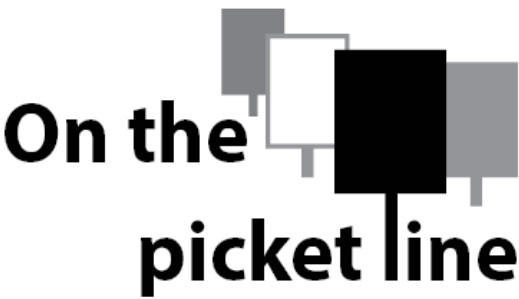
### ‘Largest organizing drive of the century’

AFSCME leaders have called this “the largest [U.S.] organizing drive of this century.” That this victory was achieved during a time of class warfare against unions and workers by the Trump administration, its political allies, corporation owners, Wall Street bankers and their media mouthpieces shows that workers can organize and succeed. It is a big boost for organized labor — and for all workers.

The Trump-appointed National Labor Relations Board has directly attacked the

right of workers to unionize and bargain collectively. The board has weakened and overturned workers’ existing legal protections, which labor unions and workers fought for, and seeks to modify labor laws

to undermine workers’ rights even more. California’s new union members have shown that workers can fight back and win! □



By Sue Davis

### Solidarity with Philadelphia sanitation workers

Even though trash has been piling up on Philadelphia streets during this steamy summer, there’s acknowledgment between city officials and the sanitation workers’ union, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Local 427 of District Council 33, 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 17,000 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 Disney 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 longtime union slogan, “An injury to one is an injury to all.”

### 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 empowering 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) □



California childcare workers celebrate growing union power.

PHOTO: SEIU99.ORG



## 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, death row. For at least two hours, they interviewed a shackled Mumia Abu-Jamal from across a thick glass partition. The interview was videoed by the late Key Martin, founder of the People's Video Network.

The conversation took place less than a year after the state signed a death warrant for Aug. 17 — the birthday 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, and education is being cut which is the only rung by 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.

But second to 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 here please. There was a time when it was "Unh, unh, not in my back yards, you better not. I don't want that here." Now they are talking, "Well, uh, jobs."

That's the reality that we are working with. And of course Blacks, Latinos, Hispanics, Mexicans in the West, and Puerto Ricans in the East, and so-called white trash, poor whites, are the raw material now. We're like the hamburger in McDonald's, we're being fed into this. And what you see in Congress and what you see in the state-houses is the greasing of the conveyor belt on that meat-patty line — because there are no laws any more.

Think about it. When you look at the trend of the law — I mean analyze the cases, read the cases, see what they are saying — you don't hear anybody talk about "search and seizure" or Fourth Amendment or any other amendment.

What you hear in popular discourse, on talk-radio stations or in the newspaper is "lock 'em up, lock 'em up yesterday" or "kill them."

And it becomes apolitical again — an engine feeding



WW PHOTO: LARRY HOLMES

Monica Moorehead with Mumia Abu-Jamal, March 28, 1996.

an industry, the prison-industrial complex.

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 Sol 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." Shot 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 every one of those 1.1 million people — and if you look across the country now, you don't have to go through 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?

It must be a new system or the abolition of this system. It must be.

Right now we are in an era where there is a depression for workers but a boom time for capital, for those with wealth, for those who own stock and mutual funds and so forth.

There is enough wealth in this country to ensure that every child is educated, truly educated, with life education. There's enough wealth in this country alone to make sure that no one has to live in a shack, in a hovel, in a ghetto. There's enough wealth so that every person can be properly housed, and fed, and have faith in a future. But when you have people who have it all, you're going to have someone who has nothing.

The real secret is that I'm free now — they just ain't dug it yet. They have tried to cage me in every way they could, they tried to kill me in the street, and every attempt they've made has been a bitter failure for them. □

A WORKERS WORLD PARTY WEBINAR

## FROM BLACK AUGUST TO BLACK LIVES MATTER

HOSTED BY THE PRISONERS SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

**THURSDAY  
AUGUST 13  
8PM ET/5PM PT**

WWP @pscwwp

**FOLLOW US!  
THE PRISONER SOLIDARITY  
COMMITTEE OF WWP**

**@PSCWWP**

Twitter Facebook Instagram

**TEAR DOWN THE WALLS**

**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 the 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 succeeded in making this the first anniversary of the attack since all MOVE 9 members have been released. However, Phil and Merle Africa were killed by the prison system. Michael Sr., 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 41 years of incarceration.

— Report and photo by Ted Kelly



Mike Africa Jr. addresses rally at location of the old Powelton Village MOVE headquarters as supporters hold portraits of MOVE 9 members.



