

Stop Trump’s attack on the post office!

By Joe Piette

Bulletin: Thousands of people will join neighborhood events at local post offices around the country Aug. 22 at 11 a.m. local time to “save the post office from Trump” and demand Postmaster General Louis DeJoy resign. #SAVETHEPOSTOFFICE

If 150 million people vote by mail in November, it would not overwhelm the United States Postal Service, which daily processes over 472 million pieces of mail. But postal officials, in apparent coordination with President Donald Trump’s efforts to suppress voting rights, have enacted actions which delay mail delivery.

This is a naked attempt to illegitimately reelect this openly racist, misogynist, anti-labor, right-wing administration. If their plan succeeds in privatizing the 245-year-old publicly-owned Postal Service, the wealthy pro-Trump ideologues, who oppose providing public services where private profits can be made, would have another reason to celebrate.

The service’s network of over 31,000 post offices employs over 600,000 postal workers. Forty percent are women, and nearly 40% are people of color. They deliver mail to every address in the country six days a week.

New Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, a Trump ally, has imposed work rules that eliminate overtime and keep workers



For decades, postal workers have been fighting to defend worker rights and the USPS as a public service. Here members of the American Postal Workers Union rally at Pittsburgh convention, Aug. 21, 2018.

from ensuring all mail is processed and brought to mailboxes by mail carriers, preventing mail from being delivered on time. As the pandemic has reduced the volume of mail, over 600 mail sorting machines are being mothballed or even destroyed, causing more slowdowns. This ignores the probability that mail volume will increase if the economy or the pandemic situation improves.

DeJoy, or “DeLay” as many postal workers call him, has donated millions of dollars to Trump and Republican Party causes. He owns over \$30 million in stock in XPO Logistics, a contractor company that processes mail for USPS, a clear conflict of interest!

As this writer stated in this newspaper on May 25, another problematic aspect is DeJoy’s “terrible labor record, rife with sexual harassment, discrimination, speedup, workplace injuries, excessive use of temps, misclassifying workers as independent contractors and inadequate sick leave during the current pandemic.” (tinyurl.com/y5dfu755)

Understaffed and overworked postal workers report incidents where mail doesn’t go out for days or isn’t going out at all. American Postal Workers Union President Mark Dimondstein told The Atlantic the changes were “demoralizing” for his members: “They’re ordering workers to leave mail for another day. That goes

against our DNA.” As for DeJoy’s alleged cost-cutting rationale, Dimondstein stressed: “It’s not called the United States Postal Business. It’s called the United States Postal Service!” (Aug. 14)

The Trump administration also installed Trojan horse figures in the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. departments of Education, Housing and Urban Development, and other federal agencies. They all focus on providing profit-making opportunities for corporations rather than on promoting the common good.

Delaying the mail, suppressing the vote

Customers have made thousands of complaints to postal officials, political leaders and the press. Medications, checks, bills, online orders and other mail are being delayed, sometimes for days and weeks, as mail piles up in massive backlogs at postal facilities.

The possibility that mail-in ballots may be delayed has garnered media headlines, as the 45th president constantly tweets false claims that such ballots are more prone to fraud. This lie undermines the public’s confidence in the USPS’s ability to deliver blank ballots to voters, and then return them to electoral authorities securely and speedily.

Every state has safely used mail-in voting, some for decades. It is a universal practice in Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Utah and Washington. A record number

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COVID-19 and Black August

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Stop the racist attacks!

Black Incarcerated Lives Matter!

California statewide action

August 22nd 11 am PST

at Soledad State Prison (CTF)

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THE PRISONER SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE OF WWP

@PSCWWP

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Le Kha Phieu ¡presente!

By Paddy Colligan

On Aug. 7, another of the heroic and determined generation of revolutionaries who guided Vietnam's liberation movement passed away.

Le Kha Phieu was born in 1931 in Thanh Hoa province in the northern part of Vietnam (then French Indochina). At 15, he joined the revolutionary struggle to gain independence from French imperialism, which had been forced out of Indochina during World War II by Japanese imperialism, but was attempting to reassert dominance. Le Kha Phieu joined the Indochinese Communist Party in 1949, and in 1950 he joined the Vietnam People's Army to take part in the armed struggle to liberate his country.



Le Kha Phieu

Le Kha Phieu rose through the ranks, first during the war against French imperialism and then during the long years of war against the U.S. occupation. (en.bocongan.gov.vn, Aug. 14) After the defeat and expulsion of the U.S. imperialist forces, he also participated in the campaign to stop the invasion by China in 1979, which was motivated by China's political differences with Vietnam regarding Cambodia.

While in the armed forces, Le Kha Phieu held many positions of political leadership. He reached the rank of colonel general and head of the general political department of the People's Army.

In 1991, he was elected to the Central Committee of the Vietnam Communist Party, to the Politburo in 1994 and was elected General Secretary of the party's Central Committee in 1997. (e.vnexpress.net, Aug. 15)

There were serious political differences inside the party and within Vietnam's general society in the late 20th century. The party was involved in a principled struggle over tactical questions concerning whether and how quickly to introduce capitalist measures into the economy. Could the economic needs of the people be more effectively met

by the government through centrally planned development projects or by loosening up some socialist controls and permitting some capitalist development and foreign corporations?

Le Kha Phieu was on the losing side of this debate (he had argued to not open up the economy), and his five-year term was cut short by a year. In 2001, he was out of that position.

He retired from his official positions in 2006. At that time, he was given many awards for his lifetime of great contributions, including the Golden Star order recognizing his 70 years of dedication and leadership as a member of the party.

Le Kha Phieu's contributions were honored with a two-day official period of mourning. Numerous high level delegations of representatives from the VCP, government, diplomatic and fraternal parties, and popular organizations attended the simultaneous memorials held in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and his birthplace in Thanh Hoa. Numerous tributes were sent recognizing his remarkable role in Vietnam's wartime and postwar struggles. □



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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, LGBTQ2+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

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

and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people's movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

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

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

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Fired for striking

Grad students win reinstatement

By Martha Grevatt

Graduate student workers at the University of California-Santa Cruz, represented by United Auto Workers Local 2865, have won the rehiring of 41 teaching assistants fired in February for striking. “In large part, this is a win for Santa Cruz workers — for workers in general,” said Veronica Hamilton, the UAW 2865 Santa Cruz unit chair and one of the 41 fired. (Santa Cruz Sentinel, Aug. 13)

The struggle began in 2019 after a contract between Local 2865 and the statewide university system was ratified. Santa Cruz teaching assistants went on a wildcat strike — not permitted under the contract’s “no-strike” clause — to demand a Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increase. They argued that their \$2,400 monthly income was not enough to cover the high costs of rent and other necessities in that part of the country, and withheld grades for that semester. On Feb. 10, they escalated the



University of California-Santa Cruz students support striking teaching assistants, Feb. 13.

fight to an all-out strike, and graduate students at several other campuses joined their “COLA4ALL” campaign.

The movement for a livable income won support among the student body, the faculty and the community,

with several militant demonstrations blocking traffic. The firings prompted solidarity actions around the state.

The university retaliated against 75 Santa Cruz strikers, firing over half and denying others teaching work. Those with the lighter punishment won a path to reinstatement in an earlier agreement. Now with the latest mediated settlement, all those disciplined will have the opportunity to work this fall.

Disciplinary records will be expunged, including those of 245 who were given warning letters for withholding grades.

This is still only a partial win for the student-workers; reinstatement could be revoked if they strike again. While the UC management extended a \$2,500 yearly “housing allowance” during the strike, teaching assistants still need the COLA raise. But as Hamilton told the Sentinel, “Some of our most brilliant scholars are able to return and that’s excellent.” □

Global campaign frees Mahmoud Nawajaa

By Kathy Durkin

Mahmoud Nawajaa is free! An international campaign pressured Israel to release the general coordinator of the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement from detention. Armed Israeli forces charged into Nawajaa’s home near Ramallah in occupied Palestine on July 30 and brutally seized him. He was illegally held without charges until a military court freed him on Aug. 17.

Nawajaa praised his supporters after his release: “Pressure works. Sustained global pressure works even better. I am deeply grateful to all of those who pressured apartheid Israel to release me. From Europe and the Arab world, to Southern Africa, Latin America, North America and Asia, your solidarity gave me strength and kept alive my hope to

be reunified with my loving family and my inspiring wider BDS family.” He also thanked Palestinian and human rights organizations. (bdsmovement.net, Aug. 17)

Nawajaa stressed that Israel can’t break this movement despite all the “resources they’ve invested in their war of repression against BDS.” He called for an intensification of the BDS campaign to “end the system of apartheid and oppression and free all 4,700 Palestinian prisoners.”

Israel has escalated repression against the resistance movement; the state arrested 17 activists in occupied Palestine, including Nawajaa, in the same week. These detentions occurred as Palestinian organizations call for global sanctions against Israel to stop the Zionist state from annexing part of the West Bank and to end its apartheid regime.

The BDS movement denounced the

U.S.-backed “peace” agreement made on Aug. 14 between the “despotic” United Arab Emirate rulers and Israel, and refuted the UAE’s claim that it would freeze Israel’s annexation plan, saying that was a “lie.”

All Palestinian factions and groupings have voiced their opposition to the pact. It was signed as Israel was bombing Gaza and stealing land, supporting settlements and attacking Palestinians in the West Bank.

In solidarity, South Africans and supporters of Palestine demonstrated outside the Israeli Embassy in Johannesburg on Aug. 14 calling for Nawajaa’s release and condemning the UAE-Israel pact. Members of Africa4Palestine, the South African Communist Party, Swaziland Solidarity Network and the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union participated. □



PHOTO: AFRICA4PALESTINE

South Africans and supporters of Palestine in Johannesburg on Aug. 14.

Stop Trump’s attack on the post office!

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of people are expected to vote by mail this year due to the pandemic.

Removal of postal collection boxes from street corners around the U.S. without the required 30-day-notice, especially in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, reinforces the suspicion that Trump and his supporters are trying to suppress mail-in voting.

Celina Stewart, of the nonpartisan League of Women Voters, commented: “The slowdown is another tool in the toolbox of voter suppression. That’s no secret. We think this is a voter-suppression tactic.” (Washington Post, Aug 14)

Voting rights have been severely restricted based on race, gender and class



In Washington, D.C., protesters marched Aug. 15 on Postmaster General Louis DeJoy’s home to denounce his orders that cut back postal services and collude on voter suppression.

going back to the first U.S. presidential election in 1788 when only propertied white men were allowed to vote. The two-party system limits the possibility of real change through elections. To further rig the system, both big business parties have historically used ballot suppression. Systemic disenfranchisement is rife, with tactics including voter ID laws and gerrymandering — redrawing voting districts to particularly decrease the weight of people of color, low-income and im/migrant communities.

