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India’s working class unites

250 million strike!

By Martha Grevatt

For the second time this year, a class-wide mobilization in an “All-India strike” brought out 250 million workers. With one in four working-age people in India participating, this 24-hour work stoppage can again claim the status of “world’s biggest strike.” The first record-breaking general strike had taken place on Jan. 8.

Ten of India’s labor federations took part, uniting under the “joint platform.” Five states — Kerala, Puducherry, Odisha, Assam and Telangana — were completely shut down, while daily activity was curtailed in many others.

News Click, a progressive Indian news source, reported on Nov. 26: “The strike saw stoppage of work in banks, financial services, various government services, transport, steel units, port and docks, telecommunication services, plantations, power generating units, coal and other mines, oil and natural gas production units, and millions of other miscellaneous industries.”

The report continues: “Government offices, railways, post and telegraph



Women were a major force in the All-India strike, Nov. 26.

services and scores of other government offices are also likely to be affected as employees will hold solidarity demonstrations. Several [hundred thousand] women working as Anganwadi [rural childcare center] workers/helpers, health care workers, mid-day meal cooks and those employed in other government-run

schemes have also gone on strike.”

Quoting from the joint union statement, it states: “Reports of successful strikes in coal and copper mines, including other mineral resource mines, have been received. The employees of postal, telecom and steel sectors were also in action and gramín dak sevaks [rural

postal workers] observed a 100 percent strike.” (tinyurl.com/y4wsthaw)

A working-class united front

Strikers held sit-ins and mass rallies, and blocked traffic and train tracks. They burned an effigy of right-wing President Narendra Modi. There was massive participation by the unemployed, unorganized, self-employed and informal sector workers, as well as students. Women played a prominent role.

The labor federations’ joint platform put forth demands for a minimum income, food for poor families, a guaranteed number of workdays, higher wages, pensions for everyone, and the end of forced early retirements. It called for the government to stop privatizations and also withdraw all “anti-farmer laws and anti-worker labor codes.”

Additional demands emerged around a range of issues, from ending the outsourcing of work to reimposition of the 12-hour day. The provision of safety measures to stop the spread of COVID was a key issue, as India has the second-highest coronavirus infection rate in the world. (Worldometers, Nov. 29)

While 250 million workers struck, farmers from all over the country attempted to march on Delhi, the country’s capital. They are protesting a new, pro-corporate agribusiness “farm bill,” but the farmers are also in full solidarity with the workers.

Government forces blocked the farmers’ paths with barricades and barbed wire, and fired tear gas and water cannons in the bitter cold. But, anticipating government-imposed obstacles, farmers packed a variety of supplies, from food and water to cell-phone chargers. These determined farmers refused to move, breaking through blockades until they were allowed to proceed to Parliament and present their demands.

Workers World newspaper will cover more on the class struggle in India in its next issue, to be published on Dec. 10.

‘Thanksgiving’ myth busted on

51st National Day of Mourning

By Steve Gillis
Plymouth, Mass.

November 26 marked the 51st National Day of Mourning. The first was in 1970 when Aquinnah Wampanoag elder Wamsutta Frank James called Indigenous peoples and their supporters to “America’s Hometown.” The crowd joined the United American Indians of New England on Cole’s Hill in Plymouth, Mass., to expose the truth about the 400-year history of settler colonialism in this region.

Over 3,000 people participated in person or remotely. Attendees braved driving rain to proclaim: “Land Back, Now!” at the spot where the pilgrims’ “puritanical” militia posted Wampanoag leader Metacomb’s head on a pike in 1676 and left it there for 25 years to terrorize the population.

Kisha James, Wamsutta’s granddaughter, opened the commemoration with a history of UAINE’s militant response to Massachusetts Gov. Francis Sargent’s racist attempt to suppress her grandfather’s 1970 speech. He wrote it to deliver at

Plymouth’s 350th founding anniversary at the state’s request.

Truth about ‘Thanks-taking’

James read Wamsutta’s speech while demonstrators occupied Plymouth Rock for the 51st time. (tinyurl.com/y2lcnrcn) She said it told the true story of the first “Thanks-taking,” refuting U.S. history books’ false mythology. These books replace the truth about the enslavement of African peoples, mass killings of the

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Stop ICE’s rush to illegally deport families!

By **Marta Guttenberg**
Philadelphia

Around 50 people, including immigrant community members, Shut Down Berks Coalition activists, and elected Pennsylvania State Reps. Chris Rabb and Joseph Hohenstein, took part in an emergency rally outside Philadelphia’s Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office on Nov. 25.

Twenty-three Black and Brown families, including 28 children, had come to the U.S. seeking asylum and family reunification. Instead, they were imprisoned by ICE. Some are being held at the Berks Family Detention Center in Leesport, in nearby Bucks County.

Having survived terrible events in their countries of origin, they are now experiencing incarceration, medical neglect and abuse, and violations of their human rights here in the U.S. ICE’s response during the COVID-19 pandemic has been not to release families from detention, as recommended by public health officers. Instead, it is rushing deportations of families back into danger, despite open asylum cases and nearby sponsors.

On Nov. 24, just two days before the Thanksgiving holiday, ICE had hastily deported several more Haitian families. It had already deported 1,300 families to Haiti in October, on what immigration advocates called “death flights.”

Statements from some of the children inside the facility were read to the crowd. Eleven-year-old Juan David wrote: “I am detained with my mom. The 27th of this month we will complete 15 months of detention. They asked me why I am afraid to return to my country. I am afraid that the gangsters will hurt me, that they will kill me and my mom. That’s why I ask God to soften the hearts of the asylum officers and that I can go live with my aunt and uncle in New York. ... Here I always have a headache and anxiety.”

Jhoselyn, also 11, and his sisters Zoe, 8, and Emily, 6, wrote: “We have been locked up here for 11 months



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Demonstrators tell ICE, “Don’t deport the 28,” Nov. 25.

already, we spent our birthdays here and it’s very hard. We don’t want to spend Christmas locked up here in this center. We can’t play freely or run because the guards yell at us not to. ... Please, I don’t want them to separate us. My sisters and I can’t go back to Ecuador either.”

Katherin, 14, stated: “Our lives are also in danger because of so many people who are infected with COVID-19. It hurts me to see that many kids like me are locked up even more because of COVID-19. They spend more time locked up in their rooms. Please, I implore you, I beg you, help us leave this place as soon as possible.”

Berks Family Detention Center is a state-chartered institution. ICE leases the facility from the county for uses that violate the charter. However, the governor has not revoked the charter. County officials claim they cannot do without the income.

Speakers demanded that the families be released together from illegal detention and pandemic risk to relatives or sponsors.

Want to help? Contact Simona Flores, director of ICE’s enforcement and removal operations in the Philadelphia office at 214-918-4822. Tell her: Don’t deport the 28. □



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

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

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

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

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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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Vol. 62, No. 49 • Dec. 3, 2020
Closing date: Dec. 2, 2020

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

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

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.
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Trans warrior, communist revolutionary Remembering Leslie Feinberg

By Mirinda Crissman

Six years since his passing on Nov. 15, 2014, Leslie Feinberg's presence is still unshakable.

The struggle against oppressions that stem from capitalism rages on. That struggle for liberation has literally been pushed forward by one of our dear comrades, freedom fighter, transgender warrior and revolutionary communist, Leslie Feinberg. The anniversary of his death was marked by a Nov. 19 Workers World Party webinar, "Leslie Feinberg: 'Remember Me as a Revolutionary Communist.'"

Ze's world building, in theory and in practice, has left such a mark on material conditions. Whether it's his still widely popular and gripping work of fiction, "Stone Butch Blues," or his Marxist analyses like "Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come" or "Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba," Feinberg's groundbreaking writing and organizing have shifted the oppressive capitalist culture they were introduced into.

As Devin C, president of Socialist Trans Initiative (STRIVE) and organizer of the Workers World Party's Central Gulf Coast Branch, explained in the webinar: "Tying together the struggle against racism with the struggle against transphobia, with the struggle against capitalism ... You know, Leslie did this almost 30 years ago. We owe

so much to him. The only thing we can do at this point to really honor Leslie Feinberg is to continue the struggle against transgender oppression and continue the struggle against capitalism. Anything else would simply be a disservice."

On this webinar, Feinberg's WWP comrades paid tribute to his passing. Now a managing editor of Workers World newspaper, Monica Moorehead explained that Feinberg was largely responsible for encouraging and training her for that job. That culture of encouragement and discipline in struggle very much still exists even in his absence.

Although I never had the honor of meeting Leslie, the way ze interacted with and taught our comrades in action is a large part of why I am now a co-editor of the Tear Down the Walls prison pages in the WW newspaper. These pages—dedicated to the global prison abolition struggle—have been revitalized from Leslie's legacy of years of editing the WW prison section.

Judy Greenspan, who co-moderated the webinar discussion along with Ezra Echo, told of a speech by Feinberg at Sonoma State University. "His talk was entitled 'The Transgender Movement: Yesterday, Today and the Future.' Ze went into this classroom [where ze was asked to speak] on the transgender movement. And the first thing ze said was, 'I am dedicating my talk to the struggle of undocumented workers, of im/

migrant workers.' Because on the way in, ze had seen a flyer calling people together to protest in support of immigrant rights. That's exactly what Leslie always did. Ze always was showing working class solidarity, always teaching and linking the components of the revolutionary struggle."

Monica Moorehead amplified, "There are so many inequalities and so many oppressions that feed off of capitalism and imperialism, including LGBTQ2S+ oppression, and Leslie never allowed this to be seen in isolation. Because Leslie understood as a worker. Leslie was a worker! First and foremost, his message was: I'm part of the working class, and there's nothing more important than to be in solidarity with each other against a common enemy, which is capitalism and imperialism."

Many heartwarming stories of Feinberg exist, as ze truly was treasured. Another beloved transgender revolutionary, comrade Renée Imperato, shared: "Whenever Leslie got into a conversation with someone who used a wheelchair, Leslie never, ever stood above them and looked down on them and spoke. So I said to Leslie: 'I noticed that every wheelchair user that you speak to, you crouch down to them.' And Leslie replied, 'We need to be equally on the same level, so that our eyes meet on the same level.' That is respect. Oh, I never, ever forgot that."

Whether it is the struggle of LGBTQ2S+



Leslie Feinberg speaks at a 1999 meeting to 'Free Mumia!' in New York City.



Leslie Feinberg with Workers World Party founding members Dorothy Ballan and Sam Marcy in 1991.

people, im/migrants, imprisoned people, disabled people—you name it—Leslie Feinberg understood and acted upon the knowledge that these oppressions have a common enemy. Those who study Feinberg's legacy continue to fight back against capitalist, imperialist and colonial structures of power. We are giving the ruling class a run for their beloved money! □



By Princess Harmony

December 1 is World AIDS Day, a day when we reflect on those who have died—and are, hopefully, supporting people living with HIV and AIDS. This special day was first declared by James W. Bunn and Thomas Netter in 1988. They chose Dec. 1 as the date so it would avoid the elections and precede Christmas.

World AIDS Day is an important day that we, as radical queers or as revolutionary communists, can use to remind ourselves of our duty to remember the lost and the queer possibilities that fell apart. These queer possibilities are the contributions we give to society in art, music and philosophical theory. There are even more queer possibilities, with friendships, lovers and families. All the things that are personal and public that people could have been or could have accomplished were wiped away by a then-novel retrovirus that was eventually named the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Queer people have been and still are blamed for the spread of HIV in the U.S. The book "And the Band Played On," although generally good, but outdated,

was used to insult and malign queer people, specifically, a gay man named Gaetan Dugas. The publisher, fearful that the book wouldn't sell, leaked unverifiable stories plucked from the book's pages about a man who coldly and calculatedly had sex with men in bathhouses, and then disclosed his HIV status (then called "gay cancer") to partners afterward. This was all untrue. He wasn't "patient zero."