# 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-science 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 19,886 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 annually in TV and marketing rights 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

*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.*

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 October, the NCAA Board of Governors approved

a law that all student-athletes would be allowed to be financially compensated for use of their image, name and likeness on merchandise for sale like T-shirts and video games. This law 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 legislature, leading other states to debate similar acts, considering the fact that 55% of college

football players are African American and come from lower-income families.

## #WeAreUnited formed

These super-exploited student-athletes have begun to exert their power, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic in March, the Black Lives Matter struggle accelerating in late May, and their ongoing fight for economic rights since 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 Curhan, 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.” (theundefeated.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 also 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.

“In rejecting the NCAA’s claim that #BlackLivesMatter, while also systematically exploiting Black athletes nationwide, #WeAreUnited.

“Because we are being asked to play college sports in a pandemic in a system without enforced health and safety



standards, and without transparency about COVID cases on our teams, the risks to ourselves, our families, and our communities, #WeAreUnited.

“Because we must have adequate COVID testing to help protect our health, #WeAreUnited.

“Because we are prohibited from securing representation while being asked to sign documents that may serve as liability waivers, #WeAreUnited.

“Because we should not be stuck with sports-related medical expenses, including COVID-19 related expenses, #WeAreUnited.

“Because any player who does not feel comfortable playing this season should be free to opt out without losing their scholarship or any eligibility, #WeAreUnited.

“Because immoral rules would punish us for receiving basic necessities or compensation for the use of our names, images and likenesses, while many of us and our families are suffering economically from the COVID-19 fallout, #WeAreUnited.

“Because we should be included in equitably sharing the revenue our talents generate, especially in a pandemic, #WeAreUnited.

“Because eliminating lavish salaries and facility expenditures to preserve 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, we will opt out of PAC-12 fall camp 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/y6sazr8f](https://tinyurl.com/y6sazr8f). □

## A voice from New Orleans schools

# ‘Are we gonna be alive?’



By Big E  
New Orleans

*This slightly edited talk was given at the Aug. 6 Workers World Party webinar, “War on the Working 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. See the webinar at [www.workers.org/videos](http://www.workers.org/videos).*

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 — that’s 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 got a contract with Google. We all got Google email. Now as Google sees the hustle of Zoom, they’re jumping into the streaming 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] is still talking about state standards and testing issues and all this kind of stuff. And we be like, “Man, are we gonna be alive?” We’re talking about our life here, right now.

Just last week this parish closed two

bars because people weren’t adhering to the facemasks and the 6-foot rule and whatnot. So now they expect children, they expect to have elementary kids in school five days out of the week — middle, high, every level. They are holding those children to a higher standard than they are people who sell alcohol!

## Uniting the working class

We had a protest yesterday; we plan to have some more actions. The New Orleans Workers Group actually has an action Aug. 8. We are uniting unemployed workers. Next ones will be at Duncan Plaza — that’s one of our little home spots where we set up shop and we meet the people. It’s a major bus stop in New Orleans.

And something I wanna say about New Orleans. People think it’s just a fun, partying, liberal city. Yeah, you can come get drunk and have a good time and all that, but it’s racist as f--k. You know, it’s

*Continued on page 7*



# 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 lemonade out of the coronavirus lemon, 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 great 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 Basketball Association legend 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](mailto: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](http://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 an owner Manley used her position to give back to her community. She hosted anti-lynching days at the ballpark. She was involved in picketing and boycotting

businesses that did not hire African Americans in the 1930s. 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 Jim Crow 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 Paseo 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 with 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 in 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 came 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 1948, 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 1965 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



The great Satchel Paige

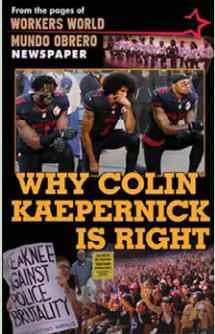
Boston Red Sox, allowing only one hit. Between innings he relaxed in a rocking chair!

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. 16 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](http://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](http://workers.org/books)

## A voice from New Orleans schools

# ‘Are we gonna be alive?’

Continued from page 6

capitalist, it’s a racist, divided city and always has been. Don’t let what they sell you on TV confuse you. You know — I’m sure 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 down here or the real estate tycoons.

Me and Josh Guzda [another organizer of education workers], we are frustrated. It’s a matter of a lot of people feel the way we do, but [hold back] due to the economic impact and the fear of losing your job and not having your health benefits. I had a brother of mine tell me about how he almost lost his wife — she had a heart attack, and he had just recently lost a job. He was able to find some emergency insurance or something of that nature. Otherwise, [the money would] come out of pocket and he doesn’t have that. People don’t realize just how frightening that is for somebody.

We are constantly trying to tell people about the power that they have. We are trying to unite the working class here.