History of political corruption

The tag team of Trump and DeJoy are not the first to politicize the Postal Service. President Andrew Jackson, admired by Trump, established a “spoils system” after his election in 1828, whereby the party that won the White House gained the right to award tens of thousands of postal jobs to its supporters, thus securing their loyalty. The postmaster general, inevitably a political crony and fixer eager to do the president’s bidding, became a Cabinet member who oversaw this immense patronage scheme.

Jackson notoriously sought to expand capitalist plunder for profits through seizing Indigenous land, often to expand the enslavement of people of African descent. He forcibly exiled thousands of Native peoples in the Trail

of Tears, a genocidal action in the 1830s. In 1835, Jackson collaborated with his postmaster general to suppress anti-slavery mail from Northern abolitionists.

The corrupt patronage system only ended with the great postal strike of 1970, after which Congress passed the Postal Reorganization Act. It created a government-business hybrid run by a board of governors nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate, with a postmaster general chosen by that board. The majority of current board members are Trump appointees, who chose DeJoy, violating the PRA’s anti-patronage intentions.

Corporations got bailed out! Postal Service got sold out!

The USPS is normally self-sufficient, financing operations with its own revenues without using taxpayer money. Congress passed a law in 2006 requiring the Postal Service to fund retiree health benefits for 75 years into the future. That onerous \$5.5 billion annual burden is not imposed on any other government agency or private corporation.

With these unnecessary costs,

combined with the pandemic’s financial effects, the USPS may run out of funds within a year. So the Postal Board of Governors requested \$75 billion in emergency financial assistance, comparable to the huge sums Congress gave to big corporations in the spring’s stimulus bill.

The House of Representatives passed a \$25 billion postal rescue plan in May as part of the HEROES Act, but the

Senate failed to act on it before adjourning for the summer break. On Aug. 13, Trump blatantly stated he opposes the proposed USPS funding because he wants to make it harder to expand voting by mail.

Postal workers and their supporters have organized petitions and call-in campaigns to Congressional and

USPS officials to demand approval of the Postal Service rescue plan, repeal of the 75-year pre-funding requirement and the firing of DeJoy for delaying the mail. It’s only a matter of time until more militant actions against voter and worker suppression take place. (See Facebook Save Our Postal Service.)

Piette is a retired letter carrier and member of the National Association of Letter Carriers.

‘It’s not called the United States Postal Business. It’s called the United States Postal Service!’

Colonialism intensifies pandemic school crisis for Puerto Rican people

By Lorraine Liriano Chávez

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.

Puerto Rico faces the life-threatening decision of the reopening of schools in the midst of rising COVID-19 cases. This escalation is directly linked to tourism from various hotspots of the pandemic in the U.S. Most countries have closed their borders to U.S. tourists, including the Caribbean islands of the Bahamas, due to rising U.S. cases.

In early March, Puerto Rico was one of the first places to implement health regulations of masks and social distancing, as well as strict curfew measures such as shutting down most businesses and entertainment venues (with the exception of supermarkets and pharmacies deemed essential). This has had little impact on the steady rise of cases because Puerto Rico does not have the jurisdiction to close airports.

Governor Wanda Vázquez Garced, who is seeking another term, recently required that all travelers who come to Puerto Rico bring proof of COVID tests or else they must be quarantined for 14 days. Many grassroots organizations have questioned how tourists will be monitored. Meanwhile, major airlines, like American Airlines, are practically giving away fares, with prices as low as \$100 round trip.

El Nuevo Día, a major newspaper on the island, has reported that in places like San Juan tourists are not wearing masks nor following social distancing regulations. A recent report stated that tourists caused thousands of dollars of damages in a San Juan mall when asked to use masks.

Airport protest to save Puerto Rican lives

On July 25, the anniversary of the 1898 invasion of Puerto Rico by the U.S., the grassroots political organization Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores (Socialist Movement of Workers) staged a car caravan protest to demand the closure of Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport in San Juan.

Issues raised by MST included that 80% of the passengers who arrive at the airport have not had COVID tests. Instead of safeguarding the health and well-being of the Puerto Rican people, the colonial government is pandering to the airline, hotel and service industries that exploit the working class with menial wages of \$7.25 to \$12.13 an hour without providing health and safety measures to safeguard their lives.

The protesters were met with federal forces, similar to those deployed in Portland, Ore., that proceeded to arrest MST leader, Ricardo Santos Ortiz. They aggressively threw him to the ground and put him in a chokehold that lasted several minutes, as his comrades demanded his release and shared images on social media. As Ortiz was driven away in the police car, images of his treatment started trending, and his comrades and outraged people came in cars to the airport demanding his immediate release.

It was a déjà vu of the “Ricky Renuncia” moment when [in 2019] the people took over the streets of San Juan demanding the ouster of then Gov. Ricardo Rosello. The Expreso Román Baldorioty de Castro, the airport freeway, became congested to the point no one could move in any direction or gain passage to the airport.

The airport was at a standstill. People were chanting that they would not move until Ortiz was released, which police did after a couple of hours. Ortiz returned to the site of his arrest to thank everyone who supported this protest to save the lives of Puerto Ricans.

On Aug. 9, MST will be joined by La Jornada las Promesas (Day of Promises), Asamblea de Pueblo de Bayamón (Bayamón People’s Assembly), Comuna Antillana y ACASA, and other environmental and community organizations in a second protest under the slogan “Nuestras vidas antes de sus ganancias” (“Our lives before their profits”) to continue the pressure.

Collective action to safeguard schools

According to the New York Times, to date the number of COVID-19 cases in Puerto Rico is 21,424. with 274 deaths. For several months prior to the

opening of schools, a coalition, La Mesa Social (The Social Table), was formed, including teacher unions, parents and community groups, led by La Federación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (Federation of Teachers P.R.), Eduquemos (Let’s Educate), Unéte (Join Up) and Comité Timón Pleito de Clase Educación (Steering Committee for Class Litigation for Education). The coalition works to create consensus about demands made to the Puerto Rican Department of Education in order to resume in-person classes.

A petition created on Change.org demanded that classes be remote until the number of COVID-19 cases can be contained according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. Most of the demands are consistent with the National Resistance Against the Opening of Unsafe Schools in the U.S. Schools must have health and safety protocols in place, such as an on-staff nurse at each school, temperature checks, free available tests and results within 24 hours, as well as contact tracing.

How will students have access to tests when there is a scarcity of coronavirus tests on the archipelago? Puerto Rico has a scarcity while the tests are massively exported to the United States. On Aug. 4, the Colectiva Feminista en Construcción (Feminist Collective Under Construction) protested in front of Abbott Laboratories in Caguas to denounce huge tax exemptions it received from the U.S. federal government.

As students and families grapple with recent Hurricane Isaias and a series of ongoing earthquakes experienced in the southern region of Puerto Rico, La Mesa Social demands that schools be inspected and repaired in regions that have suffered damages and that the schools meet Occupational Safety and Health



Lorraine Liriano Chávez.

As the colonial structure collapses, the U.S. continues to jeopardize the lives of the Puerto Rican people in order to serve the capitalist needs of Wall Street. Puerto Ricans will continue to be on the front lines to defend their lives and their country.

Administration standards for reopening. Lastly, all students and educators must have technology provided and free internet services. The access to internet and technology is a particularly important point in light of the fact that there is a 44% poverty rate in the archipelago.

As of this date, the Mesa Social coalition of teachers unions, parents and community groups has won a major victory, through collective action, to have remote learning until the conditions in the school community are safe.

As the colonial structure collapses, the U.S. continues to jeopardize the lives of the Puerto Rican people in order to serve the capitalist needs of Wall Street. Puerto Ricans will continue to be on the front lines to defend their lives and their country.

The U.N. Decolonization Committee just approved the 38th resolution supporting the independence of Puerto Rico. For more information, follow A Call to Action on Puerto Rico on Facebook.

Lorraine Liriano Chávez is an organizer with El Frente Independentista Boricua and Call to Action on Puerto Rico.

Oakland teachers fight for student access, health

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

This slightly edited talk was given at an Aug. 6 Workers World Party webinar, “War on the Working Class: the Socialist Response,” which featured education workers.

You cannot watch, listen to or read the news without hearing about the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on reopening schools. Of course, the Trump administration and Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos’ line is schools should reopen in person “as usual.”

This reopening would jeopardize not only teachers, students and education workers, but entire communities, particularly the Black, Latinx and other communities of color who have been particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus.

Frontline education workers have been working with their parent communities to develop a plan that will guarantee

safety, equity and justice as we enter the new school year. We salute the education workers who are fighting this uphill battle against capitalism that is doing its best to use the pandemic to privatize and destroy the public school system in this country.

I am a recently retired teacher from Oakland, a retired member of the Oakland Education Association and a current member of the California Teachers’ Association. I have been working with other teachers in the OEA since schools shut down in March to get all students full access to chromebooks and the internet. There is still a wide gulf — at least 30% of the students have no access to Wi-Fi and/or consistent internet access.

Here is some recent organizing that other education workers have been doing.

On Aug. 3, a broad U.S. coalition of organizations under the banner #EquityOrElse came together demanding “Safe Schools, Healthy Schools, Equitable Schools.” In some cities, the protests focused on the issue of removing school police and

abolishing school police departments. Education workers, students and parents all around the country participated in virtual and in-person rallies and protests to let school administrators, politicians and the federal government know that we value the lives and the futures of our students and teachers.

In Oakland, a coalition organized by Oakland Public Education Network held a car caravan to the offices of the Oakland Unified School District to reinforce teacher and community demands for a safe reopening of schools. One issue that OPEN focused on was the lack of equitable access to working computers and internet for many Oakland students. Workers World Party participated in the Oakland car caravan and also in a march and protest in New York City organized by rank-and-file members of the United Federation of Teachers.

Greenspan is a member of the Workers World Party-Bay Area branch.



Judy Greenspan during the Oakland teachers strike in February 2019.

Florida education workers organize week of action

By Shannon Paige
Tallahassee, Fla.

To protect school staff, bus drivers, students and parents during the COVID-19 crisis, Workers World Party-Central Gulf Coast and the Party for Socialism and Liberation-Central Gulf Coast teamed up to call “Six Days of Actions: Florida Fights Back!” across the state on Aug. 3-8.

The main demand for the entire week was that schools return to virtual-only instruction for the duration of the pandemic.

On Monday, Aug. 3, protests were held in solidarity with the National Day of Resistance (#demandsafeschools) called by the National Education Association and Democratic Socialists of America. On Aug. 4, there was a phone, email and Twitter zap to demand Gov. Ron DeSantis and Education Commissioner Richard Corcoran remove their mandate that all students return to brick-and-mortar buildings five days a week for this school year.

On Wednesday, Aug. 5, teachers and school staff wrote and shared their obituaries as a display of how the state government will harm education workers.