People living in the U.S. had developed and died of HIV before Dugas was even sexually active. The true "patient zero" is unknown; that is a good thing as whoever it was would be maligned as he was. Finally, Dugas was involved in getting information—and pushing scientists to get more knowledge—to queer people. He was a hero, not a villain.

'I hate Ronald Reagan'

In the pamphlet entitled "Queers Read This," anonymous queers wrote about the condition of queer people in the U.S. A portion of it reads, "I hate Ronald Reagan, too, because he mass murdered my people for eight years." (tinyurl.com/y6tqwjeq)

This is a historical fact. President

Reagan's staff derided people with HIV/AIDS, particularly ill queer people, and he intentionally dragged his feet on acknowledging the disease and pushing for affordable treatments. Even when the actor Rock Hudson, a friend of Ronald Reagan and Nancy Reagan, begged for intervention in his case so he could get experimental treatment in France, they denied it and allowed him to die. Other supposed friends of the Reagans were mistreated for being queer and having AIDS.

As the late Larry Kramer said in his legendary article, "March 27, 1983: 1,112 and Counting," "Our continued existence depends on just how angry you can get." (losangelesblade.com, May 27) This was true in the 1980s; it was revolutionary and radical. It's still true, revolutionary and radical because the HIV/AIDS epidemic is not over.

Medical corporations have only pursued the goal of making money. This was true when azidothymidine (AZT, zidovudine) was first discovered to have anti-retroviral properties. Companies prioritized their goal of increasing profits above the health and safety of their customers. How did

they do that? They allowed tenofovir disoproxil fumarate, a dangerous medication, to be released and sold for years, until the patent ran out. The drugs Viread, Atripla, Complera, Stribild, and Truvada all contained this dangerous medication, which could damage kidneys and bones.

The new, improved, and much safer drug, tenofovir alafenamide, wasn't released until 2015. Medicines containing this medication—Genvoya, Odefsey, Descovy, Biktarvy, and Symtuza—have come out since then. This should anger people, particularly those whose health was harmed over a few dollars.

On World AIDS Day, we must recall our history and observe our present in order to best serve people living with HIV/AIDS. We must know about and remember the powerful homophobes who caused our elders to suffer in a virtual inferno or turned heroes into villains. We must remind ourselves of the businesses that knowingly produced and sold drugs that could harm people without caring that a safer, more potent alternative could be used. We must remember that these things happened. If we don't, the lessons our elders left us may be lost. □

Florida

Attacks continue on LGBTQ2S+ youth

By Devin C
Occupied Seminole/Calusa/Taino land — South Florida

On Nov. 20 the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled 2-1 in favor of reactionary conversion therapists, striking down previous bans on conversion therapy in Boca Raton and Palm Beach County, Fla.

Conversion therapy, aimed primarily at LGBTQ2S+ youth, is a term that covers a range of dangerous and discredited practices that attempt to "fix" an individual's queer sexual orientation or gender-nonconforming identity.

The court ruling is a major step back in the LGBTQ2S+ liberation struggle, attacking one of its most vulnerable groups: youth.

Backed by right-wing religious and political ideology, conversion therapy uses emotional manipulation, shaming, mental abuse, and sometimes even physical abuse to "cure" an LGBTQ2S+ individual. It is rooted in the fascistic belief that queerness and transness are mental illnesses that are severe and need aggressive, abusive treatment.

Despite the continued horror stories about conversion therapy, countless LGBTQ2S+ people have survived to testify that it doesn't work and that they are still queer or trans. That includes confirming revelations from some leaders in conversion therapy themselves! Over 700,000 people in the U.S. have been subjected to conversion therapy. (tinyurl.com/ydxdz7mn)

This fake "therapy" is often practiced on youth who do not have any autonomy over themselves and are forced by hateful family members to attend the sessions. Conversion therapy has been condemned across the U.S. as meaningless, harmful and a major contribution to depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation in youth. It is currently banned in 20 states and Washington, D.C.

As many cities, especially in Florida where this writer lives, struggle to pass a human rights ordinance to protect more LGBTQ2S+ people at work and in housing, this attempt is often blocked by right-wing religious politicians and their donors. These same reactionaries work to chip away at what has been won by LGBTQ2S+

organizers who have worked hard to ensure some protections do exist for youth and their communities of queer/trans people.

LGBTQ2S+ youth deserve a safe and stable life that encourages them to be themselves and allows them to have full self-determination. In order for this to occur, hateful reactionary practices such as conversion therapy must be done away with once and for all. A widespread struggle is now being waged, including in Florida, to make this happen.

Devin C is a transgender Marxist organizer and writer. They are the president of Strive (Socialist Trans Initiative) and a member of Workers World Party—Central Gulf Coast branch.

Philly nurses strike!

By Marie Kelly

In early November, members of the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals (PASNAP) in four Philadelphia area hospitals voted to walk out if hospital administrators did not agree to their contract demands. The 2,500 nurses at Mercy Fitzgerald, St. Mary’s Medical Center, St. Christopher’s for Children and Albert Einstein Medical Center are unified in their belief that patient safety, not profit margins, should drive how hospitals are run. Negotiations have centered around staffing ratios and retention.

As the COVID-19 pandemic enters a dangerous upswing, these nurses know that improving staff-to-patient ratios saves lives. They have been at the frontline of the pandemic crisis from the beginning, caring for critically ill patients infected with a deadly virus that no one had seen before, let alone knew how to treat. Hundreds of nurses across the country have lost their lives providing care while wearing insufficient personal protective equipment.

Mercy Fitzgerald and St. Mary’s are owned by the Michigan-based Trinity Health conglomerate, which owns 92 hospitals across the country. Despite their non-profit designation, Trinity has closed community-based

hospitals when they are not turning a profit. St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children is owned by Tower Health. Last year, Tower purchased St. Christopher’s from Philadelphia Academic Health System, the same entity that sold Hahnemann Hospital to a private developer, thereby eliminating available health care for the most indigent in Philadelphia. And Einstein Medical Center is part of the Einstein Healthcare Network.

PASNAP nurses at three of the hospitals have union contracts. Mercy Fitzgerald’s four-year contract will increase the number of nurses on call as the pandemic surges. This will aid in keeping staff-to-patient ratios at a safe level. The contract also guarantees wage increases, which are critical to retaining experienced nurses and attracting newer nurses.

A balance of experienced and novice nurses ensures the transfer of knowledge and skill to a new cohort of nurses and lessens the risk of veteran nurse burnout. Contracts for St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children and Einstein Medical Center both include important successorship language, which will continue the contract in the event of a sale. This is a key victory in this volatile health care market.

When Tower Health acquired St. Christopher’s, they



Nurses strike St. Mary’s Medical Center, Langhorne, Pa., Nov. 18-19.

refused to acknowledge the nurses’ paid time off accumulated over the years under the previous ownership. Einstein Medical Center is in negotiations to merge with Jefferson Medical Center.

800 nurses stage two-day strike

St. Mary’s Medical Center in Langhorne, Pa., is the only hospital of the four where nurses are working without a contract. Nurses there held a two-day strike Nov. 18-19. Bill Engels, one of the key strike leaders and contract negotiators, praised PASNAP for their support over the two years since St. Mary’s voted to join the union. “We were able to lean on their experience; they (PASNAP organizers) are altruistic as hell.”

The nurses’ demands center around a reinvestment in nurses as the main component of a successful hospital. Currently, on average St. Mary’s nurses make \$5-6 per hour less than their area counterparts, making recruitment and retention difficult for this community hospital.

During the two-day strike, Trinity hired union-busting nurses with the help of anti-union firm Yessin and Associates at an estimated cost of \$3.6 million. After the strike was over, Trinity locked out the union nurses for an additional three days. However, the St. Mary’s nurses had tremendous support from the community they serve.

They are confident that they will win when they return to the bargaining table next month. Bill Engels likens the contract negotiation to raising children. “Having no union is like a toddler-parent relationship. Union negotiations require us to act like the teen asserting our rights and independence.” With a contract, the nurses at St. Mary’s will be on equal footing as adults with their “parent” organization. □

Black Friday protests hit Amazon

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

On Nov. 27, “Black Friday,” workers rallied in front of Amazon world headquarters in Seattle to condemn Amazon’s exploitation of essential workers. Chris Smalls and The Congress of Essential Workers (TCOEW) led the Seattle action. Smalls was fired March 30 by Amazon for leading a work stoppage in New York to protest Amazon’s failure to provide COVID protections.

The Seattle rally and march were part of a global day of protest, with demonstrations and work stoppages held at Amazon workplaces. These actions focused on Amazon’s neglect of essential workers laboring on 10- and 12-hour shifts, during the galloping COVID-19

pandemic. Over 20,000 Amazon frontline workers have tested positive for the coronavirus.

Amazon boss, Jeff Bezos, is now worth \$204 billion, due to the sweat and blood of Amazon’s world workforce.

Speakers at the rally declared their solidarity with the organizing drive of Alabama Amazon warehouse workers, who have now filed for a union election. One former Amazon worker called for a union of all Amazon workers.

The demonstrators marched across Amazon’s “world campus” to the company’s giant spheres. The TCOEW and supporters will march on Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos’ mansion in the ruling class town of Medina, Wash., on Nov. 30. □

Iowa workers win against wage theft

By Mike Kühlenbeck
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Nov. 24 — Six workers from Houston, Texas, hired for essential repairs on storm-damaged buildings in Cedar Rapids, won their battle against wage theft with the solidarity of labor, faith and community allies.

In August, Iowa was hit by a rare hurricane-like storm known as a “derecho,” causing damage over thousands of miles. As part of the rebuilding efforts in Cedar Rapids, a crew of eight workers from Houston were hired by BluSky Restoration Contractors, LLC, and Painting and Demolition Ramirez Company to make repairs to impacted buildings.

Tasked with dangerous work in the aftermath of a storm, during a pandemic no less, the workers faced additional obstacles. The eight workers were housed in a cold apartment damaged by the storm for weeks.

Their living conditions were described as “nightmarish” by the Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa, as they were forced to sleep on air mattresses instead of beds, underneath plastic in place of a ceiling. Working long hours and with their food supply running low, the workers repeatedly asked for their pay, only to be denied and threatened with retaliation.

CWJ organizer Mayra Hernandez told Workers World, “It has often been that in the aftermath of a natural disaster, companies rush in to fulfill repair work, and there are increases in workers rights violations. The storm has made housing difficult to access and increased the opportunity for people to be housed in poor circumstances.”

After 21 days without pay, the crew members walked off the job and went on strike on Nov. 16. They were then fired and kicked out of their employer-funded housing. Two of the workers went back to Houston, while the other six remained in Cedar Rapids, stranded over 1,000 miles from their homes.

The six refused to give up, and they contacted the



BluSky workers after victory in wage theft struggle.

Laborers and Carpenters unions. The unions brought the workers food and put them in touch with local allies who rushed to their support.

The resulting coalition was comprised of CWJ, State Rep. Art Staed, the Rev. Anthony Smith of New Creations International Church, the Rev. John Greve of Grace Episcopal Church, Royce Peterson and Antonio Govea from the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, and Jesse Case from the International Teamsters, and Democratic Socialists of America.

“Not paying wages does not just cause economic damage,” Hernandez said. “It robs families of many opportunities, such as being able to pay for schooling, food, electricity, housing. And it robs people of their time. Wage theft is all too common. It affects parents and kids’ opportunities in life. Other states have strengthened their wage theft laws and increased penalties for violations, and we need to do that here in Iowa.”