We are going door to door, always taking precautions. We have a newspaper, Worker’s Voice Newspaper. That’s the work we do with Take ‘Em Down NOLA, the

New Orleans Workers Group, the People’s Assembly and the Hospitality Workers Alliance. People can check us out on YouTube, Instagram and Facebook.

### Fighting ‘separate but equal’ schools again

Now what we want to accomplish for those kids is that schools be provided for. All the schools should be closed. They said, we’ve got to break up a fight. You got to get in there! And we expected to have 20 kids in a class. You know, it’s just ridiculous.

The schools have to be closed. But the digital divide needs to end; it should be free internet as well as free laptops and everything given to students who can’t afford it.

As it’s Title I schools, they’re actually 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’re being put into a petri dish, as well as teachers, staff, custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers and everybody.

They talk about how they don’t have money for us.

***“The schools have to be closed. But the digital divide needs to end; it should be free internet as well as free laptops and everything given to students who can’t afford it. As it’s Title I schools, they’re actually 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! □



# Testing and medical insurance: a profitable disaster

By Sara Flounders

In the midst of a capitalist crash and an out-of-control health crisis, two mega-industries that bear a heavy burden of responsibility for the health disaster are reporting soaring profits. “The nation’s leading health insurers are experiencing an embarrassment of profits,” reported the New York Times Aug. 6. “Anthem, Humana and United Health Group second quarter earnings are double what they were a year ago.”

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 are not coordinated nationally, makes tracking irrelevant. Nevertheless, it is very lucrative. Quest will earn \$1 billion this year — over 10% more than they estimated 6 months ago. As Quest Chief Financial Officer Mark 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, advance orders of essential personal 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 closes hospitals faster.

### 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



Drive-through COVID-19 testing in Bergen County, N.J. These tests were a “partnership” of state government with Quest Diagnostics and Walmart stores hosting the sites.

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 to 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 55,000 staff members.

A hiring freeze at 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.

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

By Kathy Durkin

Workers around the world are demonstrating against their governments’ policies in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. From South America to Asia, political protests and strikes are taking place. In many countries, health workers are in the lead, as they are on the front lines in this massive medical crisis. They face great risks to their own health, with fatalities increasing.

India, with 2.26 million people stricken by COVID as of Aug. 10, has the third largest number of cases after the United States and Brazil. The number is growing daily. Furious at 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 timely pay, a guaranteed minimum wage and a pension. Strikers also demanded the government treat them with dignity and respect.

At least 100 health workers in India have died from COVID; hundreds are getting sick daily. The strikers emphatically voiced concerns about their personal safety and insisted the state provide adequate personal protective equipment. Moreover, workers called for government-assured insurance payouts to deceased workers’ families, which have not been disbursed.

Some 600,000 members of the all-women Accredited Social Health Activists led the job action. They are the 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 “honorary volunteers,” they are not even covered by state minimum wage laws, although they provide public health programs!

ASHA members are the frontline workers doing door-to-door checks and tracing virus cases, facing geographical and climate hazards on their way. They must often maneuver their way on foot through mountains to distant regions, even having to cross rivers by boat and rope bridges during rains.

As the coronavirus spreads to rural areas, the public health care sector is increasingly overwhelmed. In a country of 1.3 billion people, with virus hotspots in many locations and 50,000 new cases reported daily, the burden of contacting the population and tracing the disease falls on these frontline workers.

Working 10-hour days under incredibly difficult working conditions for \$27 a month or less (!), with many not receiving the promised doubling of their salaries, and ignored and disrespected by central and local officials throughout the pandemic, these misnamed “volunteers” were fed up!

Anganwadi workers, who operate rural mother and child care centers, were also instrumental in launching the strike.

Health care in the U.S. is a patchwork that is unraveling. The lack of coordination and planning leaves millions without medical care in the best of times. Now, during the COVID-10 epidemic, it has created an uncontrolled medical crisis that is a global threat.

Countries around the world are closing their doors to 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 just has 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 5,000 military bases, more than 800 of them around the world, plus 13,000 military aircraft and 500 ships. There are huge multibillion-dollar stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear and conventional. There are 1.3 million active duty personnel, 600,000 military contractors and a well-coordinated chain of command.

The U.S. also has the largest, most repressive and racist prison infrastructure in the world: more than 2 million incarcerated, overwhelmingly people of color. And it has the largest police force in the world by far: 800,000 cops. There are 17,985 U.S. police agencies.

The police infrastructure is so highly coordinated that an electronic fingerprint test takes 15 seconds to get results, through automated fingerprint identification connected to police agencies all over the country. This database is part of the repressive national infrastructure. It functions very well.

Compare that to the two weeks on average to get the results of a COVID-19 test, where results nationally are totally uncoordinated.