School staff were encouraged to agitate their local county officials on Aug. 6. In Escambia County, where WWP-Central Gulf Coast and PSL-Central Gulf Coast are located, comrades spoke at the county commissioners meeting. Along with members of Escambia County Area Transportation Union, they demanded a countywide mask order for safety during the pandemic.

On Friday, Aug. 7, school education workers took part in a social media blast to encourage everyone statewide to attend a protest to be held at the Florida governor’s mansion the following day.

The Aug. 8 afternoon protest was the

culmination of the six days of action, with about 60 people attending and with speakers from WWP, PSL, DSA, Tallahassee Action Committee, Escambia County Teachers Union, Escambia County Education Support Union and Duval County Teachers Union.

Gravestones were placed in front of the mansion to represent the students and teachers that Gov. DeSantis will kill with his bigoted ignorance. The rally ended with militant chants.

Right-wing government attacks on schools

School sessions can be conducted completely online, but the Florida state government is forcing schools to reopen face-to-face this fall. The only thing those in state power care about is the capitalist economy. To keep business running, they want to continue the illusion that “everything will be okay” and the virus will go away on its own.

Meanwhile, workers are being pitted against each other and individuals are being blamed for the resurgence in COVID-19 cases. In reality, there should never have been any reopening of businesses and now certainly not a reopening of schools.

Gov. DeSantis and Commissioner Corcoran’s mandate to force brick-and-mortar schools to open or lose funding is just one more item on a long list of attacks on public education that have hurt the state’s people, and especially oppressed people.

There have been both federal and state education funding cuts over the past several decades. School funding based on income tax of neighborhoods around schools has ensured poor, predominantly Black neighborhood schools get the least



PHOTO: ALEXANDER RAE

Education workers from across Florida gather at governor’s mansion in Tallahassee on Aug. 8, demanding online education for the duration of the pandemic.

amount of funding. More police in school and increased racist suspensions guarantee that more Black students are funneled into the school-to-prison pipeline or drop out of school entirely.

Meanwhile, Florida government leaders have long been attacking public education in favor of for-profit education since public education doesn’t make money.

Fight for safety guidelines to extend week of action

School teachers, staff and parents in Florida are demanding that no one return to school campuses until there are 14 days with no new COVID-19 cases in the state; that all students receive free food service, universal access to the internet and a computer for every student; that police on campus be defunded and that money be used for more counselors, nurses and adequate funding for all schools.

The Florida left-coalition effort has also put forth other demands in support of the state’s education workers, students, parents and communities. These include strict social distancing laws everywhere; free health care for those who have

COVID-19; cancellation and forgiveness of rents and mortgages; free food and cleaning supplies to households in need; hazard pay for essential workers; and free, widespread and quick testing.

These supports are not in place because capitalist government is there to keep the for-profit economy going, not to keep people alive. Now people are going to be homeless when their rent is due and they can’t pay it. People are having to choose between their health and their jobs. The lives of students and school workers are at risk—for the sake of the capitalist economy.

Students should not have to die for the economy. School workers should not have to die for the economy. School should be a place where you can hang out with your friends, share notes, supplies and ideas; laugh, hug and work together. School should be a safe place for all. That is not what will be happening.

School reopening in Florida will be risking the health and safety of all people in the state.

Paige is a representative in the Educational Support Personnel Union in Florida.

At North Carolina colleges, ‘Safe Jobs Save Lives’

By calvin deutschbein
Chapel Hill, N.C.

On Aug. 17, after a COVID-19 outbreak, UNC announced that all undergraduate education would be delivered virtually.

At 2:15 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 14—as the first week of in-person classes at the University of North Carolina wound to a close—the independent student newspaper, the Daily Tarheel, made the announcement: “BREAKING: Carolina Housing reported two COVID-19 clusters today.”

The UNC-Chapel Hill administration’s communications team finally acknowledged the spread of infection half an hour later and issued a campus alert.

The administrators had spent months fighting students, workers, local and state governments, the N.C. Department of Health, virtually every local community group — and the very concept of human dignity — to push forward an in-person reopening.

The University of North Carolina, a statewide system of 16 colleges and universities, wields considerable indirect power over the entire higher education sector in the state. This is reflected in the in-person openings underway at nearby private schools Duke University and Elon College.

The UNC System is the largest employer in North Carolina — the only state in the South where Walmart is not the largest employer. The system operates five Historically Black Colleges and Universities and the state’s only historically designated Native university. The system directly employs around 45,000 workers and many more contractors,

teaches 240,000 students, and has a much-multiplied total economic impact.

The unelected Board of Governors is mainly made up of generationally wealthy white men in financial and real estate industries, all steadfastly loyal to the white nationalist vision of the North Carolina Republican Party. The board exercises complete institutional control over the state’s higher-level public schools.

The massive UNC schools similarly exercise significant control and influence over the cities and counties where they are located — many of these predominantly Black, Latinx and/or Indigeneous communities.

In the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNC Board decided that the lives and well-being of workers and students were unimportant. Against all recommendations, and with many alternative options, the board ordered in-person instruction would resume in the fall semester.

Safe Jobs Save Lives campaign

Fortunately, before the school reopening, the ambitious Safe Jobs Save Lives Campaign of the Southern Workers Assembly was raised up in the UNC System by the North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, United Electrical Workers Local 150 (UE150), along with community groups and the N.C. chapter of the American Association of University Professors. AAUP is the professional association that operates as a union at the college level. This is particularly useful for education workers in states with “right-to-work-for-less,” Jim Crow-era laws that ban public sector worker collective bargaining.



PHOTO: UE150

UE 150 organized an action at North Carolina State University in Raleigh on Aug. 6. NCSU, the only UNC System school larger than UNC-Chapel Hill, also reopened for in-person classes on Aug. 10.

For months the campaign put out a vision for a safer UNC: safer conditions on the job for essential workers, from hazard pay to personal protective equipment; solidarity with international workers who are under threat from Immigration and Customs Enforcement as well as COVID-19; and demands for students, instructors and communities to move instruction online and open campuses only when safely possible.

No stranger to the struggle with the UNC System, UE has fought austerity programs that have harmed education workers and their universities for years. To its credit, UE won a \$15 minimum wage for state workers in 2017.

UE workers predicted both the current spread of COVID-19 on campus and the administration’s complicity in that. On July 17, UE hosted a Town Hall for workers and student organizers throughout the UNC System.

UNC groundskeeper David Branagn said: “One thing that struck me is that no one seemed to be paying any attention

to the increased vulnerabilities of our housekeepers, our Black workers, especially Black women, our Latinx workers and Asian workers. ... That is absolutely immoral.”

Said Lakisha Morgan, UE 150 member and housekeeper at North Carolina State University: “There needs to be some sort of initiative taken where we can understand what’s going to work. There should never be a situation where someone wakes up to the news that there is a COVID-19 outbreak in their workplace. That’s unacceptable.”

After the Town Hall, UE followed up with direct actions around the state, including during dormitory move-ins, marches on the administration and petition deliveries. Now a class action lawsuit is underway.

Germany Alston, UE150 steward and housekeeper at UNC-CH, is the lead plaintiff: “We bring UNC the concerns, and the administrators say they’re going to fix it, but nothing ever comes of it. It gets swept under the rug. Workers are scared to complain about what’s going to happen to their health. UNC doesn’t care about us; they just want us to be here to work. It’s wrong. UNC doesn’t care about us, but we are here helping them out, and we could put our families in jeopardy. Something needs to be done.”

It will be sometime before the suit is resolved, and labor law is stacked against workers in the state. Meanwhile, UE and workers are rising to the challenge to defend themselves and their community.

All around North Carolina, workers united are saying, “Safe Jobs Save Lives!” □

COMPLEXITIES OF THE KAN

Rebellion and counterinsurgency

By Makasi Motema

“[T]here were two or three years there where the movement went a little too far toward ... [Kwame Ture], but in the end, John Lewis prevailed.”

Those words were spoken at Rep. John Lewis’ funeral on July 30 by former President Bill Clinton, one of the architects of the 1994 crime bill and the former leader of the most violent imperialist country on earth.

His comments were a pointed attempt by a white servant of capital to dampen the revolutionary fervor of a new movement for racial and economic justice. He said this because, as in 1966, we again stand at an inflection point in history. We are yet again faced with a similar choice between Ture and Lewis. And yet again, the capitalists who seek to police the Black struggle are terrified that the masses will embrace the justified rage that has ebbed and flowed for centuries and transform that rebellious tide into a revolutionary flood. The ruling class is afraid, but what can they do?

Police brutality is a favored option. The police are the frontline guards of the capitalist ruling class, and as we have seen since a countrywide uprising was sparked by the lynching of George Floyd, they are always the first to step forward and use force against the most oppressed segments of the working class. But the police don’t actually stop an uprising with force; they stop it with fear.

In any mass demonstration, the police are always wildly outnumbered. Even with their protective gear and crowd-suppressing weaponry, any suitably motivated grouping of rebels could easily overwhelm the police so long as they had the confidence to do so. That’s why the police use fear to rob the masses of their confidence. The police make brief, but spectacular displays of violence to shock and dishearten the masses. When the people hesitate, the police rush forward. When the people scatter, the police have won.

But demonstrators in Minneapolis, Portland, Ore., Brooklyn, N.Y., and numerous other cities have gone off-script. The sacking of the Minneapolis 3rd Precinct was startling evidence that the masses were losing their fear and the police were losing ground. But the capitalist ruling class has developed other tactics for maintaining oppression. Overseas, through the predatory wars of exploitation in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, the imperialists have developed a theory for dealing with rebellions (which they refer to as “insurgencies”). Their counterinsurgency tactics rely on developing an attitude among the oppressed population of passive tolerance of imperial occupation.

To put down a rebellion

The imperialist tactics sharpened abroad have made their way home to control the oppressed peoples within the borders of the U.S. The chief goal of counterinsurgency doctrine is to manipulate public opinion and to channel the rage of the masses into outlets which do not threaten the established systems of exploitation. This requires an army of on-the-ground organizers, nongovernmental organizations and religious leaders — all ideally members of the oppressed communities themselves — who can show up at any demonstration or

organizing meeting to redirect and misdirect the activities of those who are new to the struggle.

This manipulation extends also to a total saturation of the media. Prior to the George Floyd-inspired uprising, the capitalist press treated the Black Lives Matter movement as an inconvenient sideshow, suppressing their demands whenever possible. But when the movement bared its teeth, the press immediately fell in line, full-throatedly declaring that “Black Lives Matter” and that all people of conscience should support nonviolent protesters. That caveat, of course, is key.

In the capitalist press, the words “non-violent” and “protester” are always seen together. The use of this formulation is yet another tool of the ruling class to sow division, to seemingly show support for the movement — and thereby give hope to those who might believe negotiation with the state is still possible — while condemning those who defend themselves from the violence of the police.