Grace Episcopal Church provided shelter, and the Coralville Food Pantry brought them food. And the six workers were supported by community actions demanding they be paid the wages and travel costs they had been promised. In less than a week, BluSky agreed to these

demands.

A rally in support of the workers scheduled for Nov. 20 was canceled after BluSky executives met with a delegation of community allies that morning. The executives agreed to expedite payments to the workers and cover their wages for completed work and travel expenses. The following day, representatives from CWJ and the Carpenters’ Union served as witnesses as the checks were delivered to the six workers.

‘Workers should not have to fight for wages they earn’

According to a Nov. 21 CWJ media advisory, “None of these actions should have been necessary. Workers should not have to fight for the wages they have earned. But when employers break the law, it is inspiring to see our community come together to make things right.”

BluSky marketing manager Lisa Tran Franco told Workers World that “BluSky leadership has made the decision to meet with individual crew members and pay them for work completed.” However, Franco did not comment on allegations that BluSky has been implicated in what CWJ calls “a pattern of failure to pay minimum wage and overtime, unlawful deductions from pay and fabricating timesheets.” In 2019, workers in Minneapolis filed an ongoing class-action lawsuit against BluSky on behalf of employees and subcontractors across the country.

“The pandemic has shown the importance of work done by underpaid workers,” Hernandez said. “Essential workers are in a vulnerable position, every day they are out there doing a job that continuously puts them at risk. Some employers can take advantage of those vulnerabilities and exploit them. Essential workers should be paid a premium, yet there are cases like this where employees are fighting to just be paid.”

All eight workers, including the two workers who went back to Houston, have now received their wages plus travel expenses. □

Migrant workers tell bosses: We’re fed up with racism, COVID and exploitation!

By Tony Murphy
New York

As so-called essential workers fight for their rights on the job, they continue to be the most reliable fighters for COVID safety, PPE and a rational response to the pandemic.

From health care workers in California and Washington State, to nursing home workers in Illinois, to school bus drivers in Ohio, workers are striking, fighting back and organizing while COVID numbers increase exponentially and the White House ignores the crisis.

In New York, the front lines of this fight include the ranks of laundromat workers, 95 percent of whom are women and migrants. Their fierce struggle against workplace racism and exploitation now includes demands for PPE and proper ventilation.

On Nov. 25, the International Day of the Prevention of Violence Against Women, six migrant workers organized by the Laundry Workers Center launched a union drive at the Manhattan laundromat Wash Supply.

Dozens of supporters came out to support the launch of this campaign, including Workers Assembly Against Racism, Street Vendors Project, Food Chain Workers Alliance, City University of New York (CUNY) Internationalist Club and local clergy.

The Workers Assembly Against Racism (WAAR) had pledged at their most recent meeting to support this campaign. Held on Nov. 21, the assembly included reports from workers active in the New York teachers’ struggle; an activist involved in a strike authorization vote by CUNY teachers; an official with the Transport Workers Union; and a report on the upcoming Nov. 25 action by the Laundry Workers Center.

WAAR was formed in October, in the wake of a righteous call by trade unionists to conduct strikes and work stoppages against racism, with the purpose of expanding that call from the ranks of organized labor -- about 10 percent of the workforce -- to the rest of the workforce. Many unorganized workers take part in Black Lives Matter



WW PHOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

New York laundry workers and supporters rally on Nov. 25.

protests. WAAR activists have asked: Why not unite the anti-racist movement with the workers’ movement?

This focus includes supporting cutting-edge workers’ struggles. So on Nov. 25, WAAR sent ten of its members, many of whom have participated in the Black Lives Matter protests, to support the launch of the organizing campaign at Wash Supply, a campaign for workers’ rights as well as a fight against racism and sexism.

The laundromat is located on the Upper West Side — one of the most expensive places to live in New York City, the center of world capitalism.

That wealth does not translate into decent wages for laundry workers. In fact, the workers at Wash Supply, all women, face intensified exploitation. They are paid below minimum wage. They work 60 hours a week with

‘Thanksgiving’ myth busted on 51st National Day of Mourning

Continued from page 1

Indigenous population and land theft — which characterized colonists’ warfare from early Jamestown to Plymouth’s plantations in the Caribbean — with a story about a harvest dinner.

James asked, “What did we get in return for kindness? Genocide, the theft of our lands, slavery, starvation and never-ending oppression.”

Mahtowin Munro, UAINE co-leader, recalled activists climbing the fake replica of the Mayflower’s mast to hoist the American Indian Movement’s flag. She told of years of burying the rock, chasing “pilgrim progress” parades off the street, occupying “pilgrim” churches and taking over Main Street on Plymouth’s most lucrative holiday. They faced down dogs, teargas and a brutal 1997 police riot that resulted in the arrests of the “Plymouth 25” — UAINE elders, leaders and supporters. She led a shout-out to Moonanum James, Wamsutta’s son and UAINE co-leader, currently hospitalized.

NDOM participants visited sites liberated by the treaty that a worldwide boycott and defense campaign forced Plymouth’s town fathers to sign with UAINE in 1998. The frame-up charges of assault of cops were dropped, as were requirements for permits to march on Indigenous peoples’ own land. The town’s bankers and trinket sellers had to erect plaques written by UAINE on Cole’s Hill and Post Office Square, telling the Indigenous peoples’ truth about the genocide here and the Wampanoag Nation’s centuries-long resistance. (tinyurl.com/yxugn748)

‘The struggle will continue!’

Munro concluded, “We all know that racism is alive and well. We are struggling under an oppressive capitalist system that forces people to make a bitter choice between heating and eating. We will continue to gather on this hill until corporations and the U.S. military stop polluting the earth, until we dismantle the brutal apparatus of mass incarceration.

“We will not stop until the oppression of our Two Spirit siblings is a thing of the past, when unhoused people have homes, when children are no longer taken from their parents and locked in cages. And when Palestinians



WW PHOTO: MAIREAD SKEHAN GILLIS

National Day of Mourning, Nov. 26.

reclaim the homeland and autonomy Israel has denied them for 70 years, when no person goes hungry or dies due to lack of quality health care, when insulin is free, when union busting is a thing of the past. Until then the struggle will continue!”

Munro noted the importance of the “thanksgiving” myth to the current settler government in Washington, which attacks the Black Lives Matter rebellion and forcibly occupies Indigenous lands from Afghanistan to Palestine to Hawaii. Loud cheers greeted her salute to Evo Morales’ return to Bolivia from U.S. coup-imposed exile.

Indigenous women on front lines

A program of powerful Indigenous women speakers shone a spotlight on today’s struggles of Indigenous peoples, who are on the front lines fighting the ravages of the pandemic and capitalist greed.

Chali’Inaru Smilez Dones, United Confederation of Taíno People, brought federal political prisoner Leonard Peltier’s greetings: “We must unite and work together every chance we can . . . and embrace all others who are of like mind and willing to work to correct this worldwide pandemic of greed and selfishness that has infected the whole earth and mankind.” (tinyurl.com/y3t3fk wz)

Samantha Maltais, a young Aquinnah Wampanoag activist, told of founding #MayflowersKill after dancing at Pow Wows and being confronted with public schools’ racist curriculum. “Rename Custer Park” organizers

no overtime pay, no paid sick days, and no COVID safety precautions. They work under atrocious health and safety conditions in a tiny basement with no ventilation, no heat in the winter, no emergency exits and no PPE. The workers have even been forced to buy their own toilet paper just to use their workplace bathrooms.

Even taking an hour to eat lunch is a struggle, which is why the workers used their first full lunch hour on Nov. 25 to deliver to their bosses demands for a union, better conditions and better pay.

After a raucous protest that met in a nearby playground and then marched to the front of Wash Supply, the workers, all wearing the same color T-shirts and aprons stencilled with the words WE ARE THE UNION, went into the workplace to deliver their demands to the employers. They were joined by supporters from the rally, who jammed into the tiny basement behind the workers, overflowing onto the small stairway leading down to it.

One by one, the workers approached and confronted their boss to tell them they wouldn’t accept humiliation, abuse or exposure to COVID any more. One worker said to her boss, “When I’m having lunch you come to us and tell us to stop and get back to work. We’re sick and tired of this and we don’t want to take it any more!” The supporters standing behind her and her coworkers cheered.

The turnout made it clear to the bosses that these six workers had community support. The need for this was obvious. The manager held her cell phone up while being confronted by the workers, making it clear she was videoing them. One of the main rally slogans, “The community is watching” — on signs and chanted by the protesters — let the bosses know that any retaliation for the workers demanding their rights would be met with swift fightback.

A rally announcement by Laundry Workers Center leaders served to back up that promise. Rosanna Rodriguez announced to the crowd that one of the LWC’s other campaigns — the Justice for Beatriz Campaign, at the New Giant Launder Center in Queens — resulted in victory, with the worker involved recovering stolen wages and returning to her job with better working conditions. □

Melanie Angel and Sharnell Cepa Seaboy traveled from North Dakota’s Great Plains to express solidarity.

Tela LandBack Troge and Kelly Haddo-Namo Jimoseyang-Tunuppasog of the Shinnecock Sovereignty Camp called for an to end to economic genocide and for the right to provide for their people, as they battle New York State to defend their sovereignty rights.

Dozens of solidarity messages and songs

Messages and prerecorded cultural performances were interspersed throughout the program from elders and supporters who were prevented from attending by the pandemic. These included Melissa Harding Ferretti, Chair of the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe; Frank Waln, singing “My People Come from the Land”; Wade Fernandez of the Menominee Nation, who sang “We Wear Because We Care”; Skyler Williams, Six Nations of the Grand River; the Council of Maya Elders/Consejo de Ancianos; Nick Estes, Lower Brule Sioux, and Elena and Savannah Ortiz, Ohkay Owingeh, with The Red Nation; and Sheldon Raymore, Two Spirit, Cheyenne River Sioux.

Also, Khaled Barakat, Palestinian writer; BAYAN Philippines; Eli Pabon and #Bombantillana; Roberto Borrero, Taino Kasike; Matt Remle, Lakota, Defund Pipelines; singing by Jacinda Beals, Labrador; North American Megadam Resistance Alliance leaders; Eldred Mesher, Labrador; Sarah Wunderlich, Oneida, on nephew Jonathon Tubby’s death in police custody; Lucy Pagoada Quesada, Honduran Resistance Council and U.S./Canada Coordinator of the Libre Party, closing with the Maunakea movement’s anthem.

Bolstering NDOM’s liberation of stolen ground with 300 marchers was a solidarity force of thousands of supporters worldwide on livestream, produced by hate5six.com’s brilliant Sunny Singh, backed up by solidarity roadies from United Steelworkers Local 8751, the Dorchester Art Project and MIT’s WMBR. The recording with live ASL, posted at tinyurl.com/y2ngml22, has gotten 30,000 views.

Steve Gillis is the Financial Secretary of Steelworkers Local 8751 and a Plymouth 25 defendant.

Free Alabama Movement calls ‘Economic blackout’ on prison system



By Devin C
Occupied Muscogee Creek, Choctaw, Cherokee, Shawnee, Yuchi lands

The Free Alabama Movement, led primarily by Black men who are incarcerated in the state of Alabama, has declared a 30-day economic blackout — a boycott of for-profit prison services and a work strike — to protest inhumane conditions at prisons across Alabama.

The Jan. 1-31 protest focuses on the inaction of the Alabama Department of Corrections in tackling COVID-19 state-wide, as well as ADOC attempts to institute video calls throughout its prisons. That would effectively end in-person visitation between those incarcerated and their family and friends.