Under capitalism, an economic crash occurs every 7 to 10 years. This has been true for three centuries. It is expected, predictable, unavoidable and devastating for millions of people. But it always leads to greater concentrations of capital and wealth.

The huge military machine and the giant repressive prison and police apparatus serve an essential role. They exist to hold this global capitalist empire together and to ensure the ability of a tiny handful of capitalist owners and major shareholders to make superprofits.

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. □



Striking health care workers in India demand higher wages and PPE, Aug. 7-8.

Unions representing all sectors and peasant organizations came out in 21 states in this All-India walkout. Under threat of firings and arrests, the strikers, mostly women, defied the Modi government. With this great show of solidarity, the demonstrators’ numbers swelled to 3.5 million. □



# Why Cuba is winning the fight against COVID-19

By Nathaniel Chase

*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 that what we’re going through now in the United States and what so many people on this webinar have already spoken of very eloquently doesn’t have to be this way. It’s not necessary; it’s not inevitable. It could be another way.

This is about how 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 passed through one of the busiest tourist seasons. But Cuba was able to do that while providing for its people because it has an economy 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. If 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 has the potential to reduce the symptoms and lethality of COVID-19. This medication is not available in the United States because of the blockade.

Cuba has an enormous public health system that makes it able to do contact tracing. Why? Because Cuba invests its resources in public 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

Furthermore, 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 own their own housing. Nobody is worried about an eviction, and if anybody falls ill, a system is in place to care and provide for them.

Workers World Party has been putting out demands in response to this crisis. Demands that are winnable and possible, like workers’ control over the means of production. Like socialism itself, these are things we can achieve through organization and struggle.

We are demanding free health care for all. Nationalize the health care system under community control. Build emergency hospitals. Full pay, benefits and guaranteed income for all.

Food, housing, medical supplies and utilities, including internet, for all. Unequal 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 shutoffs and all debt.



A sign held by crew members reads “I love you, Cuba” as the British cruise ship MS Braemar finally docks there on March 18. Cuba was the only nation that helped the ship, using strict pandemic prevention protocol to assist more than 1,000 passengers and crew members to return to England. Of Cuba’s response, the country’s foreign minister, Bruno Rodríguez, said. “Let’s reinforce health care, solidarity and international cooperation.”

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 LGBTQ2S+ people, seniors, youth and people with disabilities.

These most oppressed sectors of society 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 the 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. □

## Palestinian Liberation Movement marks global day of action



WW PHOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

New York City, Aug. 9.



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Cleveland, August 9.

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 Palestinians, the demolition of homes, the denial of Palestinian refugees’ right to return and further war crimes and crimes against humanity.

“Annexation is a continuing threat — especially if the Israeli state thinks that it can pass unnoticed without continued resistance. The struggle is not over; in many ways, it has just begun.”

Over 130 other organizations around the world took part in actions to demand an end to the imperialist project to erase the nation of Palestine, its culture and its people. There were actions in dozens of cities in the U.S. and around the world.

Workers World Party is proud to have endorsed these Days of Resistance and unwaveringly supports the struggle for national liberation and self-determination.

— Report by Ted Kelly

## Speak truth to power! Build Workers World!

August 26 is the 100th anniversary of the day that the 19th Amendment went into effect in the U.S. — when “The right of citizens . . . to vote shall not be denied or abridged . . . on account of sex.”

But, truth be told, for decades it was only white women who had this right — until the 1965 Voting Rights Act was passed, under pressure from the historic Civil Rights Movement. What’s not widely known about the struggle for women’s suffrage is that for years thousands of African American women organized and marched in many cities and towns, even as they were held back by Jim Crow laws.

Other women of color were also denied the right to vote. Voting rights were not fully accessible to Indigenous women until 1948; Chinese immigrants only in 1943; Japanese women after internment in 1952; and people whose primary language was not English — including many Latinx and Asian immigrants — not until 1975 after a court battle. Mississippi was the last state to ratify the 19th Amendment — in 1984!

This 100th anniversary occurs when the right to vote is blatantly under

attack — by the White House and by states closing polling places, shortening voting hours and passing outrageous regulations to suppress votes by people of color.

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 five free subscriptions to give to friends — all for a donation of \$75. Or \$100, \$300, or more if you can! Donations can be made annually or monthly to reach the \$75 a year supporter minimum.

Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at [workers.org/donate/](https://workers.org/donate/) — it’s easy to set up monthly deductions. And know we’re grateful for your help in building Workers World — for today and for the future!



# 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. “Congressperson 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 polls showed 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 that put corporations first.” (New York Times, Aug. 5)

The doubts expressed may have been

wishful capitalist thinking. Michigan’s richest person, Dan Gilbert — owner of Quicken Loans, the Cleveland Cavaliers and vast swaths of real estate in Detroit — had contributed to Council President Jones’ current and past election campaigns. Gilbert, Jones and Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan have often teamed up to reward real estate developers with tax breaks — including about \$500,000 for Gilbert himself.