Why Kamala Harris?

Amidst an uncontrollable mass movement that explicitly condemns law enforcement, it might seem to be a polit-

and the absolute desperation of the ruling class to undermine the Bernie Sanders campaign.

Compounding Biden’s intellectual inadequacy with his repeated signals that he will be a one-term president — along with the need for a competent leader to suppress the masses — the selection of his VP is of the utmost importance. Make no mistake: Should Biden win in November, Kamala Harris will be, after Dick Cheney, the most powerful vice president in the last hundred years.

Kamala Harris is a key player in the ruling class’s strategy to maintain the capitalist order during a monumental Black uprising. Imagine for a moment if she were white. Imagine if she were a man. What would the reaction of the masses be to the selection of a 55-year-old white male prosecutor for the second highest office in the country?

There would be no doubt that such a candidate was put in place as a direct check on the newfound power of the masses. In such a situation, it would be clear that the selection of a prosecutor was a signal that the ruling class sought to bring down the hammer of the U.S. legal system in order to smash the rebellion.

The imperialist tactics sharpened abroad have made their way home to control the oppressed peoples within the borders of the U.S. The chief goal of counterinsurgency doctrine is to manipulate public opinion and to channel the rage of the masses into outlets which do not threaten the established systems of exploitation. This requires an army of on-the-ground organizers, nongovernmental organizations and religious leaders — all ideally members of the oppressed communities themselves — who can show up at any demonstration or organizing meeting to redirect and misdirect the activities of those who are new to the struggle.

ical blunder for a presidential candidate to select a former prosecutor and state attorney general as their vice presidential nominee, especially one with a record as ruthlessly carceral as Harris’.

But Joe Biden is a leading servant of the capitalist ruling class and his first goal is not winning the election, but doing his masters’ bidding. To defeat a movement such as ours will require a heavy-handed response from law enforcement — not just the police, but local and federal law enforcement. For that, Harris’ experience makes her perfectly suited for the role of vice president.

It would be an error to view the Harris nomination as meaningless because of the usually ceremonial role played by the U.S. vice president. Joe Biden is an incompetent fool with a record of blatant plagiarism, outrageously inappropriate off-the-cuff comments and two embarrassingly disastrous presidential runs.

He exists where he is now due to white privilege, an unflinching willingness to serve the interests of the war industry and credit card companies, an easy smile,

That is why Kamala Harris is so perfectly cast. And we should be clear that a capitalist election is nothing more than a casting call for potential administrators of the capitalist machine. To have an experienced, intelligent and ruthless prosecutor like Kamala Harris, who is also Black, South Asian, a woman and the daughter of migrant parents, is a huge boon to the capitalists.

Harris’ representation of oppressed groups acts as a scalpel, surgically carving divisions within the working class. The capitalists have no shame in playing on the hopes of oppressed people who, seeing someone like them reach the heights of power, might dare to hope that their oppression would soon be alleviated. The cynical ruling class knows this. They know that having a woman of color as the administrator of capitalist exploitation will cause confusion and hesitation among the masses, that it might convince some to wait or negotiate or give the benefit of the doubt to a system that does not deserve it. This was true with President Barack Obama.

But regardless of who operates the



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Makasi Motema speaking on Nov. 16, 2019, in NYC.

exploitative U.S. capitalist system, it is primarily a racist, patriarchal system of exploitation. A system that destroys the lives of people of color for profit. A system that underpays women and gender-oppressed people and denies them bodily autonomy to increase stock prices. A system that has, and always will, worked for the benefit of wealthy white men. This is the true face of the machine. Kamala Harris is merely the brutal machinery of state repression clad in blackface.

The law as warfare

Napoleon Bonaparte advised rulers to hide their iron hand in a velvet glove. When Trump came into office, he brought with him the vile neo-Confederate Jeff Sessions as attorney general. Sessions tirelessly dismantled the meager and wholly inadequate protections established by the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Sessions’ only goal was to remake the Department of Justice into an iron hand with which to swat the movement for Black Liberation. Anyone who believes Harris will attempt to undermine Sessions’ work will be sorely disappointed. She will instead act as a velvet glove, covering the repressive innovations of the Trump administration with a soft veil of legitimacy.

Harris will no doubt make a show of publicly putting the most egregiously violent police departments under toothless consent decrees — as the Obama administration did before her. But she will also quietly use her years of experience in tossing human beings into cages to further develop the means by which both state and local prosecutors can harass, contain and destroy Black radicals. We’ve already seen absurd, draconian prosecutions leveled at demonstrators. We can only expect this to continue under the stewardship of a veteran prosecutor.

Counterinsurgency means division

As Bill Clinton revealed, the ruling class is afraid. They are looking to Kamala Harris as their last hope. They believe that the masses can be fooled into curbing their resistance because a member of an oppressed class and group has been allowed to wield the tools of oppression. This strategy failed under President Obama, and it will fail again if Vice President Harris is elected.

The Black Lives Matter movement was born under the Obama administration. It was born because the oppressed masses understood that the race of the president had no material impact on the violent exploitation they faced everyday in their communities. The oppressed masses also understand, more and more each day, that their power comes from their numbers, and any attempt to divide them must be dismissed out of hand. Kamala Harris can’t stop the rebellion, no more than you can stop the tide from coming in. □

KAMALA HARRIS NOMINATION

A view from a South Asian revolutionary

By Tania Siddiqi

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden announced on Aug. 11 that California Sen. Kamala Devi Harris, the first South Asian American and the second African American woman to serve as a U.S. senator, will be his running mate for the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

Harris is now the first Black woman, the first South Asian American woman and the first graduate of a Historically Black College or University to join a major party's presidential ticket.

For many people of South Asian descent, Harris' nomination has been met with celebration and excitement. In particular, this monumental decision has led some South Asians to feel they are being seen and represented for the first time.

While communities of color, in general, may share enthusiasm about her nomination, it is imperative that we critically assess her views throughout her political career, create a framework on how to discuss Harris' nomination and consider the much larger question: "How does Harris' nomination influence the ongoing uprising against systemic racism?"

Harris' actions as a prosecutor demonstrated her dedication to the punishment bureaucracy and the prison-industrial complex. As a district attorney in San Francisco, Harris pushed for legislation that supported state-sponsored kidnappings and imprisonment of poor Black parents whose children were deemed truant.

In 2014, she argued against the early release of prisoners, because many of them held prison jobs and the prisons would lose an "important labor pool." (Los Angeles Times, Nov. 14, 2014) Most notably, she has exerted efforts to uphold wrongful convictions and keep innocent

people confined to human cages. (New York Times, Jan. 17, 2019)

Like fellow punishment bureaucrat Joe Biden, Harris' "tough-on-crime" stance strengthened her political capital and helped her secure the Democratic Party's nomination for vice president.

If Harris' actions have created so much harm in communities of color, why do we have to be careful and thoughtful when discussing her nomination? The answer lies in her identity and position in society.

National identity and gender

Harris — the daughter of a Jamaican father and an Indian mother — comes from a migrant background. Therefore her nomination is viewed as an oppositional stance to toxic, anti-im/migrant policies proposed during the Trump administration and his campaign for reelection. This, in large part, is true.

One day after Biden announced Harris's nomination, Newsweek published an op-ed arguing that she does not meet the citizenship requirement necessary to serve as vice president. (Aug. 14)

Although Trump used the same anti-immigrant discourse during Obama's presidential campaign, Harris' position as a woman of color means that she also has to deal with gender-based derogatory rhetoric. Indeed, Trump has already called Harris "nasty," a "madwoman" and "angry." (U.S. News, Aug. 14)

As the election proceeds, Harris will face racist, sexist and xenophobic rhetoric, similar to what First Lady Michelle Obama and Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., have experienced. Therefore, it is important that we do not reproduce toxic rhetoric spewed toward Black women or any woman of color. Moreover, Harris' identity as an Indian American adds complexity in discussing her nomination.

While many South Asians have displayed support for Sen. Harris, unhealed generational wounds stemming from British imperialism and the Partition of India in 1947 persist in the subcontinent and for the descendants of colonized people.

While gathering sources for this article, I came across a picture of Biden and Harris accompanied by dehumanizing Facebook comments attacking Harris' assumed caste.

One person wrote that "[Harris] is a Brahman who considers themselves top class [sic] of India, Muslims to them are lower than lower class," and claimed the person responsible for the post was trying to replace Trump with someone equally as hateful.

Another person on Facebook referred to the people in the photo as "Biden and his B--ch." As South Asians, we must keep in mind that anti-Black racism is very much present in our communities. Moreover, some of our community members still find it perfectly acceptable to throw horrendous comments at those who do not share our religious, ethnic or national identity.

Instead of using Harris' nomination to reestablish tension and hostility that emerged during British imperialism, South Asians should focus on addressing racism and xenophobia present in our community, especially during the ongoing uprising to end white supremacist violence against all communities of color.

Kamala Harris' nomination is full of contradictions. However, everyone must keep in mind that Harris is a woman of color and deserves safety and protection. Moreover, we must consider what her nomination means in the context of the current uprising. Did voting someone into office sway the Supreme Court to



Tania Siddiqi

maintain protections for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipients or extend employment safeguards to LGBTQ2S+ plus workers?

No, the people's efforts in the streets put pressure on the court to rule in the people's favor. Voting for either the Democratic or the Republican party will not bring about liberation to our class. We know that revolutionary change will not come from those who maintain the current system in place.

Instead, our collective vision, work and commitment to the working-class struggle are our tools to dismantle the oppressor's power. Our focus must remain on building class consciousness to build a workers' world.

Tania Siddiqi is a Muslim womxn of South Asian descent. Her parents migrated from Pakistan to the U.S. Her grandparents on both her mother's and father's side migrated from India to Pakistan during the Partition of India in 1947.

The Democratic Party and the national question

By Monica Moorehead

With the Aug. 11 announcement of California Sen. Kamala Harris' nomination for the Democratic Party's vice presidential candidate, WW is reprinting excerpts from the July 25, 2019, article, "A revolutionary understanding of the national question — In defense of the squad." (workers.org/2019/08/43256)

In response to Trump's xenophobic attack on Harris, New York City Congressional Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez stated in an Aug. 13 tweet: "White supremacy is a belief system based on



Monica Moorehead at Free Palestine demonstration, November 2014.

the idea that ppl of color, esp Black ppl, are fundamentally illegitimate as equal citizens or human beings. Calling into question the citizenship of elected officials of color, esp when the answer is obvious, is one way it manifests." The Joe Biden-Kamala Harris nomination is an attempt to resuscitate the Democratic Party in the eyes of the masses.