During the January blackout, FAM is asking for a total boycott of the following corporations: JPay, Union Supply Company, Access Corrections, Securus Technologies and Alabama Correctional Industries. These five companies are directly responsible for the worsening conditions for those incarcerated in Alabama.

FAM is also calling for incarcerated people to refuse to go to work at the prisons during January.

The blackout is responding to the out-right negligence of the ADOC in handling COVID cases. Recently a spike in positive cases occurred at Bibb Correctional Facility in Brent, Ala. Retesting is being

done on those incarcerated, with no explanation given, amid many accusations that test results are being tampered with and skewed. (tinyurl.com/y5fknj5y)

With a few exceptions, Alabama authorities remain steadfast in refusing to release anyone due to the rising number of cases within ADOC prisons, though Etowah County is releasing some incarcerated workers in the coming weeks. Those still incarcerated are forced to sit by and wait, possibly infected, but without knowing and not being given an answer.

Why a blackout of prisons?

In a Nov. 16 video press release from FAM, co-founder Kinetik Justice Amun explained the reasoning for the blackout:

In January of 2014, we made a lot of allegations under the banner of the Free Alabama Movement. We released over 60 videos showing the horrid conditions of what was going on inside the Alabama Department of Corrections. We released interviews and stories of people who are incarcerated to show how white supremacy affects the criminal justice system throughout the state. How so many people were overcharged, and how many were over-sentenced, the majority of which



Kinetik Justice Amun

are young Black men [who] have been trapped inside the Alabama Department of Corrections for decades.

These allegations made by the Free Alabama Movement were justified and verified by the Department of Justice’s investigation into all male prisons in the Alabama prison system. Therefore, for the last six months, we have been waiting on some type of accountability, somebody

to have to pay some type of consequence for the violations of [the rights of] all prisoners in the state of Alabama, for the violations of their Eighth Amendment right [to have “no cruel and unusual punishments inflicted”].

There have been no consequences forthcoming, and no one has been accountable. Therefore, we at Free Alabama

Movement, in order to establish that we will no longer accept being dehumanized and we will no longer accept being victims of white supremacy, we are calling for a 30-day economic blackout of the entire Alabama Department of Corrections.

We’re asking that all brothers [who] are incarcerated in the state of Alabama not to go to work January 1st through January 31st. We’re asking all family members and loved ones to support these brothers in boycotting Securus, with their video visitation, because once

Securus establishes their video visitation, they plan to do away permanently with all contact visits. So if you ever want to touch your loved one again, help and support the brothers as we boycott Securus and their phone services. We’re also boycotting Access Corrections, as they continue to exploit the family members and loved ones with exorbitant prices of things they sell to those incarcerated.

We’re asking you to join us and support us in calling for a 30-day economic blackout of the entire Alabama Department of Corrections. (View video at tinyurl.com/y4gw574k.)

Support resistance in the prisons!

It is imperative that incarcerated people all across the Alabama prison system be supported in their economic blackout and work strike of the cruel and inhumane Alabama Department of Corrections. The fascistic prison system must be abolished, and these comrades behind the walls are leading the way in doing just that.

For more, visit freealabamamovement.wordpress.com.

Devin C is a transgender Marxist organizer and writer. They are the president of Strive (Socialist Trans Initiative), a transgender advocacy organization, and member of the Workers World Party – Central Gulf Coast (Alabama, Florida and Mississippi) branch.

COVID-19 in Oregon Prison laundry workers at greatest risk

By Johnnie Lewis
Portland, Ore.

In November, three Oregon prisons — Two Rivers, Salem, and Snake River — reported the state’s highest rate of workplace COVID-19 infections.

By Oregon law, prisons are workplaces. All prisoners are forced to work a 40-hour week. On Nov. 23, Snake River reported 518 infections among workers, and 157 among guards and staff.

Last year, imprisoned workers, who on average earn pennies an hour, made \$28 million for Oregon Corrections Enterprises. OCE employs thousands of workers in 10 prisons, including laundries. These workers process 40,000 pounds, or 20 tons, of laundry for at least 33 hospitals each day, every day, including laundry of COVID-19 intensive care wards. They earn on average \$1 a day.

In April, Michael Zell, a prisoner at

Salem, wrote that OCE bosses illegally removed biohazard labels from COVID-19-infected laundry before workers handled it. Suspecting that this illegal practice was taking place in all OCE laundries, Zell warned that the coronavirus, already raging in prisons, would increase.

Soon after, Two Rivers prison, the site of an OCE laundry with 168 workers, reported 40 new infections. Jason Ellis, a prisoner at Two Rivers, said that in spite of the spike in COVID-19 infections, laundry workers have to report for work. This was confirmed by a prison spokesperson. (streetroots.org)

The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulates prison laundries, workshops, factories, call centers, and other work spaces, as well as the working conditions for those who labor in them. The U.S. Center for Disease Control provides COVID-19 protocols for workplaces, including those in prisons.

These U.S. government agencies recognize that prisoners are workers, and, as all workers, have the right to health and safety on the job. As it is for all workers, though, enforcement is another matter.

For example, Oregon Corrections Enterprises posted a notice online and in its prison laundries that “all employees and adults in custody (AICs) working in OCE laundry follow standard/universal precautions as defined by both OSHA and CDC, to wear appropriate personal protective equipment.”

However, the National Lawyers Guild states that this contradicts reality; that workers in Oregon prisons handling COVID-19-infected hospital laundry are not provided PPE, neither gloves nor masks. That, in fact, face coverings OCE provides are not PPE, but “utility masks, made of 100% cotton,” and produced by OCE garment workers.

Of the thousands of workers employed

in OCE’s prison workshops, about 1,500 are highly skilled and work as upholsterers, welders, ironworkers, metal fabricators, carpenters, sewing machine operators, fabric pattern cutters, cabinetmakers and woodworkers, painters, and more. These workers are “paid” \$7.25 an hour, the federal minimum wage (the Oregon minimum wage is \$11.25), but they actually “take home” on average only \$82 a month. The rest of their wage is taken by the state — to pay for their own imprisonment. □



Oregon prison laundry, 2017.

How prisons contribute to opioid crisis

By Princess Harmony

Prisons, which serve the purposes of the capitalist bourgeoisie, are filled to the brim with people who suffer from addiction and other substance use disorders.

Among them are opioid users. The gold-standard treatments for opioid use disorders (opioid addictions) are methadone (Diskets, Methadose) and buprenorphine (Suboxone, Subutex, Sublocade, Zubsolv, Bunavail). There is a third drug used to treat opioid addiction — naltrexone (ReVia, Vivitrol), but it’s not a successful treatment in many cases and can cause fatal overdoses.

Since prisons do not rehabilitate people — definitely not in the cases of drug addicts — outside sources are needed to treat them. Many of these people, when they lived on the outside, were already on methadone and buprenorphine. They were already on maintenance, with their

disease pacified. Despite that, and despite the best interests of society, methadone and buprenorphine are not distributed in many prison or jail facilities.

Statistics show that in prisons where methadone maintenance is used, incarcerated workers have great outcomes. They do not repeat offend; they do not overdose (fatally or nonfatally); they stick to the program in a structured way; and they do not suffer adverse reactions to illicit opioids like fentanyl (or its analogues acetylfentanyl, butyrfentanyl, carfentanil).

Methadone and buprenorphine maintenance therapies are statistically and scientifically proven to be a successful form of treating opioid use disorder. Methadone has a success rate of between 60% and 90%. Contrast that with abstinence-only approaches to addiction, which have a success rate of only 5% to 10%. Buprenorphine also has a success rate between 50% and 70%.

A success rate of 50% might seem troubling, but compare that to abstinence-only methods that only have 5% to 10% “success” rates.

Of the thousands of jails and prisons in the U.S., only a handful offer evidence-based medication-assisted treatment. Most recently, the state of Rhode Island started to offer methadone and buprenorphine-based treatment. The drop in post-release overdoses was a 12% decrease in the state’s overdose statistics!

In other states, such as Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts and Washington, it took lawsuits on behalf of prisoners in order for them to gain access to methadone and buprenorphine. On the regional level, Philadelphia and Camden, N.J., both initiate and maintain patients on buprenorphine and methadone.

A 2015 study in England showed that patients who only received therapy or counseling for their addictions were far

more likely to die of an overdose than patients who were maintained on methadone and buprenorphine. According to “Maintenance Medication for Opiate Addiction: The Foundation of Recovery,” over 80% of patients who received only behavioral health interventions returned to using, in turn risking fatal and nonfatal overdose. (tinyurl.com/y55ogtbu)

Many prisons and jails across the U.S. are withholding important, lifesaving medications from people who need them, not caring that methadone and buprenorphine both save lives and reduce the possibility of recidivism.

But prisons in the U.S. are based on punishment and capitalism, so anything that might hurt that bottom line is cruelly ignored. People on the outside who seek to be allies to people in, or seeking recovery from, drug addiction should push prison authorities into allowing the therapies. □

Mumia Abu-Jamal on: Lessons from the first abolition movement



This article is part of Abolition for the People, a series brought to you by a partnership between Kaepernick Publishing and LEVEL, a medium publication for and about the lives of Black and Brown men.

In 1981, Black Panther Party member Mumia Abu-Jamal was sentenced to death by a “hanging judge” for the killing of a white police officer in Philadelphia. In 2000, Amnesty International found that the case “was irredeemably tainted by politics and race and failed to meet international fair trial standards.” Mumia forms part of the generation of Black radicals on whom the state tested law-and-order propaganda and lockdown in the ’60s—a prelude to the carceral repression it would deploy against poor Black and Brown urban communities in the 1980s and 1990s. On death row, Mumia became a writer of great literary power, and we are pleased to present this piece as part of Abolition for the People.

— The Editors, Kaepernick Publishing

From WW: To read Mumia’s essay in its entirety, go to tinyurl.com/y3vvz4rm

When one thinks of the term abolition, there is a tendency to see it as a threat emerging from the left. Another perspective understands, however, that abolition is a natural response to a situation that has become untenable.

What condition lay before the nation in its founding days? Slavery: human bondage, which sat like an incubus upon the new nation’s foundation and transformed its stated aims and ideals into lies. After some reflection, perhaps, we will see that the notion of abolition has deep historical roots. Consider summer, 1776, when delegates from the Continental Congress gathered in a sweltering room in Philadelphia.

These men, some of the country’s intellectual elite, were scientists, writers, doctors and thinkers, yet their claims of the new nation’s ideals were thick with contradiction. They wrote and adopted a document that said, among other things, the following:

“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it.”

These words emerge from the Declaration of Independence, adopted July 4, 1776, and celebrated throughout the U.S. annually on Independence Day today.

When people came together in the 19th century to oppose the expanding slave system, they were called abolitionists. Among both the rulers and the press, such people were regarded as oddballs at best, and nuts at worst. Despite present popular opinion, slavery was the air that people breathed. The nation was so deeply and openly negrophobic and racist, that the idea of a multiracial group opposed to slavery was considered aberrant.

Furthermore, the document, signed by such luminaries as Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Dr. Benjamin Rush and John Adams, included platitudes like “all men are created equal,” while dark men, propertyless white men, and all women were neither able to vote nor be voted for posts of political power. Indigenous people were seen as part of a distant wilderness

and not part of the nation that was being contemplated.

In October 1859, white abolitionist leader John Brown, joined by 21 men, raided the U.S. Armory at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in an attempt to arm African captives in neighboring plantations so they could strike out for freedom. Such an attempt had to face fierce logistical challenges, given the communications needed to gain the ear and trust of a largely illiterate and deeply repressed enslaved community, constantly subjected to white armed militia surveillance.