Trump backers Stars and Stripes Forever and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee paid for numerous ads attacking Tlaib as a “terrorist.” These forces have repeatedly vilified The Squad — Congresspeople Ilhan Omar (who won the Minnesota primary Aug. 12), Ayanna Pressley and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (known as AOC, who won a New York primary) along with Tlaib — since they were elected. Trump himself subjected them to racist, sexist, xenophobic attacks.

**The vote and the movement behind it**

The multinational working-class voters in the 13th Congressional District have every reason to vote against “establishment politics.” The district, which contains a big part of Detroit along with seven

abutting suburbs, has an overall poverty rate of almost 30%, with child poverty at 42.5%. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a genocidal impact on Detroit, an historically Black working-class city. Racist capitalist austerity has given crumbling neighborhoods the appearance of a war zone.

Tlaib lives in Southwest Detroit, the center of the city’s Latinx community. Her Congressional district is 7% Latinx and home to tens of thousands of Lebanese, Palestinians, Yemenis, Syrians and Iraqis. The district is next to, but does not include, the heart of the Arab community: Dearborn.

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. 5 — 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” class content behind Tlaib’s win is wholly progressive. Tlaib — a “democratic socialist” like Bernie Sanders and the three other members of “The 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 class 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 hall [of the hotel] screaming, ‘I’m not going! I’m not going!’”

In the month of July, Immigration and Customs Enforcement held nearly 200 immigrant children, including babies and toddlers, in hotels in El Paso and McAllen, Texas, as well as Phoenix, Ariz. This violated a decades-old court settlement 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 20 days, children are supposed to be released to a family sponsor who 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 location with family members 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 reason was not provided about 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 unofficial holding 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.

**Misusing 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 105,000 immigrants under the guise of public health concerns. (tinyurl.com/yaostc7z) 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/socarxiv/zdy7f/) 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 hidden in hotels have been Black immigrant families.

ICE was ostensibly formed to protect the U.S. from terrorism in the period after Sept. 11, 2001. After nearly 20 years, the



An immigrant Haitian mother and her daughter are incarcerated by ICE in a hotel room in San Antonio on July 1.

agency has caused an extensive amount of trauma to children and families by separating them. Its agents have been accused of sexually assaulting thousands of children and have also mentally and physically abused adult immigrants.

The government treats every single immigrant as a criminal threat, greeting them at the border with handcuffs and jailing them for seeking a better and safer life. But ICE is the real criminal. □

## 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 things they didn’t do elsewhere.

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] Rogers. I’d later search many a bookstore for his work, often without success.

I thought of those days because of a little-known quote I’d read in the work of two late Black scholars and historians: Ishakamusa Barashango and Lerone Bennett.

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

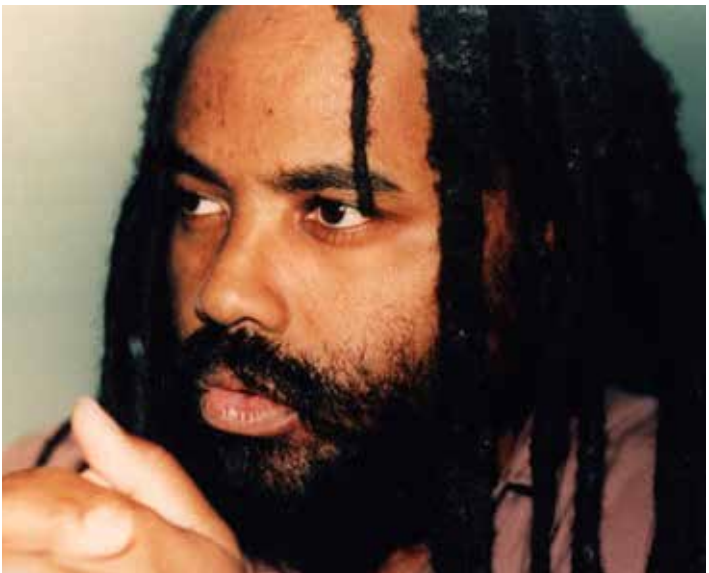
Said Jefferson of African slavery in America: “One hour suffered under such conditions was fraught with more misery than ages of that suffered under the British by white Americans who rose in rebellion to oppose them.”

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

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 revolution 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 in that densely populated city. It also unleashed a political tsunami that pulled in regional and imperialist powers as well as Lebanese political forces.

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 powers and their reactionary Lebanese clients 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, which explains 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. Ever since feudal France sent troops to participate in the Crusades, the French ruling class has intervened in the 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 (\$250,000,000) from imperialist countries and Gulf emirates — should 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 called upon the U.S. to lift its sanc-

tions on embattled Lebanon.