This talk will not give a blow-by-blow account of all the attacks that racist Trump has made against the four progressive congresswomen of color — Reps. Ilhan Omar, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ayanna Pressley and Rashida Tlaib — known as "The Squad."

But these four congresspeople symbolically represent the global working class, despite their political affiliation and loyalty to the Democratic Party. The fact that their respective nationalities — Somali, Puerto Rican, Black and Palestinian — represent millions of oppressed peoples globally is an inspiration to the movement for revolutionary change.

In the end, these racist attacks are not isolated from attacks on the global working class, which include workers and oppressed of all nationalities and oppressed genders and gender

expressions who are super-exploited and super-oppressed by the same bosses and bankers.

Whatever form the struggle against racism may take — in a bourgeois arena like electoral politics or outside that arena — as revolutionary socialists we must be prepared to take on the fight against racism whenever and however it rears its ugly head. This is because of the historical, theoretical and practical significance of the national question and its relationship to the class struggle.

National oppression as a theoretical, practical concept

National oppression is a concept that Vladimir Lenin expounded in "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism." He explained that nations of peoples — be they of African descent, Latinx, Indigenous, Arab, etc. — are super-exploited, along with the resources of their homelands, by the richest capitalist countries. This expands the wealth

and territory of the small class of billionaires who own the banks and corporations. This is how the world is divided into oppressed nations and oppressor nations.

As a young Black woman raised in the apartheid South, I was radicalized by the struggle to smash white supremacy during the era of the Black Panther Party and the Attica prison rebellion (1966-71). However, it was the unwavering theoretical position of Workers World Party Chairperson Sam Marcy regarding the defense of

oppressed nations as central to class unity that won me to revolutionary Marxism.

Marcy wrote the article titled "The right of self-determination and the class struggle" in November 1983. He said, "Of all the great domestic political problems facing the working class and the oppressed people, none surpasses in importance the relationship of national oppression to the class struggle. Indeed, one may say that it is at the heart of the basic social problem

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The Joe Biden–Kamala Harris nomination is an attempt to resuscitate the Democratic Party in the eyes of the masses.

Biden won't save us

Keep it in the streets!

By Nathaniel Chase

As the November election approaches, pressure will mount on revolutionary organizations within the U.S. to fall in line with the Democratic Party and endorse Joe Biden.

The argument often made is that a Democratic president is needed to counter reactionary policies put in place by the Republicans.

Does this claim hold up to scrutiny? If Joe Biden is elected, can we expect him to reverse Trump's reactionary, white supremacist policies? Let's examine Biden's own record, as well as the record of the past two Democratic administrations, to see if this is a reasonable expectation.

Deportations

People across the U.S. are outraged by the daily crimes against humanity committed by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Border Patrol under Trump. Can we expect Biden to halt or even slow down the detention and deportation machine? His record and recent remarks say otherwise.

From 2009 to 2017, while Biden was Barack Obama's vice president, the U.S. deported more than 2.5 million undocumented migrants, more than during the entire 20th century. (abcnews.com, Aug. 29, 2016) Last November at an event in Greenwood, S.C., a former undocumented migrant challenged Biden about his record of deportations. Biden's response? "Vote for Trump."

Black Lives Matter, police brutality and mass incarceration

Unprecedented Black Lives Matter protests and rebellions rocked the country in the wake of the Minneapolis police murder of George Floyd. While many revolutionary forces, including Workers World Party, advocate abolition of the police, the more mild demand to defund the police has gained wide circulation, even among moderate forces. Biden made his position clear in a June 10 opinion piece in USA Today: "I do not support defunding the police."

Trump has deployed federal agents to a number of cities in response to the protests, a move widely decried as a step toward a police state. Biden has engaged in a bit of doublespeak, opposing the deployment while also saying "anarchists

should be prosecuted." This statement criminalizes people for holding a particular political perspective, and offers a way for the ruling class to target its opponents as "anarchist" and arrest them. While condemning Trump, Biden actually endorses the principle of Trump's policy.

Bill Clinton was elected president in 1992 after 12 years of Republicans Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. Under Reagan's greatly expanded racist "war on drugs," mass incarceration grew by nearly half a million, the majority Black, Brown and/or Indigenous. This trend continued under George H.W. Bush.

When Democrat Bill Clinton took office, the incarcerated population grew by an incredible 650,200, the largest increase in U.S. history. A major force behind this was the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, the Democrats' attempt to meet and exceed the Republican Party's "tough-on-crime" image. None other than Sen. Joe Biden took the lead in drafting the bill.

While working and oppressed people are out in the streets as never before, the Democratic Party has chosen to put forward a senator who oversaw the greatest incarceration of Black people since the Civil War, with a prosecutor — Kamala Harris — as his running mate. Can such a ticket be expected to listen to those in the streets — or to repress them?

Welfare

Trump and the Republican Party's decision not to extend the federal \$600/week unemployment benefits, despite record joblessness resulting from their failed response to the COVID-19 pandemic, is an appalling act of cruelty.

Biden has not demanded resumption of the \$600/week benefit. Instead he's offering a vague program of "employment insurance." Nor has he pushed for undocumented migrants to receive benefits.

This refusal to stand firmly behind direct cash payments to address poverty is not new for Democratic presidents. While Republican Ronald Reagan rode the racist myth of the "welfare queen" to the presidency, Democratic President Bill Clinton actually dismantled Aid to Families with Dependent Children in 1996. In its place was the meager Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (emphasis on "temporary"). Senator Biden voted for this reactionary "welfare reform" and has avoided standing

behind or disowning that vote ever since. (nbcnews.com, Feb. 10)

War

Examples of Trump's militarism are too numerous to count, but a selection should include: saber-rattling at Iran, including the drone assassination of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani; a trade war and escalating tension with China; an attempted coup and debilitating sanctions on Venezuela; rejection of Iraq's demand that U.S. troops be withdrawn; major increases in the military budget; support for the genocidal Saudi blockade of Yemen and the Israeli genocide of Palestinians; and sanctions and threats of military force against People's Korea.

Will Biden take a different course?

He has actually criticized Trump for being "too soft" on China and People's Korea. He supported the 2003 invasion of Iraq, sanctions on Iran, U.S. coup attempts and sanctions against Venezuela, and is a long-time promoter of Israel.

This similarity between the two main capitalist parties is not new. George H.W. Bush presided over the 1990 U.S. invasion of Iraq, but Clinton, with Biden's support, then continued a brutal regime of sanctions that led to the deaths of more than 500,000 Iraqi children. Democratic Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said the deaths were "worth it."

Similarly, the Obama/Biden administration continued the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, backtracked on a campaign promise to close Guantanamo Bay, began a \$1 trillion modernization of the U.S. nuclear weapon arsenal, and carried out coups in Honduras and Libya, creating migration crises that continue to this day.

Health care

An unprecedented global public health crisis has already killed over 160,000 people in the U.S., with millions of workers laid off so they no longer receive irrational employer-based health insurance. Supporting Medicare for All seems like a no-brainer. An April poll showed 69% of registered voters support it. (Newsweek, April 24)

But Biden stands with Trump and the insurance industry and rejects this basic step to improve universal health



care access. In the face of that position, anything Biden suggests in response to COVID-19 will ring hollow.

Misogyny

Deep disgust at Trump's blatant misogyny and admitted serial sexual abuse of women ignited one of the largest days of demonstrations in U.S. history: the 2017 Women's March.

But what about Biden? Numerous women have accused him of sexual assault and inappropriate behavior. Denying allegations by Tara Reade, a staffer in Biden's office in the early 1990s, he responded: "If they believe Tara Reade, they probably shouldn't vote for me."

Social Security

If reelected, Trump has promised to end the payroll tax responsible for a major share of Social Security's funding. (americanprogress.org, Aug. 12)

Will Biden protect this crucial program? He has repeatedly advocated cutting Social Security since the 1980s, as detailed in a Jan. 13 piece in The Intercept.

Biden tells on himself

At a posh Manhattan fundraiser in June, Biden summed up what to expect from his presidency: "Nothing would fundamentally change." He had kind words for Sen. James Eastland of Mississippi, who called Black people "an inferior race." But the sheer grotesqueness of Trump's white supremacist rhetoric and policies will make many feel that they must vote for Biden, regardless of his record. In any case, the ever-worsening crisis of U.S. imperialism will not be addressed in the voting booth on November 3.

The loyalty of the Democratic Party is to the ruling class. Working and oppressed people can rely only on ourselves, armed with our dual weapons of solidarity and organization, to counter the move to the right and defeat this horrifically rotten, racist, misogynist, ableist, homophobic, transphobic system. That will remain the case whether a capitalist donkey or a capitalist elephant walks into the White House in January. □

The Democratic Party and the national question

Continued from page 7

in the United States. It touches every form of social existence, and no sector of society is free from it.

"For Marxists in particular it is the acid test of the correctness of their general political program. It is also a test of the revolutionary integrity of the party, in particular as this is manifested in day to day practical application. Probably nowhere else is theory so severely tested by practice as in the field of the national question."

Marcy's emphasis on socialists putting their theoretical understanding of the national question into practical application is critical, because to fail to do so does more harm to prosecuting the class struggle. Marcy timed the writing of the 1983 article to meet the acid test of the first presidential campaign of the Civil Rights leader,

the Rev. Jesse Jackson. His campaign was challenging the racism of the Democratic Party leadership, the Democratic National Committee, notwithstanding that the mass base of that party has many Black and Brown people, then and now.

For Workers World Party, we viewed the significance of the Jackson campaign beyond its form within the Democratic Party organization. In its essence, the Jackson campaign was a catalyst for Black and other oppressed nationalities to complete the unfinished bourgeois democratic revolution by extending and winning full social rights for Black people and other disenfranchised sectors of our class.

The Squad and the struggle against national oppression

While we all know that the Democratic Party is as much a party of big business,

war and racism as the Republican Party, The Squad's politics in general are to the left of the party they belong to.

These congresspeople defend the rights of migrants, including calling for abolishing Immigration and Customs Enforcement and closing down the detention centers, uplifting the rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland, supporting Medicare for all, deploring Trump's attempts to cut over 3 million more people off the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and generally support Black Lives Matter and more.

But the Democratic Party leadership fears a mass mobilization in the streets that would become more independent, move more and more to the left and be driven to militancy.

We must continue to defend The Squad — or any other prominent figures,

politicians or not, attacked by racists. We must also continue to distinguish that defense from any endorsement of the two major bourgeois parties, which will do and say anything to occupy the White House, Congress and other capitalist institutions that administer class rule.

We must continue to organize and unite to shut down the camps, to shut down mass incarceration, to shut down police brutality, to shut down all forms of white supremacy. This can all lead to a complete shutdown of capitalism — toward realizing a socialist future. Build international solidarity! Build a Workers World!

Moorehead was the 2016 presidential candidate for Workers World Party.