Abolitionists brought forth another vision, and hence, another future. Harpers Ferry, Virginia, was a step in the fateful march to war that, after earth-shaking sacrifice, led to the abolition of slavery.

Abraham Lincoln, one of the most admired presidents in history, would describe the raid and the raiders as little better than lunatics and regicides, less than a year after the attack failed. In February 1860, Lincoln spoke before a crowd at New York’s Cooper Institute (now known as Cooper Union) to distance himself and his party (Republicans) from the Harpers Ferry raid. Lincoln told his audience that Brown wasn’t a Republican and that Republicans had nothing to do with the raid. Indeed, Lincoln assured his northern audience that neither he nor his party supported abolition. And, truth be told, this is far from a remarkable perspective, for the fact of chattel slavery was one deeply normalized in American experience and history.

Indeed, abolition was the exception, not the rule.

What this means, of course, is that abolitionists were truly remarkable people who saw beyond the present into a time not yet born. Spurred often by religious

convictions, abolitionists supported attacks against the slave system, which they saw as an unnecessary evil.

In 1858, a year before the Harpers Ferry raid, Lincoln opined that slavery would last for at least 100 more years—or at least until 1958 or the 1960s. It is important to note that Lincoln’s prognostication was meant to appease the slavocracy. It was not an assessment of the counterrevolutionary dynamic that would detonate after the war.

Abolitionists brought forth another vision, and hence, another future. Harpers Ferry, Virginia, was a step in the fateful march to war that, after earthshaking sacrifice, led to the abolition of slavery. Thus, abolition was not a skip in the park. It is a deep, committed movement of social transformation that seeks to bring down institutions that needlessly inflict pain upon the People.

Abolitionists like Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and John Brown forged a new America, one unimaginable to earlier generations. They saw farther than their contemporaries, and even warned them of problems threatening from the periphery.

After coming close to execution twice in the 1990s, Mumia’s life was saved when a mass international movement mobilized in the streets on his behalf. In 2011, after 28 years on death row, a federal court ruled that Mumia’s death sentence had been obtained unconstitutionally; his sentence was commuted to life in prison without parole. Make no mistake: This is not enough. Freeing political prisoners is the moral assignment of every emerging generation of revolutionaries and freedom fighters. It’s time to bring Mumia—and all political prisoners—home.

— The Editors, Kaepernick Publishing

Protesters call for release of incarcerated workers

Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Around 50 demonstrators gathered outside the Federal Detention Center at Seventh and Arch streets on Nov. 28 to demand the release of those on the inside—where at least 200 new COVID-19 cases have been reported in less than a month. In the past week, the detention center has reported between 17 to 28 additional positive cases each day.

Protesters also called for the release of incarcerated workers in state and local jails across Pennsylvania, raising up the cases of political prisoners Russell Maroon Shoatz and Mumia Abu-Jamal in particular.

Opening the rally, Ted Kelly with the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party stated that “The most dangerous place to be right now in the U.S. is prison. The pandemic is happening inside this building and unless we do something, people will die. We need to build a real abolitionist movement to do justice.”

The vast majority of the 1,000 men and women incarcerated at the federal facility have not been convicted

and are still pending trial. In April, the Public Interest Law Center filed a lawsuit seeking to cut down the jail population and allow those most at risk of COVID-19 complications to be released with remote monitoring. However, rather than being released, the prisoners were put under harsh restrictions: no visits, including from attorneys; limited communications; limited access to legal research; and being allowed out of their cells only three times a week for 30 minutes.

Speakers denounced these draconian measures as cruel and unusual punishment that does nothing to stem the spread of COVID-19, since it is guards and other staff who bring the disease into the prisons. There is now a full-blown resurgence of COVID-19 in Pennsylvania prisons, with outbreaks in 21 of the 23 state facilities. With unlimited movement within the prisons, the guards become super spreaders.

Statements from Russell Maroon Shoatz and his family were read by Megan Murray, also with Workers World. Shoatz, now 77 and incarcerated since 1972, has stage 4 colon cancer. On Nov. 11 he tested positive for COVID-19. Rather than give Shoatz compassionate release, prison officials held him for 10 days in a gymnasium with 30 other COVID-19-positive prisoners, who all share one toilet. He was eventually moved to the infirmary after advocacy from family and supporters.


Mumia Abu-Jamal, like most prisoners in Pennsylvania, is kept in 23-hour lock-down in his cell, with one hour to shower or make phone calls. Abu-Jamal continues to experience health problems stemming from decades of untreated hepatitis C that have left him with sclerosis of the liver.


Fermin Morales with the Philadelphia Boricua Committee stated: “Prisons are concentration camps for poor Black and Brown people.”


Throughout the rally, prisoners inside the Detention Center could be heard banging on windows in response. Several drivers, passing by, also honked car horns in support. □



Protesters gather outside Federal Detention Center Nov. 28.

 workersworldparty

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BUILD CLASS SOLIDARITY WITH INCARCERATED WORKERS

A LIVE DISCUSSION WITH SPEAKERS FROM THE FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT PRISONERS SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE OF WORKERS WORLD PARTY AND MORE!

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

THURSDAY DEC 10 @ 8PM ET 5PM PT

Palestinian prisoner Maher al-Akhras released after 103-day hunger strike!

Palestinian political prisoner Maher al-Akhras was released from Israeli prison Nov. 26. He had staged a hunger strike for 103 days in protest of his arrest and incarceration. He was held by occupation forces under “administrative detention” and was never charged with a crime. Akhras, who was transferred to a hospital in Nablus, said, “My freedom is the freedom of my people, and we have won over the occupation with our will and determination.” He is pictured here being fed a spoonful of food by his daughter Tuqa.

— Report by Ted Kelly



International Day of Persons with Disabilities

By Edward Yudelovich
New York, N.Y.

The worldwide struggle by people with disabilities for equal rights led the United Nations to establish the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on Dec. 3, 1992. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted by the United Nations in 2006. Some 177 countries have ratified it — but not the United States, which has also failed to ratify human rights treaties defending women, children and migrant workers.

In 2019 the U.S. Senate once again refused to ratify the CRPD. In the article “Let’s Try Again: Why the United States Should Ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities,” human rights attorney and professor Arlene S. Kanter explains why the U.S. government continues to deny equal rights and justice to disabled people.

Kanter notes that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADAAA) limit the rights of people with disabilities by using a legal definition of disability that requires someone to have a “physical or mental impairment” that “substantially limits a major life activity,” or “a record of such an impairment.”

This places the burden on the disabled person to provide medical evidence to prove disability. By contrast, the U.N.’s CRPD does not include any limited specific definition of disability nor require medical proof.

The stated purpose of the ADA and the ADAAA is to prohibit discrimination against disabled people, one individual at a time. The CRPD, however, goes beyond the anti-discrimination ADA model of equality and acknowledges that “full participation by persons with disabilities will result in

their enhanced sense of belonging and in significant advances in the human, social and economic development of society and the eradication of poverty.”

Both the ADA and the ADAAA limit the disabled person to seeking access to an accommodation that is “reasonable” and does not constitute an undue hardship upon the individual landlord or employer. They place the stressful financial burden of litigation, with rigid deadlines, on the disabled person. The CRPD treaty, on the other hand, guarantees all accessible accommodations — unless they present an undue burden on the entire state and not just the individual employer or landlord. No obligation is placed on the disabled person to litigate.

Finally, the CRPD affirms the right of all people with disabilities to live in the community and have sufficient support to guarantee such independence. Both the ADA and the ADAAA, and many court decisions diluting ADA/ADAAA rights, do not sufficiently protect this right.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities Webinar

On Dec. 3, the Peoples Power Assemblies/NYC is hosting a webinar for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the sixth annual action on that day. PPA’s Facebook post reads:

“Over 50% of people murdered by police are disabled, and a high percentage of those disabled people are neuro-divergent Black and Brown folks. PPA is dedicated to fighting the oppression of people with disabilities.

“In this infamous year of 2020, we will discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the disabled community, white racism within disability community, the effects of racism on Black and Brown disabled folks, who may also be GNC and/or LGBTQIA — intersectionality and how capitalism,

racism, misogyny, cisheterosexism impact people with disabilities. Also essential to our dialogue are conversations by folks who are neuro-divergent and the struggles of people with hidden disabilities. Finally, disability rights vs. disability justice and in-community conversations about resistance strategies and building disability justice within our movements.”

On Dec. 3, 2015, PPA/NYC-led protesters rocked New York City’s Penn Station during rush hour to protest the murder of Jeremy McDole, a 28-year-old African-American paraplegic who had been shot and killed by police in Wilmington, Del., that Sept. 23, while in his wheelchair. PPA/NYC leader and activist Terrea Mitchell, a woman with disabilities, led protesters through all the sections of Penn Station with chants of “Jeremy McDole! Say his name!” “Disabled people need decent jobs and quality health care, not police terror!” and “Disabled Black lives matter!”

In 2017, PPA/NYC led activists who streamed through the Macy’s department store on ramps between the floors and through the aisles. When they reached a sizable clear space, they held an impromptu indoor rally to make people aware of the difficulties faced by people with disabilities.

The next year, PPA/NYC targeted the renovated subway station at 23rd Street and 6th Avenue to protest the Metropolitan Transit Authority’s “tradition” of spending money on cosmetic renovations without spending a penny on accessibility for desperately needed elevators and more “economical” use of wheelchair ramps. Only 20 percent of New York City’s transit system is accessible for riders who are disabled, the worst in the U.S.

In 2019, PPA/NYC returned to Herald



Inside Macy’s Dec. 3, 2019.

Square, Macy’s and Penn Station to demand fully accessible transportation for all New Yorkers and real affordable housing and health care. Their flier read: “We fight, each to their ability, against the murder, mass incarceration, warehousing and institutionalization of people with disabilities, especially Black and Brown folks.”

All these International Day of Persons with Disabilities protests were supported by many disabled individuals and organizations. Our allies include Workers World Party and its Disability Justice and Rights Caucus, which has included Terrea Mitchell as a guest speaker on July 30 and Oct. 22 webinars. (tinyurl.com/y52pxv3m and tinyurl.com/y48u2dlla)

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and new restrictions on outdoor gatherings for the disability justice and rights movement, PPA/NYC will host a webinar on Dec. 3 at 7:00 p.m. Contact PPA/NYC at peoplespowerassemblies@gmail.com to get access information. To attend the PPA webinar: fb.me/ecvzfzbn3F.

Yudelovich is an organizer with the Disability Justice and Rights Caucus of Workers World Party with neurodivergent and auditory disabilities. Our caucus can be contacted at djrcwvp@workers.org.

WW COMMENTARY

By Princess Harmony

In addressing addiction, harm reduction comes in many forms. Some include drug decriminalization, safe injection sites, spreading of Narcan and other forms of naloxone, distribution of medicines for medication assisted treatment along with pure drugs, fentanyl test kits, distribution of clean needles, and the diversion of methadone and buprenorphine. We should examine every form of harm reduction, because understanding them is key to defeating the scourge that is the disease of addiction.

It is important to remember that addiction is indeed a mental illness. Without understanding this, by treating it like a personal choice, it is impossible to have a correct position on the subject.

Drug decriminalization is the most potent form of harm reduction. Under the current system, the “War on Drugs” rightly frightens people into hiding their drug use and into hiding completely. Forcing people who use drugs to hide means they won’t take the steps necessary to keep themselves safe.