Both Macron and Trump issued statements calling on the Lebanese government to make concessions to the demonstrations. This itself raises questions about the direction of these protests, whatever the legitimate 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 Lebanese protesters, 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, adjusted a speech he was scheduled to give Aug. 7 on current developments so he could speak exclusively to the crisis caused by the explosion. He said since Hezbollah was being attacked by politicians and media who he knew were lying, he wanted to remove any doubts about Hezbollah’s role.

“I confirm in a firm, categorical, absolute, final, total and definite way that

Hezbollah has absolutely nothing in the port. There is no weapons warehouse, no missile stock, not a single rocket, a single rifle, a single grenade, a single bullet, (a single drop) of nitrate, there is nothing of all this, neither in a hangar nor outside a hangar, neither now nor in the past, there is nothing and there never has been anything.”

Nasrallah brought up that the international media have already stopped blaming Hezbollah because they know it strains their credibility—everyone knows that Hezbollah has no responsibility for the port of Beirut.

He called for solidarity: “The priority is compassion, cooperation and mutual aid, to overcome these days of pain, suffering and humanitarian crisis.”

Not that Nasrallah would excuse the guilty: “I call on State officials, at all levels and in all authorities, to show the utmost seriousness and determination, whether to complete the investigation or to judge and blame, and chastise all those



Lebanese emergency workers look for victims after Beirut explosion, Aug. 4.

responsible for this tragedy.”

And finally, the Hezbollah leader told his people that despite this tragedy, that the Hezbollah-led resistance “by its strength, its place in the country and in the region, is too large, too strong and too noble for it to be tainted by the slanders of certain oppressors, liars and falsifiers of the truth, who incite sectarian rivalry, and who encourage civil war. They have always worked at this and have always failed, and they will fail again.”

For the full speech, see [tinyurl.com/y5nx7y66](https://tinyurl.com/y5nx7y66). □

## Venezuela

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

*Telesur 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 Denmnan and Airan Berry, who participated in the failed invasion attempt in Venezuela [May 4], were sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Denmnan and Berry tried to force their way into Venezuela along with 50 other citizens of the Caribbean country to overthrow President Nicolas Maduro’s government.

“The U.S. former military officers confessed to the crimes of conspiracy, association, illicit trafficking of war weapons and terrorism,” Saab tweeted.

These crimes appear in Venezuela’s Penal Code, and for them, the mercenaries were sentenced to 20 years in prison.

“The former U.S. soldiers, who admitted their responsibility in the events,



Former members of the U.S. Green Beret Special Forces (circled) captured in Venezuela while attempting invasion.

were accused by the prosecutors in the case of serious crimes,” Saab explained.

The U.S. Silvercorp employees, former members of the U.S. Army Green Beret Special Forces, were detained in the second attempt of an attack against the Venezuelan coast.

At least eight people died and half a hundred more were arrested during the search and capture of the mercenaries.

Last May, Venezuela’s justice system ordered preventive detention for 40 people due to their involvement in the failed invasion attempt. □

# Political strike shuts down Bolivia

Continued from page 1

Will Morales’ overthrown MAS party return to power through elections, or will some other outcome erupt through a bloody struggle in the streets? Only time will tell.

Evo Morales tweeted: “De facto government and right-wing press discredit legitimate mobilizations of the Indigenous movement and social organizations. The peoples that fight for peace and social justice are called terrorists, savages and they tell us that we are violent; it is the North American doctrine.” (@evoespueblo)

### Dialogue is doomed

On Friday, Aug. 7, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights called on the de facto interim president to promote dialogue with all the protagonists in the struggle. Áñez promptly invited key

players to a televised dialogue that took place at 9 a.m. on Aug. 9. The U.N., the Catholic Church, the European Union, the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Government, Áñez, representatives of two political parties (ADN and PAN-Bol) and a representative of the heavy transport industry attended.

One participant humiliated Áñez 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.

Áñez’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 exhorted demonstrators to allow passage of oxygen and medical supplies so as not to interfere with the national hospitals in their fight against COVID-19. The government and the media have lied, saying that strikers are blocking vital supplies and emergency vehicles.

In the meantime Bolivia’s coronavirus cases are soaring, with thousands of uncounted deaths due to the lack of testing. Nine out of 10 families have lost income due to the collapse of the economy under Áñez’s incompetent management.

On the ground, militants who remember

the massacres and the broken promises, whose families are hungry due to the crises, want more than an election. According

to Resumen, “[T]he cooperatives of miners are saying: ‘We will not back down one millimetre in our struggle for Áñez to resign.’”