Prisoners' lives matter!

'Inmates cannot social distance'



By Makini Iyapo

This edited talk was given at an Aug. 13 Workers World Party webinar, "From Black August to Black Lives Matter," hosted by the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of WWP.

I am so honored to be here, in the company of people of like minds. I feel rejuvenated and encouraged to be a part of this.

Never Forget, Never Again, Never Alone is an organization I founded in 2000 as a result of a conversation with my husband. He was in Pelican Bay, arriving in 1989. He was released from SHU [Security Housing Unit] there in 2015. [Inmates in Pelican Bay SHU spend 22.5 hours daily in windowless cells — it is a notorious supermax prison in the U.S.]

It's been such a challenging transition for him. It's like peeling back an onion, because they've been so traumatized. He slept on the floor, [suffering] from sleep deprivation and traumatic events that I can't even name.

We just rallied to get the word out for Black August. We commemorate Black August. We don't celebrate it, because Black August acknowledges our fallen comrades — brothers and sisters who gave their lives — comrade George [Jackson], Khatari Gaulden, Sister Adama [Traoré].

Black August: a time to commemorate and educate

Cell Blocks 2 City Blocks is an organization started by a brother who passed away last year. He got out about three years ago. He reached back to support the brothers, and [he] reached out to college Black Student Unions and young people to get them involved and open up their eyes to what was going on behind prison walls.

Cell Blocks 2 City Blocks was in the community and contributing to the community by creating jobs, creating organizations, helping them to access resources that they otherwise would not have known.

[Another organization is] KAGE Universal, started by Minister King X. He combines music, art, bringing out and highlighting the work of so many talented

brothers and sisters behind those enemy walls; doing concerts, getting art shows and helping them get resources so their voices can be heard.

The KAGE Universal [work] involves the youth, because we understand that the whole prison-industrial complex has a pipeline created to bring our babies in there. It happens in the elementary schools, when they start saying "You have a disciplinary problem; you have a learning issue." They are making a way to bring foster children into this pipeline.

A lot of brothers and sisters do time, but don't reach out to their family and tell them, "I've been in SHU all these years, and I've been subjected to this."

"The community loves them, misses them, wants them home."

They're prideful; they're men; they're women. They're strong, and they don't want to worry their family. They don't want to be a burden.

We know that the community loves them, misses them, wants them home. We are trying to get the word out to the community. We all see them and know that everybody

deserves a second chance.

The Black August Organizing Committee [which I'm on] is working to bring awareness of Black August every day. Black August is a time to commemorate, but we also educate. We're trying to heal in the midst of all this going on. We want to heal. We are loving, caring men and women. And we want to continue to elevate and raise awareness to that.

This particular year, when my husband is on the mainline [general prison population], is mind blowing. Not only has he been incarcerated all this time, but he's locked up more now than he was. When he was in SHU and trying to just navigate that and keep his spirits and encouragement [up was one thing] — now we find

ourselves in this pandemic.

Inmates not able to social distance

In California, we started having these conversations in March about if it gets inside the prisons, that's going to be a petri dish. It's going to spread. Now it is widespread. Gov. [Gavin] Newsom and Secretary of the California Department of Corrections Ralph Diaz said that they would not be transferring [people]; they would practice social distancing. They did not hold true to the statement that they gave.

They've transferred prisoners from Chino to San Quentin. Now they have 25 deaths, including eight staff. There is an outbreak in Folsom, [after] one of the guards there went to San Quentin to help, when their pandemic became overwhelming. Now they've taken that back to Folsom.

They have [prisoners] in tents in Folsom. They had eight people [positive] on Friday [Aug. 7]. I spoke to a brother today — now they have 100 people [positive] out there. They don't even have a physician on staff. They have porta-potties that don't flush. At what point is any of this considered inhumane?

What do we have to do to bring awareness and stop this? Incarcerated people's lives matter, and we can no longer accept this. We are trying to organize nationwide, because this is happening throughout Texas, Florida, New York. It's happening everywhere where there's no regard.

The inmates are not able to social distance. They don't have enough of the hand sanitizers and things to be able to comply with what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said helps decrease the spread. Their masks [are from] old jumpsuits that they've made. But staff walk around and don't comply.

[There was] the raid at Soledad. Not only [guards] pulled them out of their beds at 3 a.m., they didn't allow them to get dressed. [Guards] didn't allow [prisoners] to get their masks and they made racial slurs, like they hope all those "n---rs" got the COVID-19 virus. Well, guess what? Now there are 12 positive cases.

Numbers are continuing to climb [at



Soledad], because they're not even treating them. When people are complaining about how they're not feeling well, the nurses — who they are having language barriers with, so they can't really communicate — tell them that they'll be okay. They're young; it's all in their minds.

At what point is enough, enough? Their lives matter. From a capitalistic perspective, we are taxpayers, and we have to make the states of California, of Texas, of New York, all of them, take notice and acknowledge us and know that our lives matter — that they are our husbands, brothers.

From the MOVE people, I'm so excited that finally, after all these years, and after all of the tragedy and losses, they've all been released. This meeting is so inspiring to me to know that there are people out here who do know we are no longer going to stand for this. We are going to put our foot down. We have to inconvenience them. We have to let them know that this is no longer acceptable.

We have to continue to fight to raise awareness to get the word out, to be informed and network. I'm so excited and proud and thankful to have been included in this conversation. We are just going to continue to bring the awareness, network and be prayerful.



Makini Iyapo has a long history of involvement in the prisoners' rights movement in California. At the webinar she represented Never Forget, Never Again, Never Alone; California Prison Focus/KAGE Universal; From Cell Blocks 2 City Blocks; and the Black August Organizing Committee. She is the spouse of a prisoner who has been incarcerated for 45 years.

Stop the racist attacks!

Black Incarcerated Lives Matter!

California statewide action

August 22nd 11 am PST

at Soledad State Prison (CTF)

FOLLOW US!
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COMMITTEE OF WWP

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TEAR DOWN THE WALLS



Democrats vs. Republicans: Which party really CARES?

While the corporate media focus public attention on the imminent opening of the Democratic and Republican Party conventions and the electoral contest, another battle matters much more to tens of millions of people still out of work: the failure of Congress to pass a third stimulus bill.

The provisions of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), which was passed in March, expired July 31. Despite its drawbacks for undocumented and gig workers, CARES provided incomes for tens of millions of unemployed workers and kept the economy afloat. Now the economy is sinking.

At the same time, Trump has cut the federal supplement to jobless benefits by executive order from \$600 to \$300, with, at best, another \$100 from the state, and reduced the number of people eligible.

To eat and to house themselves and their families, workers will have to gamble on jobs where they risk exposure to COVID-19. This is unacceptable.

House Democrats passed the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act (HEROES Act) in mid-May. It extends the CARES unemployment benefits through January (March for gig workers), and this time includes benefits for undocumented workers. Money is also provided so states can hire workers to maintain infrastructure.

It continues the moratorium on evictions for another 12 months. Its total cost is more than \$3.4 trillion.

The Senate Republicans' Health, Economic Assistance, Liability Protection and Schools (HEALS) bill offers far less, slashing federal jobless supplements while offering a \$450 "bonus" to workers who find new jobs — essentially bribing them to risk their health. Its total cost would be about \$1.1 trillion.

While any concession to the reactionary Senate and Trump is a crime against the working class, it's apparent no compromise will be reached until summer recess ends on Sept. 8, at the very earliest.

In the meantime, millions face no jobs, loss of shelter, utility shutoffs, food "insecurity" — hunger — lack of health insurance and health care during the ongoing COVID-19 emergency, school reopenings, no money for school supplies and much more.

Systemic horrors such as poverty, mass incarceration, deportations, caging of im/migrants, racist police violence, anti-LGBTQ2S+ and sexist oppression, Islamophobia and ableism persist, including in cities and states under Democratic Party leadership.

The mass suffering occurring under Trump, and the callous eagerness to slash relief by the Republican-majority Senate,

may result in Republicans being booted out in November. But the best that workers, especially the most oppressed, can expect is some mitigation of the crisis and the loss of center stage by a pro-fascist president.

While both the Democrats and Republicans serve the same imperialist ruling class, it's a mistake to say "there's no difference between the two parties." **But the working class, the class that through their labor creates all value in society, deserves more than partial relief from oppression and exploitation.**

'To each according to their needs'

In "Critique of the Gotha Program," written in 1875, Karl Marx raised the famous slogan "from each according to [their] ability, to each according to [their] needs." He explained that this could be achieved, after a period of transition from capitalism, in the final stage of communism "after the productive forces have also increased with the all-around development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly."

Back in 1875, the productive forces were far less developed than today. Factories were powered by steam, electrification was decades away, and the assembly line was yet to be invented — let alone the "high-tech revolution" and other

technological advances.

But even in 1875 Marx — still dismissed by cynics as utopian — could see the potential for shared abundance.

Now labor's productivity has advanced to levels once unimaginable. There are "workerless" factories and "driverless" vehicles. One can order nearly all basic necessities with a mouse and a keyboard or a cellphone.

Human society has the material capacity to eradicate human want. Yet no matter who gets elected, suffering persists.

What gets in the way of securing the necessities of life for every human being? It's capitalism. It's a system with a built-in contradiction: While production is social, ownership of the means of production is individual. Obscene income inequality gives a small clique of multi-billionaires more wealth than much of humanity, who live by selling their labor power and are increasingly pauperized.

Elections don't change this

Many are desperate to kick Trump/Pence out. That's understandable. But whatever happens in November, we need to stay in the class struggle. We have to fight for a planned economy organized for human needs, not profit — to make real the vision of 1875. □

U.S. cities, states look to socialist Cuba for COVID-19 help

By Betsey Piette

With the U.S. death toll from COVID-19 expected to surpass 200,000 by the end of August, governing bodies in U.S. cities and states are taking matters into their own hands. They are calling for U.S.-Cuba scientific and medical collaboration against the pandemic.

On July 21, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution for the U.S. to cooperate with Cuba against COVID-19, saying this could "save lives." (48hills.com, July 22)

Resolution sponsor Supervisor Hillary Ronen pointed out that Cuba's pharmaceutical industry has developed drugs that should be available in the U.S.: "Limiting cooperation with Cuba makes no sense." Similar resolutions have passed or been submitted in several California cities and in Massachusetts and Minnesota state legislatures.

On Aug. 7, Minnesota state senators and representatives sent a letter to Gov. Tim Walz, along with a Senate resolution and House bill advocating reaching out to Cuba. The letter noted that "[A]s the place where George Floyd was killed, we have an obligation to our people of color and

Indigenous communities to demonstrate our commitment to address the vast disparity in the impact of the pandemic on their populations. Our proposal may present one of the best opportunities to do so by recognizing and learning from a country whose medical brigades and outreach have brought assistance to the world's poorest and most disadvantaged people." (Cubadebate.cu, Aug. 12)

Sen. Sandy Pappas noted, as of July 6, that Cuba had a total of only 2,380 cases and 86 deaths. Around that time, U.S. deaths per capita were 53 times greater than Cuba's. As of Aug. 16, U.S. deaths are over 80 times greater.