The War on Drugs is a failed system, but it is “successful” for the for-profit prison owners. It gives them a steady supply of people to cruelly enslave. Drug decriminalization, on the other hand, provides drug users the opportunity to use drugs but also seek treatment without fear of imprisonment. The money that has been used for imprisonment could be put towards drug treatment programs, where people would be able to turn away from drugs.

Harm reduction, not jails!

The disease of addiction drives people to use drugs in the most dangerous ways. That’s where safe injection sites come in. Safe injection sites have naloxone (Narcan, Evzio), fentanyl test kits, and clean needles on hand. They permit the user to use drugs safely, in a way that keeps them from dying of an opioid overdose.

A safe injection site was planned for Philadelphia — a city singularly impacted by the opioid epidemic. However, neighborhood complaints, and an outcry from people who either don’t know or don’t care that opioid use disorder (opioid addiction) is a disease, shut the project down. In addition, the group behind the site is struggling with legal barriers that impact its opening.

Lives can be saved!

Narcan and Evzio save lives. This is just a fact. By acquiring and sharing them — typically they can be acquired without the use of a prescription — these medications get into the hands of people who would benefit from them. There are people who are overdosing in the streets.

It’s so important for people to know how to use Narcan/Evzio in case they encounter someone in that state of distress. The 2016 and 2017 deaths of the musicians Prince and Lil Peep, among the most recent deaths of celebrities to addiction, could have been prevented if the people around them had, and knew how to use, naloxone kits.

People must have access to medication assisted treatment — which includes buprenorphine (products such as

Suboxone), methadone, naltrexone (products such as Vivitrol), and diacetylmorphine (commonly known as heroin; heroin-assisted treatment is legal in Canada and elsewhere) — it’s also important for them to have access to steady supplies of pure drugs not tainted with toxic fentanyl. In Canada, Vancouver to be specific, organizations dedicated to supporting and helping drug users have distributed pure drugs to their clientele. With a supply of medications and pure drugs, people who use drugs are at lesser risk for overdose and death.

If pure drugs aren’t available, like in the United States, then the next best thing is to test all drugs — regardless of what type they are — for fentanyl. Fentanyl and fentanyl analogues (such as butyrfentanyl, acetylfentanyl, ohmefentanyl and carfentanil) are often responsible for fatal and nonfatal overdoses. When drug users are given the ability to test their drugs, it saves them from overdose, complications from overdose and death.

Nonprofits and community collectives — such as Project SAFE and Prevention Point Philadelphia — are starting to embrace the idea of distributing fentanyl testing strips. These strips may or may not be legal everywhere, but the reward of saving lives is well worth the risk.

Many tools are necessary

The distribution of clean needles saves people from getting illnesses like HIV and Hepatitis B and C. In some states distribution of clean needles may be



These simple overdose reduction kits, when used properly, save lives. CREDIT: PREVENTION POINT

illegal, though the practice still continues underground.

The most controversial harm reduction activity is the diversion — meaning the share and spread of “illicit” methadone and buprenorphine. This harm reduction activity is controversial because it breaks the law and potentially could backfire, although the practice is still a necessity for the survival of some drug users.

Methadone, a very potent opioid agonist, could cause some who do not have the tolerance to go into a state of overdose. But the distribution of “illicit” methadone allows for people to avoid the pain of withdrawing, and opioid withdrawal can, infrequently, cause death. Buprenorphine has the benefit of having a ceiling effect, making it hard for people to overdose on it. Buprenorphine diversion is easier, too, as it’s prescribed like a normal medicine and not distributed at a clinic like methadone.

To put it simply, methadone and

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Biden’s appointees aim to restore pre-2016 Washington

By John Catalinotto

Even as #45 continues to bring lawsuits in a desperate attempt to reverse the vote that should eject him from the White House on Jan. 20, the government office controlling expenses released funds allowing President-elect Joe Biden to appoint staff and nominate officials.

Biden’s earliest nominees and first appointments brought few surprises to anyone who has followed his career or listened to his campaign speeches. The records of the cabinet nominees, for example, show that the new administration will attempt to restore the pre-2016 role of U.S. imperialism. Since the decline of U.S. world hegemony has accelerated, they are not likely to succeed.

It’s true that the Biden/Harris “team” will look more diverse than #45’s gang.

The nominations point to a continuation of Obama administration policies on domestic questions, which were pro-business and anti-immigrant – except for the DACA program.

Biden’s foreign policy indicates a renewed attempt to include Washington’s imperialist allies in its plans to maintain control of the world’s resources and the exploitation of workers worldwide. While more consistent than Trump’s policies, the new administration’s goals will be to reconquer areas of the world that had wrested some sovereignty from imperialism during the period from about 1945 to 1991, when the Soviet Union existed.

Biden himself, first as a senator from Delaware and later as vice president, supported the wars against Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq, which is why his cabinet appointments should be no surprise.

Antony Blinken, State Department

Biden has nominated Antony Blinken, his longtime aide in the Senate, as secretary of state. According to Politico (Nov. 29), “In his roles in the NSC [National Security Council] under Obama and as deputy secretary of state, Blinken advocated for more robust U.S. involvement in the Syria conflict, and notably broke with his boss, Biden, to support the armed intervention in Libya. He was also a close aide to Biden when the then-senator supported the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003.”

Politico says Blinken is a fierce believer in the transatlantic alliance and considers U.S. leadership in multilateral institutions essential. In 2016 Blinken said, “Put simply, the world is safer for the American people when we have friends, partners and allies.” Translating



Reps. Ilhan Omar and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez signed a petition to stop Biden from appointing ‘deficit hawk’ Bruce Reed as OMB head.

diplomat-talk into straight talk, this means U.S. imperialism has lost its former predominant position and needs to share some of the pillage with other imperialist powers if it wants to keep the rest of the world subdued.

Blinken called Europe “a vital partner” and has dismissed the Trump administration’s plans to remove U.S. troops from Germany, especially because “it weakens NATO, it helps Vladimir Putin, and it harms Germany, our most important ally in Europe.” In other words, he thinks if the U.S. dismisses and disrespects German imperialism, it might push the German government into making deals with Russia.

Avril Haines, DNI

Biden named Avril Haines, a former deputy director of the CIA, as director of national intelligence (DNI). A recent article by CNN national security analyst Samantha Vinograd described Haines as a reliable expert who wants to “depoliticize intelligence.” This is in reaction to Trump’s dismissal of intelligence that doesn’t support his choices and his appointment of cronies to top positions in the spy agencies.

According to the Nov. 23 New York Times, Haines was “the architect of the Obama administration’s program targeting terrorists with drones, some of which killed civilians.” The Times described her as having lots of experience working with covert programs. Haines also strongly supported Trump’s CIA director, Gina Haspel, who carried out and justified torturing prisoners during interrogation.

Revolving doors of the MIC

The Trump administration is notorious for using its role running the U.S. to enhance its business opportunities. Democratic Party officials have found a way to gain

some of the same advantages in a slightly different way.

Blinken was one of the founders of WestExec in 2017, along with Michèle A. Flournoy, who is on Biden’s short list for secretary of defense. WestExec’s website offers “unique geopolitical and policy expertise” to companies seeking to navigate “external factors and relationships that affect businesses” in Washington and around the world. (New York Times Nov. 28.)

Haines also has worked as a consultant for WestExec, as do other possible appointees being considered by the Biden administration. One of the companies WestExec had as a client, Shield AI, makes surveillance drones. The same Times article reports on this “revolving door” connecting government appointees with the military-industrial complex.

Some of the more progressive elements in the Democratic Party are already raising opposition to these appointments from WestExec. Also, Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar have signed a petition calling on Biden not to appoint an old crony, Bruce Reed, to head the the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Under Obama, Reed led demands for cuts in Social Security and Medicare.

Another questionable nominee is Alejandro Mayorkas, whom Biden has chosen to head the Department of Homeland Security. This nomination caused a stir in the media, which emphasized Mayorkas’ background as a Latinx immigrant who came to the U.S. as a young child and grew up in Los Angeles.

Mayorkas’ Romanian mother took refuge in Cuba soon after World War II. Talking of his father, the owner of a steel wool factory who left Cuba with his family in 1960, “He did not want to raise the family in a communist country. He believed in democracy, and he understood the perils and the challenges of living otherwise.” (Los Angeles Times, Nov. 23)

While Mayorkas is expect to play a “centrist” role in the NSA, that statement positions him as a strong anti-communist.

Biden also nominated former chair of the Federal Reserve Janet Yellen to be secretary of the treasury. Yellen is known to be a “financial hawk” – someone ready at any time to cut social benefits.

Many of the other appointees to staff positions that don’t need congressional approval worked in government under the Clinton, Bush or Obama administrations. So far, anyone from the left has been frozen out. □

Capitalist crimes against seniors in nursing homes

By Jim McMahan

As we are hit by a second wave of the pandemic, the causes of the 266,000 U.S. deaths of COVID-19 must be exposed. It is not because of the virus alone that the U.S. has become the world’s leader in number of deaths. It is the capitalist system and its for-profit health care industry.

This is especially true in the country’s nursing homes, where 77,000 workers and residents have died of COVID-19 this year. Nursing homes and other long-term care facilities house about 1% of the U.S. population but have about 40% of COVID-19 deaths. (tinyurl.com/y423a84p) More than 1,300 nursing homes reported having three or more cases as of the first week of November. New cases are especially rising in the Midwestern states with 1,473 in Illinois, 1,399 in Ohio, 1,353 in Texas and 1,206 in Missouri.

Large numbers of nursing homes report staff shortages and are still struggling to get personal protective equipment and have workers and residents tested. The national stockpile for PPE is running low.

Victoria Richardson is a staff assistant earning \$14 an hour at Forest View Rehabilitation and Nursing Care, run by Infinity Health Management in the Chicago area. Richardson lost her husband to cancer in September and struggles to pay her bills.

COVID-19 has killed 18 residents at Forest View. After owners took away hazard pay and were not supplying adequate PPE, Richardson and 700 other members of the Service Employees union recently went on strike and won the hazard pay back and PPE!

Causes of death include racism, ageism, capitalism

The epidemic has hit Black and other communities of color especially hard. A Washington Post study of two dozen states found that the death rate was 20% higher



Health care workers — the majority Black and Latinx women--went on strike at nursing home and other long-term care facilities at 11 Illinois locations on Nov. 23, here at Oak Lawn Rehabilitation Center.

where a majority of nursing home residents were Black than if a majority were white. At 250 predominantly Black homes, more than 2,200 residents have died from COVID-19.

On top of the 77,000 COVID deaths caused by this ageist attack against seniors and workers in nursing homes, tens of thousands more have died because overburdened workers can’t give the care they need. For every two in long-term care who die consistent with the normal rate of death, it is estimated that one more dies prematurely due to other causes. These are “excess deaths.” (tinyurl.com/y46wjvuu)

Since early in the pandemic, nursing home visitors and government inspections have been halted — in normal times nursing home residents have regular contact with people who can advocate for their safety.

On top of that, nursing homes are extremely short-staffed. At least 15% of direct-care workers live below

100% of the poverty rate, and nearly half live below 200% of the federal poverty level income, according to PHI, a nonprofit that works to improve long-term care. (tinyurl.com/yyar6rwh) The median wage for direct-care workers is only \$20,200 a year.

Many more nursing and other health care workers need to be hired. Their wages need to be greatly increased. We need support and solidarity for these essential workers who daily put their lives on the line. All the nursing homes that have been shuttered in recent years need to be reopened and new facilities built.

COVID-19 is a deadly disease, but the deadly disease of capitalism is worse. We need to fight for the Socialist Demands of Workers World Party for the COVID-19 crisis, including “Free healthcare for all” and “Nationalize the health care system under community control. Build emergency hospitals.” □

Harm reduction, not jails!