One of their leaders said that they are going to continue with the struggle and that “the dictator Áñez must resign.” He warned the military and police: “[E]ither join

us or suffer the consequences. There are millions of us throughout the country.” (Resumen Latinoamericano, Aug. 9) □

**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.’**





Potosí, Bolivia, 5 de agosto. Las manifestaciones apoyan una huelga general en el país.

## El uso de la tecnología por parte del estado: un problema para el movimiento

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. Usamos 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 transmitimos música en nuestros viajes diarios al trabajo. La lista continúa.

En medio de la actual crisis de COVID-19, la tecnología ha jugado un papel aún mayor 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 una serie de cambios en el capitalismo global, en gran parte en beneficio del capital. (Lea “High Tech, Low Pay” en [workers.org/books](http://workers.org/books). En este libro, publicado en 1986, el presidente del Workers World Party, Sam Marcy, mostró cómo estos acontecimientos afectaron a los trabajadores y globalizaron la economía).

La tecnología ha aumentado la capacidad del capital para poner a los trabajadores en competencia directa entre sí 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 niveles más altos de automatización y 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 reducción de los salarios y las condiciones laborales sienta las bases objetivas para una mayor politización de la clase trabajadora multinacional.

### Las ganancias, aluvión de poder para los ‘Cinco Grandes’

Estos desarrollos tecnológicos han sido tremendamente rentables para la clase capitalista. Los cinco gigantes tecnológicos, Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Alphabet (Google) y Facebook, como se los conoce colectivamente, han tenido un aumento del 184% en el valor de mercado en los últimos tres años. ([tinyurl.com/y2vudh2h](http://tinyurl.com/y2vudh2h)). Esto ha ocurrido mientras que el valor del resto del mercado de valores durante el mismo período se ha mantenido más o menos igual. A su vez, estas cinco corporaciones ejercen una increíble cantidad de poder e influencia políticos, que se entrelazan en muchas facetas de nuestras vidas de más formas de las que creemos.

Junto con 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 está movilizando Trump para sofocar la rebelión 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 agencias estatales para desarrollar herramientas sofisticadas para su uso. La lista de tales colaboraciones es numerosa. Incluyen el intercambio de videos e imágenes capturadas por Amazon con sus timbres Ring, el desarrollo de bases de datos de Microsoft para su uso por los departamentos de policía en las principales ciudades y el desa-

rollo de software de reconocimiento facial racista y “algoritmos predictivos”, por nombrar algunos.

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 torno a sus propias condiciones laborales. Se han opuesto cada vez más al papel que juegan sus empleadores corporativos en la sociedad, desde proporcionar tecnología para el Pentágono hasta colaborar con el Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas y la policía, contribuir al cambio climático y permitir el acoso sexual y la violencia en el lugar de trabajo que enfrentan las mujeres y los trabajadores no conformes con su género.

En particular, muchos trabajadores de Google se han opuesto a la colaboración de la empresa con ICE y la Patrulla Fronteriza de EE.UU. Además, el hecho de que la empresa recompensara a los abusadores sexuales con paquetes de indemnización por valor de millones de dólares provocó una huelga mundial de los empleados. Los ejecutivos tomaron represalias contra algunos organizadores de las protestas.

### Aprovechar la tecnología para ayudar en la lucha

Como organizadores, activistas y revolucionarios, hacemos todo lo posible por aprovechar estos tremendos desarrollos para fortalecer nuestra capacidad de comunicarnos entre nosotros, llegar a nuestra clase, hacer propaganda contra el sistema y, en última instancia, ayudar en el desarrollo de la organización orientada a la lucha.

Nuestro primer instinto debería ser siempre descubrir cómo politizar y organizar nuestra clase como y donde podamos. Naturalmente, usamos muchas de estas herramientas en nuestro trabajo diario: configuramos eventos de Facebook, enviamos correos electrónicos masivos y nos comunicamos a través de mensajes de texto y llamadas telefónicas. Durante la pandemia, hemos utilizado Zoom con regularidad para realizar seminarios web para presentar

nuestra perspectiva sobre las cuestiones políticas urgentes del momento.

Si bien debemos continuar haciendo este trabajo, vale la pena echar un vistazo crítico a cómo nuestros movimientos usan la tecnología y luego evaluar los peligros presentados para nuestro trabajo y nuestra clase por el desarrollo de la tecnología y el uso de recopilaciones masivas de datos regulares por estas corporaciones, particularmente ahora. Se debe considerar lo que se necesita para protegernos a nosotros mismos en el corto plazo y avanzar hacia una estrategia a más largo plazo para romper nuestra dependencia de estas herramientas corporativas por completo.