Pappas, who has taken three delegations to Cuba, acknowledged that nation's long history of providing medical assistance to other countries during epidemics like Ebola, swine flu and dengue.

As of May, over 50 countries have requested and received assistance from Cuba to combat the virus, and over 80 countries have requested Cuban pharmaceutical products, including interferon, proven to successfully mitigate the impact of the coronavirus. Cuba has sent more than 2,000 doctors and nurses to 23 countries in Europe, Latin America,

Africa and the Middle East since the pandemic began. (The Nation, May 22)

The Trump administration has refused to lift the U.S. blockade of Cuba and allow interferon or other Cuban-made drugs to be sold or tested in the U.S. In 2005, Cuba offered to send 1,600 medics, field hospitals and 83 tons of medical supplies to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina decimated the city. U.S. President George W. Bush rejected the aid. After Hurricane Maria in 2017, President Trump rejected

Cuba's offer to send doctors and humanitarian aid to Puerto Rico.

In April, Josefina Vidal, Cuba's Ambassador to Canada, stated: "[I]f the current United States government asks for assistance to confront COVID-19, Cuba would provide it. Cuba advocates that solidarity, the need to put aside political and ideological differences between countries and cooperation among all, is the only way to overcome this pandemic." (The Progressive, April 30) □



In 2007 the first medical students from the U.S. to graduate from the Latin American School of Medicine in Havana, Cuba, vow to return home to use their skills to treat poor people, in keeping with the school's socialist principles.

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/ — 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!!

U.S., fascists set scopes on socialist-leaning Belarus

By Otis Grotewohl

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko on his reelection Aug. 9.

U.S. imperialism and the Western bourgeois media, however, wasted no time in denouncing Lukashenko’s victory as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo used saber-rattling language against Belarus by claiming the election was not “free and fair.” (Reuters, Aug. 10)

Since the mid-1990s, U.S. imperialism has targeted the Belarus government, which has had cordial relations with other anti-imperialist governments, such as Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

Lukashenko’s main electoral opponent, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, who polled around 10% of the vote compared to Lukashenko’s 80%, refused to accept the election outcome. Her supporters and other opponents of the government from various centrist and right-wing parties, poured into the streets to denounce Lukashenko.

Shortly after protests started, demonstrators violently clashed with the police. Internet images have shown many of the demonstrators waving the anti-Communist red and white flag used by the Byelorussian Central Council, which collaborated with German Nazi occupiers from 1943 until 1944. The same flag was also flown by Belarusian counter-revolutionaries during the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

A ‘Maidan movement’?

In 2014 a NATO-sponsored coup succeeded in overthrowing Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich. Pro-Western,

anti-Semitic Ukrainian nationalists, including pro-fascist elements inside the “Maidan movement,” carried out this coup. At the time, Lukashenko warned the people of Belarus about such a movement developing there.

Today, Ukrainian fascists are openly lending their support to the Belarusian opposition movement.

Tikhanovskaya’s spouse, Sergei Tikhanovsky, initially intended to run against Lukashenko, but he was disqualified and arrested for participating in illegal, anti-government activities. Tikanovskaya became the main opposition candidate after his arrest. Corporate media reports that Tikhanovskaya fled to Lithuania on Aug. 11.

Reason for Lukashenko’s popular support

Lukashenko’s reelection was the sixth one since 1994, when he also won 80% of the popular vote. In the book “The Last Soviet Republic: Alexander Lukashenko’s Belarus,” author Stewart Parker argues that Lukashenko’s mass popularity and electoral success derive from his tight connection with the former Soviet Union. Unlike the other former Soviet Republics, Belarus displays symbolism of the former Soviet Union (USSR).

The only political party that Lukashenko ever belonged to was the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. According to Parker, “Lukashenko’s positive opinion of the USSR, as well as the preservation of Soviet national holidays and a rejection of nationalism, have all found favor with the older generation.”

Despite the capitalist counter-revolution in 1991, Belarus was able to

restore some of the socialist programs of the Soviet era. Parker points out that the first thing Lukashenko did upon election was double the minimum wage. All education is free, including higher education.

Parker adds, “Communist and socialist governments the world over have always had literacy and education programmes as core principles. Belarus has continued in this tradition. This is in stark contrast to the decline in public service spending in the other former Soviet republics.

“Maternity leave in Belarus is also extended to those who adopt babies. ... Few Belarusian pensioners will have the luxury cars or the latest computers, but they will be able to afford food, fuel and the essentials that allow them to enjoy a peaceful retirement. Belarusian life expectancy is higher than in all former Soviet states with the exception of Georgia.”

Imperialist threats to sovereignty and stability

Belarus’ government has its contradictions. While Belarus still maintains features from its socialist history as part of the Soviet Union, it lost other socialist features during and after the USSR’s collapse. The people have some legitimate grievances against Lukashenko, especially regarding his response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Taking advantage of these grievances, Washington and the Belarus opposition use problems caused by the pandemic as a pretext against Belarus’



USSR-era socialist art in Minsk, Belarus, in February 2019.

sovereignty — despite the U.S. government’s own mishandling of the pandemic crisis.

As of this writing, the opposition’s future is still hazy. What is clear, however, is that Lukashenko’s opposition welcomes support from the pro-fascist Maidan movement in Ukraine and from U.S. imperialism. This makes the Belarus opposition similar to the pro-capitalist protesters in Hong Kong, which U.S. imperialist politicians and Western white supremacists embrace.

Anti-imperialists and revolutionaries inside the U.S. must oppose any U.S. involvement in other countries’ affairs. Washington’s policies aim at instability in Belarus. Ukraine’s Maidan movement encourages a pro-fascist coup. These are both a threat to Belarus’ workers.

U.S. imperialist and fascist hands off Belarus!

The author dedicates this article to the memory of Workers World Party founder Rosemary Neidenberg (1921-2020), who requested that he analyze U.S. imperialism’s threat to Belarus.

Fidel at 94

The ideas of a revolutionary never die

WW COMMENTARY

By Teresa Gutierrez

Makasi was 16 when he first learned about Fidel Castro. As a Black Latinx youth, Makasi notes that “growing up as a Puerto Rican in the U.S., learning about Fidel showed me how someone from a small Caribbean island can challenge the most powerful and most vicious empire in the world. That’s a lesson I’ll keep with me my whole life.”

Indeed.

Fidel Castro would have been 94 this Aug. 13. Fidel and his comrades organized and led a socialist revolution in Cuba that triumphed in 1959 and freed the beautiful island from capitalism and imperialism forever.

Fidel died on Nov. 25, 2016, the same month that Trump was “elected” president of the U.S.

It is hard to fathom a world without Fidel, especially now, with the ascendancy of a white supremacist administration in power in the U.S.

But this great Marxist-Leninist revolutionary lives on, and he will forever stay in the hearts and minds of workers and oppressed people.

For those revolutionaries who had the great opportunity to visit Cuba and see and hear Fidel for themselves, it was a

once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It was like living in the time of Lenin and having the opportunity to see and hear him.

A visionary for all times

The Cuban people say that Fidel could see so far ahead that he could see around corners. That the continent of the Americas produced such a great Marxist-Leninist is a triumph for all times.

From the very early days of the revolution, Fidel demonstrated that he studied and was guided by the principles of Marx and Lenin — definitely with a Caribbean flair. For Fidel also studied the works of such Latin America revolutionaries as José Martí and Simón Bolívar.

But it was the ideas of Marx and Lenin that guided him, the Cuban Communist Party and the masses who followed their lead, and that helped seal the fate of socialist Cuba.

Fidel said in 1961: “The more we learn about imperialist policies throughout the world, the more we dig deeper and uncover the bloody claws of imperialism, the miserable exploitation ... the crimes they commit against humanity, the more ... we feel sentimentally Marxist, emotionally Marxist, the more we see and discover all the truths contained in the doctrine of Marxism. The more we have to trace the reality of a revolution and the class struggle, and we see what the class struggle

really is, in the setting of a revolution, the more convinced we become of all of the truths Marx and Engels wrote and the truly ingenious interpretations of scientific socialism Lenin made.”

This kind of deep thinking, this zest for revolutionary theory, is exactly why socialist Cuba has been able to stand up to U.S. imperialism and build socialism right under Washington’s nose.

The U.S. government under both Democratic and Republican administrations has worked nonstop to overturn the Cuban Revolution. But nothing has worked. No bombs, no biological warfare, no inhumane blockade have succeeded in overturning the Revolution.

The Cuban masses found freedom. They also know that their free health care, education and much more is still beyond the reach of their very own neighbors in Haiti or Puerto Rico, still a U.S. colony.

These gains will be fought for by Cubans to the end because Fidel Castro demanded and institutionalized that education, health care and opportunity for all would be provided for each and every Cuban. Furthermore, international solidarity — a system that sends doctors abroad and not bombs — is also deeply ingrained in the socialist project of Cuba.

There is not a single Latin American, Asian or African revolutionary who does



Fidel Castro Ruz (center) in victory.

not mourn the loss of Fidel — and also carries on his spirit. Throughout the world, and indeed here in the U.S., Fidel lives and will always live on.

In a recent article, “Happy Birthday, Fidel Castro: We’ll Forever Remember Your Solidarity with Our Struggle,” anti-apartheid fighter Ronnie Kasrils wrote that Fidel’s “life and legacy are intrinsically bound up with Africa’s destiny—earning him the undying gratitude of its peoples. In Fidel’s immortal words, after forcing the racist South African military to make its ignominious retreat from Angola after the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in 1988: ‘The history of Africa will be written as before and after Cuito Cuanavale.’” (Jacobin, Aug. 13)

Comrade Fidel contributed slogans that will live forever, such as “Victory or Death.” “Homeland or Death.” “Socialism or Death.”

And as the workers and the oppressed of the world face an unprecedented economic and social crisis, as the global COVID-19 pandemic especially obliterates people of color, the idea of fighting our oppressors to the death becomes ever more necessary and ever more desirable.

Fidel, presente para siempre! □



FAVIANNA RODRIGUES

Editorial

El virus, el PIB y el afán de lucro

“El costo de la pandemia de coronavirus en la economía de la nación se volvió enfáticamente más claro el jueves”, escribió el New York Times el 30 de julio, “cuando el gobierno detalló el colapso de tres meses más devastador registrado, que borró casi cinco años de crecimiento”.