Continued from page 8

buprenorphine diversion — despite their risks — are necessary parts of a harm reduction model, because it saves the user from going through overdose where the chances of a fatal overdose on opioids like fentanyl are highest.

Harm reduction is a set of tools — and a philosophy — that saves lives, especially the lives of opioid users. Marxist-Leninists, striving for a better society, should support harm reduction, because it saves members of the proletariat from death and things like brain damage. We should oppose laws that hold back harm reduction and put pressure on authorities to allow such tools to be used. □

Companies lie, workers strike back

We are in the middle of an epic and escalating pandemic in the U.S. There are 200,000 new cases almost daily, and deaths are accelerating.

We all know this. What's missing is how to at least slow, if not stop, the tragic losses that are hitting hardest the people in poverty, communities of color, people who are disabled, seniors, LGBTQ2S+ people, and anyone marginalized in accessing health care.

As we the ordinary working people face the crisis, what is Big Business doing?

Making more money than ever by cancelling hazard pay, refusing to supply PPE or virus tests to workers, docking workers' pay for time lost in quarantine and illness — and pushing off blame for the spreading illness onto workers.

A Nov. 27 Guardian article reported a Kaiser Health News study showing a deliberate pattern by business owners of refusing to take responsibility for preventing workplace transmission, in part by not reporting COVID infections in their companies. (tinyurl.com/yxcq8jqt)

"Lost on the Frontline" investigated over 240 deaths in tracking 1,413 frontline

health workers. The report found "employers did not report more than one-third of them to a state or federal OSHA office, many based on internal decisions that the deaths were not work-related — conclusions that were not independently reviewed." (tinyurl.com/y393ndr2)

The report noted: "In California, public health officials have documented about 200 healthcare worker deaths. Yet the state's OSHA office received only 75 fatality reports at healthcare facilities through Oct. 26."

Health care bosses refuse to report deaths, despite the certainty that frontline health care workers have a high risk of contracting COVID-19 at work.

Meanwhile, according to Axios, "a vast majority of health care companies are reporting profits that many people assumed would not have been possible as the pandemic raged on." (tinyurl.com/yxolpjfg)

Actually, Marxist economists and communists could have predicted this spike in profits, as capitalists are legendary for their ruthlessness in using crisis conditions — like war or pandemic — as

opportunities to make even more money out of people dying.

Of course, the capitalist tendency to sacrifice workers' lives for the bottom line occurs across all industries, not just healthcare workers.

For example, a retired autoworker told WW that autoworkers still on the job report that their companies attribute plant cases to "community transmission" — even though close contact between thousands of workers must be spiking infection.

But workers everywhere are mobilizing against the murderous neglect and deliberate sacrifice of their lives by Big Business.

In Puget Sound, Wash., a group of 200 doctors and nurse practitioners went on strike Nov. 23, for the first time, against increasing caseloads without proper PPE. (Pay Day Report, Nov. 24)

On the same day in Oaklawn, Ill., and 11 other locations across that state, 700 certified nursing assistants, aides, housekeepers and other workers struck over unsafe working conditions and the cancellation of COVID hazard pay.

In rural Austinburg, Ohio, 200 warehouse workers walked off the job on Nov.

20 because of safety and pay issues relating to the company's COVID-19 policies, including workers being docked hundreds of dollars for time missed due to quarantine.

And at an Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Ala., workers filed notice with the National Labor Relations Board of their plans to unionize the 1,500 full and part-time employees there. One of Amazon's newer warehouses, it has ramped up business during the pandemic shopping surge, adding to the company's record-setting profits — and setting up even more potential for COVID infection at the workplace. (tinyurl.com/y2z76aa3, NPR, Nov. 25)

The workers' "Why a Union?" statement on bamazonunion.org said: "With a union contract, we can form a worker safety committee, and negotiate the highest safety standards and protocols for our workplace."

Big Business is out to make profit from workers' lives — and deaths. Marxist economics explains why this will always happen — unless workers resist.

And during this pandemic emergency, workers are striking back! □

U.S. role in assassination of Iranian scientist

By Sara Flounders

The targeted assassination of top Iranian physicist and nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh on Nov. 27, and Donald Trump's immediate approving Tweet, confirm the determination of U.S. and Israeli rulers to sabotage every possible effort for peace or normalization of relations with Iran or other countries in the region.

The multi-pronged attack involved at least one explosion and small-arms fire by a number of assailants.

Regardless of who the media blame, whether Israel or the Washington-supported Iranian terrorist group People's Mujahedin Organization, this latest act of state-sponsored terrorism follows decades of U.S. sanctions, sabotage, and assassinations against Iran, plus invasions and occupations of surrounding countries.

Almost a year ago, on Jan. 3, a U.S. drone assassinated a highly respected Iranian general, Qasem Suleimani, as he was traveling to Iraq with a peace proposal involving countries throughout the region. U.S. intelligence agencies were well aware of the peaceful purpose of his trip.

Suleimani's assassination confirmed that U.S. leaders felt threatened by the possibility that the countries of the region might arrive at peace or reconciliation among themselves. This new assassination of a top Iranian scientist is a criminal provocation and a desperate attempt to lure Iran into a response leading to a wider war.

Iran has long maintained that its nuclear program is strictly for peaceful purposes, not weapons. Nuclear technology today is a crucial part of industrial development and even medical progress.

U.S. effort to block development

Never mentioned in the U.S. media is that Fakhrizadeh was a pioneer in Iran's effort to combat the novel coronavirus. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif described this crucial role: "One of the latest services of Martyr Fakhrizadeh was his outstanding role in the development of the first indigenous COVID-19 test kit, which is a great contribution to our national efforts in curbing the COVID-19 pandemic at a time when Iran is under inhumane sanctions of the United States, strictly preventing our access to humanitarian goods including medicines and medical equipment." (tinyurl.com/y259rl9f)

Fakhrizadeh headed the Iranian Defense Ministry's Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research. He trained many researchers to find ways to scientifically advance Iran, especially for defense. He helped apply lasers to the detection of invading aircraft.

Four other senior Iranian scientists have been assassinated over the past decade. Others were injured in assassination attempts. Targeted assassinations and economic sanctions are meant to deprive countries of



Iranians mourn Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, Tehran, Nov. 28.

scientific capabilities and development.

Iran's High Council for Human Rights denounced the atrocity as an outright violation of the country's right to have access to science and technology in order to progress.

U.S. violated nuclear agreement

Iran demonstrated the peaceful nature of its nuclear program in 2015 by signing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with six world powers — the U.S., Germany, France, Britain, Russia and China.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has acknowledged Iran's compliance with this onerous agreement, after subjecting its nuclear work to extensive and recurrent examinations.

After Iran kept its part of the agreement, the Trump administration violated it in May 2018 and re-imposed unilateral sanctions on Iran. Washington then demanded that every other country also violate the agreement and impose sanctions on Iran. This illegal unilateral action outraged even other imperialists who conduct profitable business with Iran.

The incoming Biden administration wants to revive the agreement — but not to end attempts to strangle Iran. Rather, it aims to restore relations with imperialist allies who have been snubbed and insulted by Trump.

U.S. imperialists are also concerned that Iran's expanding trade with China and Russia is undermining U.S. dominance in the region and limiting the impact of sanctions.

A staged provocation

The latest attack is understood internationally.

Mark Fitzpatrick, former State Department nonproliferation official, tweeted: "The reason for assassinating Fakhrizadeh wasn't to impede Iran's war potential, it was to impede diplomacy." (New York Times, Nov. 29)

Even former CIA Director John O. Brennan said the assassination of the Iranian scientist was "an act of state-sponsored terrorism" that could ignite a new round

of conflict in the region.

Powerful forces in the vast military and intelligence infrastructure are committed to the strictest form of U.S. sanctions, hoping to unleash a wider war which would enormously profit the military-industrial complex.

Israeli role in attack

The U.S. corporate media is crediting Israel with this latest criminal attack.

The Zionists have always been more than willing to play the role of U.S. imperialism's attack dog in the region.

In fact, Israel could not survive without the endless stream of U.S. military, economic and diplomatic support.

The U.S. has used its veto power against U.N. resolutions on Israel at least 43 times in recent decades. Total U.S. aid to Israel from 1946 to 2018 amounted to \$236 billion. Almost all current U.S. aid to Israel is in the form of military assistance. ("U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel," Nov. 16, Federation of American Scientists, Congressional Research Service)

U.S. agencies may claim little advance knowledge of the assassination of Fakhrizadeh, but the Israeli and U.S. governments are the closest of allies and have long shared intelligence regarding Iran.

Israel is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and has refused to either confirm or deny the existence of nuclear weapons in its arsenal. But according to the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, "Israel is widely believed to possess 90 plutonium-based nuclear warheads and to have produced enough plutonium for 100-200 weapons."

Thus it is sheer hypocrisy to lambaste Iran for its peaceful development of nuclear energy.

Will Biden be different?

Michèle Flournoy, apparently President-elect Biden's top choice for Secretary of Defense, is a well-known war hawk. As a Defense Department official in both the Clinton and Obama administrations, Flournoy had a key role in the criminal U.S. wars in Libya and Syria and the continuing war in Afghanistan.

Flournoy has written countless policy papers promoting higher military spending, renewed military threats against Iran, and larger plan for transforming the U.S. military through trillion-dollar long-term investments in new weapons technology.

Both the outgoing Trump administration and the incoming Biden administration are determined to continue the sanctions and war against Iran. The only differences revolve around how best to proceed.

It is up to anti-imperialist forces in the U.S. and around the world to challenge this continuing assault against Iran. The sanctions, assassinations and military encirclement are a threat to both Iran and the people of the world. □



Diego Maradona, wearing Che Guevara shirt, referred to Fidel Castro as a “second father to him” following Fidel’s death in 2016.

Argentinian Diego Maradona ¡Presente!

Bolivarian soccer genius

By Danny Shaw and William Camacaro

This excerpted article first appeared on Council on Hemispheric Affairs on Nov. 26. (tinyurl.com/coha-diego)

The fighting peoples of the world lost a humble legend on Nov. 25. Diego Armando Maradona was 60 years old. Arguably the greatest soccer player to ever grace the pitches, the spirited striker combined unparalleled skills in his sport and an unflinching outspokenness before oppression. No other sports figure’s public statements and transformation have equally captured the changing momentum across Latin America.

He embraced the peoples of Cuba, Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Argentina and more, by developing deep friendships with Fidel, Raúl, Lula, Evo, Hugo, Nicolás, Daniel, the Kirchners and many more.

Maradona was for the people of South America what Muhammad Ali was for Black America.

The Falklands War

When a Spanish player hurled racist epithets at him because of his Indigenous ancestry, Maradona headbutted him, leading to a brawl that was broadcast before King Juan Carlos, in front of 100,000 fans in the stadium, and with half of Spain watching on television.

Maradona, 22 years old at the time, was radicalized by England’s 1982 Falklands War assault on his homeland, known in Latin America as “la guerra de las Malvinas” and “la guerra del Atlántico Sur.”

Causing untold agony and trauma, hundreds of soldiers died on both sides, and numerous veterans committed suicide for years after. Reagan’s U.S. claimed to be a “mediator,” but stayed faithful to their junior colonial partner led by the ultraconservative Margaret Thatcher.

This was the backdrop of the 1986 [quarter-final] showdown between the two countries, without diplomatic relations, at the World Cup in Mexico City. Argentina was South America, and South America was Argentina.