### Evaluar los riesgos de usar las redes sociales

Son numerosos los ejemplos de recopilación atroz de datos por parte de las agencias policiales y el uso activo y la colaboración de las fuerzas del orden con estas corporaciones tecnológicas gigantes con el propósito de reprimir a nuestra clase.

En un caso, agentes del FBI llegaron a la casa de Lore Elisabeth Blumenthal en el barrio de Germantown de Filadelfia la mañana del 16 de junio con una orden de arresto. Blumenthal está detenida sin derecho a fianza por el gobierno federal por cargos de que presuntamente participó en la quema de dos coches de policía durante las protestas del 30 de mayo en respuesta al atroz asesinato policial de George Floyd. Ella enfrenta hasta 80 años de prisión. Para identificar a Blumenthal, los agentes federales utilizaron fotos e información disponible públicamente de sitios de redes sociales populares como Etsy, LinkedIn y Poshmark.

Este es solo uno de los muchos ejemplos de fuerzas policiales que utilizan cada vez más las redes sociales y otras herramientas tecnológicas para vigilar y reprimir el actual levantamiento Black Lives Matter, además de la movilización directa de agentes federales para atacar y reprimir manifestaciones justas, como las de Portland, Oregon.

La Oficina de Aduanas y Protección Fronteriza de EE.UU. ha estado comprando acceso a bases de datos automáticas de lectores de matrículas vehiculares desde 2017. La agencia almacena imágenes recopiladas de lectores de matrículas públicos y privados en las carreteras de EE.UU. Esta información le da a CBP la capacidad sin precedentes de rastrear y enfocar el movimiento de casi todas las personas. Esto se suma a las compras regulares y bien documentadas de CBP y otras agencias policiales de datos de ubicación de teléfonos celulares, que el Wall Street Journal informa que ICE ha utilizado para aterrorizar y detener a los trabajadores migrantes.

Según una investigación realizada en 2016, las cinco grandes corporaciones tecnológicas cumplieron aproximadamente entre el 70% y el 80% de las solicitudes de las agencias de aplicación de la ley para compartir datos de los usuarios con ellas. Además, Google informa que en 2019 recibió más de 52.000 solicitudes de datos de usuarios que afectan a más de 140.000 cuentas, y la empresa cumplió con el 82,5% de estas solicitudes. ([tinyurl.com/yy5z4qk6](http://tinyurl.com/yy5z4qk6)) En algunos casos, estas “solicitudes” iban acompañadas de una Carta de Seguridad

Nacional, esencialmente una orden de silencio indefinida que evita que el destinatario incluso diga que recibió dicha carta.

Estos ejemplos se suman a la vigilancia, el terror y la represión regulares y continuos que enfrentan todos los días las comunidades de la clase trabajadora, en particular las compuestas por trabajadores negros y migrantes. Están sujetos a interrupciones regulares llevadas a cabo por agencias estatales y fuerzas de derecha que utilizan las redes sociales, los datos de ubicación de teléfonos celulares, software de reconocimiento facial y otras herramientas de alta tecnología para la represión.

### ¿Qué pueden hacer los organizadores?

Entonces, ¿qué debemos 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. Las consideraciones en torno a la seguridad deben equilibrarse con las tareas necesarias de intervenir en la lucha de clases viva y construir un amplio movimiento de masas que atraiga trabajadores, particularmente ahora durante el levantamiento que sigue estallando a nuestro alrededor.

Adoptar prácticas organizacionales y personales en torno a la seguridad, y promover una conciencia más amplia sobre las innumerables formas en que el estado, la derecha y las corporaciones tecnológicas colaboran para vigilar e impedir nuestros movimientos, es primordial. Varias guías sobre cómo hacer eso han sido desarrolladas por organizaciones del movimiento y están disponibles en línea.

Levantar demandas y participar en la lucha para defender nuestros movimientos contra la represión política, que incluye hacer retroceder el arsenal de herramientas de alta tecnología, será cada vez más importante. También lo es conectar esta lucha con las luchas activas de los trabajadores dentro de estas corporaciones.

A largo plazo, nuestros movimientos deben preocuparse más por nuestra dependencia excesiva de las herramientas tecnológicas de propiedad empresarial. Debemos tomarnos en serio la tarea de desarrollar tecnología de izquierda que pueda respaldar nuestro trabajo y ayudar a construir nuestros movimientos, evitando al mismo tiempo las trampas y los riesgos asociados con nuestro uso excesivo de tecnologías de propiedad corporativa.

Sin duda, esta tarea es mucho más fácil de decir que de hacer. Pero a medida que nuestros movimientos comprendan más ampliamente estos temas y los aborden de manera seria, esta tarea debería orientar nuestras intervenciones a largo plazo en torno a ellos. Esto ayudará al desarrollo de un movimiento revolucionario de la clase trabajadora que pueda luchar y ganar el socialismo. □