Específicamente, el producto interno bruto, “la medida más amplia de bienes y servicios producidos”, cayó un 9,5% en el segundo trimestre de 2020, según la Oficina de Análisis Económico del Departamento de Comercio de EE.UU. Esto se traduce en una tasa anual de disminución del 32,9%, la mayor desde que la oficina comenzó a rastrear el PIB. En el primer trimestre de este año, el PIB cayó un 5%, rompiendo una racha de crecimiento de cinco años.

Otras economías capitalistas, incluidas Francia y Alemania, experimentaron un colapso similar.

El noticiero The Times quiere hacernos creer que la recesión se debió en su totalidad al coronavirus, totalmente independiente del funcionamiento orgánico del sistema capitalista. Sin embargo, la China socialista, donde se descubrió el virus por primera vez, está experimentando una fuerte recuperación económica, después de

una caída menor (6,8%) en el PIB durante el bloqueo del país en el primer trimestre.

Esto plantea preguntas que el Times claramente está evitando. Por un lado, ¿por qué las economías capitalistas son mucho más vulnerables a la presión de la pandemia? ¿Y la crisis económica se debe exclusivamente a la pandemia? ¿O está en juego aquí la sobreproducción capitalista?

Hubo signos de recesión a principios de 2020 incluso antes de que el coronavirus tuviera un impacto en la economía de Estados Unidos. Estos incluyeron un exceso de petróleo, una disminución en la actividad manufacturera y una caída en las ventas minoristas. General Motors había cerrado plantas en Michigan y Ohio, así como en Ontario, Canadá.

Lo que The Times no se atreve a decir

Cuando los trabajadores reciben un salario, solo se les compensa parcialmente por el valor que producen. Lo que Karl Marx llamó “plusvalía” se lo embolsa el patrón en forma de ganancia. Las crisis de sobreproducción (recesiones, que a menudo se convierten en depresiones) son una característica cíclica e inevitable del capitalismo. Ocurren cuando la clase

trabajadora produce más bienes y servicios de los que la clase capitalista puede vender con fines de lucro.

Las crisis de sobreproducción han causado un tremendo sufrimiento a la clase trabajadora, la única clase que crea valor, y especialmente a los más oprimidos. Ahora el capitalismo está en un callejón sin salida; los ciclos normales de “auge y caída” operan en el contexto de una crisis sistémica permanente. Hemos visto el fenómeno de la “recuperación del desempleo” a medida que se utiliza la tecnología para generar más valor con cada vez menos trabajadores.

Bajo el capitalismo, las ganancias están antes que las necesidades humanas. Incluso la atención médica, un derecho básico, está dominada por productos farmacéuticos con fines de lucro, compañías de seguros y proveedores de atención privados. No es de extrañar que el COVID-19 haya sido tan devastador en los Estados Unidos capitalistas, desde los casi 160.000 que han muerto hasta el 4 de agosto hasta las decenas de millones de desempleados y sus familias. Muchos todavía están esperando los beneficios por desempleo, que ahora se han recortado a medida que expiran las disposiciones de la Ley CARES.

La pérdida de beneficios reducirá aún más el poder adquisitivo y, con él, el PIB. No es probable que se recuperen millones de puestos de trabajo, independientemente de cuándo se desarrolle una vacuna o cuando la pandemia esté bajo control. La recesión, que se está gestando desde antes de la llegada del COVID-19, se ha transformado en una catástrofe económica además de una pesadilla de salud pública.

Pero no todo el mundo está sufriendo. Los asquerosamente ricos se están volviendo más ricos, incluidos los propietarios de Apple, Facebook, Alphabet (propietario de Google) y Microsoft. Las ganancias de Amazon se duplicaron, mientras que la compañía eliminó el “pago por riesgo” de los trabajadores.

Los portavoces capitalistas como el Times no quieren que los trabajadores vean más allá del impacto del coronavirus. Su trabajo es suprimir la verdad de clase. Pero cada vez más trabajadores y personas oprimidas se están dando cuenta de que el desempleo masivo, el impacto genocida del coronavirus, la violencia policial racista y la explotación capitalista están conectados.

¡Este sistema podrido debe ser derrocado! □

En honor a las Ligas Nacionales Negras Solo la pelota era blanca

Por Gloria Rubac

Este año, 2020, es el centenario de las Ligas Nacionales Negras. No la Liga Nacional de Grandes Ligas, sino las Ligas Nacionales Negras.

Me gustaría que conocieras a algunos de mis héroes: Cool Papa, Peach Head, Double Duty, Satch, Buck y Peanut. Incluso si eres un fanático de los deportes, es posible que no hayas oído hablar de ellos, pero si eres un fanático del béisbol, realmente necesitas conocerlos. Fueron algunos de los cientos y cientos de jugadores que jugaron béisbol profesional para las ligas de béisbol negras desde 1920 hasta 1950.

Todo el béisbol ha estado honrando este centenario, desde el Museo de Béisbol de la Liga Negra en Kansas City, Missouri, hasta las Grandes Ligas de Béisbol y la Sociedad para la Investigación del Béisbol Estadounidense. Las celebraciones del museo, junto con la celebración nacional de la MLB en todos los estadios de las Grandes Ligas programadas para el 27 de junio, tuvieron que posponerse debido a la pandemia.

Bob Kendrick, el presidente del museo, tuvo una idea al hacer limonada con el limón del coronavirus. Quería tener celebridades, dignatarios, atletas de todos los deportes y cualquier otra persona que quisiera unirse para inclinar su gorra hacia los grandes jugadores que no tuvieron la oportunidad de jugar en las Grandes Ligas hasta 1947, cuando Jackie Robinson irrumpió en MLB con los Brooklyn Dodgers.

De los cuatro ex presidentes estadounidenses vivos, la leyenda de la Asociación Nacional de Baloncesto Michael Jordan, la ex estrella del tenis Billy Jean King, los jugadores afroamericanos actuales de la MLB y el gerente de los Astros de Houston, Dusty Baker, muchos se han inclinado para rendir homenaje a los

jugadores en las ligas negras.

Si desea inclinarse, tome una foto o un video y envíelo a Photos@tippingyourcap.com y luego publique su foto o video en las redes sociales con el hashtag #TipYourCap2020. Te verás inclinando tu sombrero en tippingyourcap.com.

Progresista con las mujeres y anti-linchamiento

Muy por delante de la MLB, las ligas negras tuvieron tres jugadoras a lo largo de los años: Toni Stone, Mamie “Peanut” Johnson y Connie Morgan.

Kendrick dijo que la carrera de Stone “merece ser más que una nota a pie de página tanto en el béisbol como en la historia de Estados Unidos”. (New York Times, 11 de junio de 2019)

Además, había varias mujeres propietarias, gerentes y entrenadoras de equipos de la Liga Negra. El más conocido fue Effa Manley con los Newark Eagles. Como propietaria, Manley usó su posición para retribuir a su comunidad. Fue anfitriona de días contra los linchamientos en el estadio. Participó en piquetes y boicoteos de empresas que no contrataban afroamericanos en la década de 1930. Manley es la única mujer elegida para el Salón de la Fama del Béisbol en Cooperstown, Nueva York. Fue incluida en 2006.

La Liga Negra comenzó en 1920 porque el racismo y las leyes Jim Crow impedían que los jugadores negros jugaran en las Grandes Ligas. Habían jugado en equipos de la empresa, equipos militares y formaron sus propios equipos a partir de la década de 1880. Recorrieron en graneros diferentes ciudades y estados para encontrar competencia.

Finalmente, Rube Foster, que había jugado pelota y dirigido equipos, reunió a un grupo de dueños de equipos negros en el Paseo YMCA en Kansas City en febrero

de 1920, y se formó la primera Liga Nacional Negra.

La creación de las Ligas Negras demostró que los jugadores negros podían jugar en igualdad de condiciones con sus

contrapartes blancas y despertar el mismo interés de los fanáticos del béisbol.

La vida no fue fácil, sin embargo, con jugadores negros durmiendo en autobuses y teniendo que enviar a un jugador a la parte trasera de un restaurante para comprar comida para llevar para todo el equipo. A veces no podían bañarse durante dos o tres días debido a la segregación de los hoteles.

Eventualmente, los equipos negros jugarían partidos de exhibición contra equipos de la MLB, atrayendo a grandes multitudes y demostrando que los jugadores negros eran tan competitivos como los de los equipos blancos, y en muchos casos eran mejores.

En 1945, un jugador llamado Jackie Robinson jugaba con los Kansas City Monarchs. Fue abordado por el dueño de los Brooklyn Dodgers de la MLB y se convirtió en el primer jugador negro en firmar con un equipo de Grandes Ligas. Jugó en el equipo AAA de los Dodgers en 1946, los Royals de Montreal. En 1947 pasó a los Dodgers y el resto es historia.

Pero el Salón de la Fama del Béisbol tardaría 24 años más en incorporar a su primera estrella de la Liga Negra. Eso se produjo después de que la estrella de los Medias Rojas de Boston, Ted Williams, fuera admitido en 1966. Le dijo a la multitud en la ceremonia de inducción: “Espero que algún día los nombres de Satchel Paige y Josh Gibson puedan agregarse al símbolo de los grandes jugadores de la Liga Negra que no están aquí solo



El gran Satchel Paige

porque no se les dio la oportunidad”.

Cinco años después, el legendario lanzador, Paige fue incluido en el Salón de la Fama. Paige es recordado por su larguísima carrera

en el béisbol y sus coloridas travesuras. Comenzó a jugar en la década de 1920. Cuando llegó a las Grandes Ligas en 1948, ya tenía 42 años. Ayudó a lanzar al equipo de Cleveland a una victoria de la Serie Mundial ese año. Lanzó hasta mediados de los 60.

Luego, a fines de la temporada de 1965, los Kansas City Athletics lo contrataron para un juego. Se convirtió en el jugador de mayor edad en lanzar en un juego de Grandes Ligas a los 59 años. Lanzó tres entradas contra los Medias Rojas de Boston, permitiendo solo un hit. Entre entradas se relajaba en una mecedora.

Se dice que el béisbol es tan “americano” como el pastel de manzana. En la historia del béisbol estadounidense, el racismo también es tan “estadounidense” como el pastel de manzana. Por su valentía y determinación, y por su amor por el juego, los jugadores negros jugaron béisbol con éxito en sus propias ligas y finalmente en las ligas mayores.

Major League Baseball se ha fijado el 16 de agosto para celebrar el centenario en todos los partidos de las Grandes Ligas.

La Sociedad para la Investigación del Béisbol Estadounidense y el Centro Internacional de Béisbol Femenino están organizando una Conferencia de Mujeres en el Béisbol en septiembre y el tema de este año es Celebrar a las mujeres afroamericanas en el béisbol. Será un evento virtual al que puede registrarse en [sabr.org/women-in-baseball-conference](https://www.sabr.org/women-in-baseball-conference). □