Maradona famously scored a crafty goal, where slow motion highlights show he illegally used his hand to redirect the ball into the English net. When the English team accused him after the game at the press conference of cheating by using his hand, he responded that “sería la mano de dios,” “it must have been the hand of god.” (tinyurl.com/y4zfrdjo) Sports analysts applauded the “picardía” or Argentine cunningness behind the maneuver. The second goal was a miracle of human athletic skill. Maradona made a full sprint, starting on the Argentinian side, far from the English goalkeeper, and clearing a path through a minefield of English defenders, to execute a stunning goal that went down in sports history as “the goal of the century.” (tinyurl.com/yxkg6gn7)

These heroic acts sealed Diego’s destiny as an enormously popular figure combatting neocolonialism. To beat England in Latin America was to exact revenge on the invading enemy.

The front lines in the battle of ideas

In 2000, an overweight and beleaguered Maradona travelled to Cuba to treat his drug addiction. Fidel Castro visited him in his worst moments and helped take care of him. The Cuban president took off his military coat and gave it to the patient. Maradona said he adored Fidel, because he was “genuine and cared about human problems that others brushed aside.”

The down-and-out “wretched of the earth” was not rejected in Havana; he was accepted, treated like a dignified human being and loved.

The same year, Japan denied Maradona a visa because of strict laws barring anybody from the country who had a history with drugs. Today, however, past and present Japanese soccer players pay tribute to Maradona.

The Bolivarian Revolution was advancing across Latin America and had recently paid off Argentina’s foreign debt. Hugo Chávez traveled to Argentina to contest the interventionist and free trade agenda of the U.S. leader. La Plata river divided the two countries and the two sides of history.

Rising to the historical occasion, with Diego by his side donning a “Stop Bush” T-shirt, the Venezuelan leader famously chanted: “El que no brinca es yankee.” (If you don’t jump you’re an imperialist.) Maradona gave credence to Evo Morales’ catch phrase: “the empire stands with the right wing, football stands with the left.”

This was the battle of ideas Castro spoke of.

The mainstream press is also remembering the football titan but consciously shying away from his political commitments. Like the political leaders he so admired, Maradona never expressed ire towards the people of the United States, but rather towards its political elites who thought they were “the county sheriff.”

Through the years of the Pink Tide, Maradona was a regular on television programs and at rallies with Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Daniel Ortega, José “Pepe” Mujica and other anti-imperialist figures of the continent.

Last year, following a coaching win in April, he stated, “I want to dedicate this victory to Nicolás Maduro and all Venezuelans, who are suffering. These Yankees, the sheriffs of the world, think just because they have the world’s biggest bomb they can push us around. But no, not us.”

Danny Shaw and William Camacaro are the senior research fellow and senior analyst, respectively at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs. Fred Mills and Patricio Zamorano contributed as co-editors.

General strike

Greek workers respond to government’s attacks

By G. Dunkel

In big cities like Athens and Thessaloniki, and smaller ones like Larissa and Patras, workers in Greece struck and marched by the thousands Nov. 26 to defend workers’ wages and benefits. Their actions defied government restrictions, made under the pretext of responding to COVID-19, which limit gatherings of more than three people.

The Greek government has introduced bills into parliament, at the behest of big business, which require workers to accept a 10-hour work day while only getting paid for 8 hours, along with substantially lower wages and Sunday work. Social security will be privatized, along with public facilities such as transportation systems.

A decade of austerity imposed by the IMF and the big European and U.S. banks has shrunk Greece’s economy by at least 25%. The impact of COVID-19 has produced a 10.5% drop in its GDP in 2020. The Greek capitalists need every euro they can extort from Greek workers.

Dozens of union federations, labor centers and trade unions across the country went on strike, responding to the call from the All Workers Militant Front (PAME). Among them are federations of hospital doctors and other medical workers, construction workers, workers in the pharmaceutical industry, and the labor centers of Athens, Piraeus, Patras and dozens of other cities.

The unions representing marine workers — particularly important in a country with so many islands — held a 24-hour nationwide strike in all ship categories, while the workers of the Athens urban transport also participated in the strike.

PAME has demanded benefits — without terms and conditions — for all unemployed workers, revoking all illegal layoffs during this COVID-19 period and ending any further job furloughs. PAME and the unions supporting its call also demand no cuts in employment rights and a moratorium on bank payments, along with free electricity, gas, water and communication services for workers in quarantine.

Health workers’ demands

Protesting health workers have demanded more hospital beds, including intensive care units, additional diagnostics and laboratory centers, as well as the mass recruitment of doctors of all specialties and nursing staff. A key demand is that the government ensure sufficient infrastructure and personal protective equipment.

Greece held infections low during the first COVID-19 wave in Europe, with just hundreds of cases and dozens of deaths. However, starting at the end of October, cases and deaths began to spike. As of Nov. 29, Greece, whose population is just over 10 million, has 104,722 cases and 2,321 deaths, according to the Worldometer website.

Videos and pictures, as posted on the PAME website and Flickr albums, show that the Nov. 26 protests complied with proper COVID-19 precautions. Protesters were masked and, except those carrying banners, observed proper distances.

PAME is calling on all workers to react to the government and employer attack, to leave no one out of this struggle, to dismiss all fear, intimidation and pessimism and let the strike message reach everywhere, every workplace! (tinyurl.com/yylcnkoj)

In November before the general strike, a struggle broke out around commemorating the 1973 occupation of Athens Polytechnic University. At that time, a coalition of students and



Greek demonstrators, maintaining social distance, commemorate the 1973 Greek student revolt against the former military dictatorship.

workers was protesting the military dictatorship led by army colonels, who had acted in a U.S.-NATO plot to seize power in April 1967.

The military used tanks then to crush the university occupation, which had gained a tremendous amount of popular support. The reaction to this massacre led to the fall of the Colonels’ dictatorship in 1974.

The commemoration of the Polytechnic occupation has drawn thousands of supporters in past years, but the current right-wing government tried to ban the traditional march from the Polytechnic to the U.S. embassy. A coalition of the social-democratic Syriza, which led the government from 2015 until July last year, the Greek Communist Party (KKE) and Mera25, founded by former finance minister Yannis Varoufakis, put up such a storm of protest that even the conservative Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotaki had to lay a wreath at the Polytechnic.

Greek workers continue to protest for their rights and lives despite the reactionary regime and the pandemic. □

Crecientes amenazas contra hogares de los obreros

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Hay predicciones de que se presentarán hasta 4,1 millones de casos de desalojo en el primer mes de 2021. Y la orden de los CDC y la Ley CARES simplemente pospusieron la fecha de vencimiento del alquiler; las medidas no perdonaron la deuda de alquiler.

Mientras muchos inquilinos luchan

por mantenerse a flote y evitar las catástrofes que traería la falta de vivienda, la gran burguesía de este país lo está bien. Business Insider (30 de octubre) estima que los multimillonarios estadounidenses aumentaron su riqueza en medio billón (millón de millones) de dólares en 2020, mientras que 40 millones de trabajadores estadounidenses solicitaron un seguro de desempleo. □



Las trabajadoras están al frente de la huelga de todo India de 250 millones de trabajadoras, 26 de noviembre.

Crímenes de lesa humanidad: ¡Acusamos de genocidio!

El viernes 20 de noviembre, se diagnosticaron más de 200.000 casos nuevos de COVID-19 en los EE.UU. ¡En solo ese día!

Desde que el virus comenzó a viajar por el país a fines de enero, al principio sin ser detectado, más de 260.000 personas han muerto en los EE.UU. y más de 12.250.000 personas han contraído la enfermedad. (worldometer.com)

Reportes se han extendido de que las morgues de la ciudad estaban abrumadas por los cuerpos y los hospitales que se quedan sin espacio para tratamiento, ya que las tasas de infección aumentan en casi todos los estados.

Estamos en medio de una carnicería mucho, mucho más mortal que la que sufrieron los soldados estadounidenses durante las guerras del siglo XX. En 11 meses, le cifra de muertes por COVID en los Estados Unidos es cuatro veces mas que los soldados muertos durante los 11 años de la guerra contra Vietnam. Y las muertes por coronavirus en el país pronto superarán las 290.000 muertes de soldados estadounidenses en batalla durante los cuatro años de conflicto de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. (Departamento de Asuntos de Veteranos de EE.UU., “America’s Wars”)

Estas cifras son una acusación condenatoria de la llamada “democracia” estadounidense que supuestamente se libraron para defender esas guerras. Las cifras revelan los continuos crímenes de un gobierno creado para gobernar, desde sus inicios, a través del colonialismo, el capitalismo y el imperialismo.

Ahora, en medio de una crisis de salud mundial, vemos que esta empresa estadounidense con fines de lucro no tiene ayuda organizada, eficaz y oportuna, ni

misericordia, para las personas que viven aquí. No hay plan para millones de personas sin trabajo, que enfrentan el desalojo o la ejecución hipotecaria, que pasan hambre e incluso que mueren de hambre en este momento.

Y no hay plan para detener la pandemia, excepto una vacuna aún no disponible que sin duda irá primero a quienes pueden pagarla y tal vez nunca a los más oprimidos, que morirán antes de que llegue a su vecindario.

La guerra contra los oprimidos y los trabajadores

Estamos en medio de una guerra a muerte que va en contra de la gente oprimida y trabajadora en los Estados Unidos. Nombrar este genocidio no es una exageración, como lo expone el foco de atención de estos números.

El mayor peso de la pandemia en los EE.UU. está recayendo sobre los afroamericanos, latinos e indígenas. Y los que se enferman, mueren y se ven afectados de manera desproporcionada también son aquellos que tienen problemas para acceder a la atención médica en cualquier circunstancia: personas discapacitadas, personas pobres, personas en prisión, personas queer y trans.

APM Research Lab en su informe del 12 de noviembre, “El color del coronavirus”, documentó: “Los afroamericanos continúan experimentando las tasas reales de mortalidad por COVID-19 más altas en todo el país, aproximadamente dos o más veces más altas que la tasa de los blancos... que tienen las tasas reales más bajas”. Cuando APM ajustó las tasas de mortalidad para las diferencias en la distribución por edad de las poblaciones, encontró “disparidades de mortalidad documentadas aún

más grandes: las personas negras, indígenas y latinas en los EE.UU. tienen una tasa de mortalidad por COVID-19 del triple o más que los estadounidenses blancos, que experimentan las tasas más bajas ajustadas por edad”. (tinyurl.com/y9l4v9xm)

En un artículo de Workers World/Mundo Obrero del 15 de septiembre, “COVID y la gente de color: ¿es un genocidio todavía?”, Teresa Gutiérrez conecta los ataques mortales del capitalismo: “Sustituya el ‘coronavirus’ con la mayoría de las enfermedades u otras condiciones sociales nefastas como el desempleo, la gentrificación, el hambre o calamidades sociales más amplias como el cambio climático, y allí también las personas de color serán las más afectadas. En otras palabras, las personas de color son las más afectadas por cada maldita calamidad capitalista. COVID-19 ha expuesto el hecho de que la actual infraestructura global del capitalismo, bajo la cual vive la mayoría de la gente, no solo es incapaz de abordar la pandemia, sino que la agrava”.

Los crímenes de la clase dominante estadounidense

Acusamos al gobierno de los Estados Unidos, y a su clase dominante, de genocidio y crímenes de lesa humanidad por negarse a dar una respuesta efectiva a la pandemia de COVID-19.

Volvemos a plantear las acusaciones contra Estados Unidos formuladas en 1951 por el Congreso de Derechos Civiles (CDC), afiliado al Partido Comunista de Estados Unidos. Dirigido por ilustres activistas afroamericanos, incluido el Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, Claudia Jones, Paul Robeson y Mary Church Terrell, el CDC presentó: “Acusamos de genocidio: la petición histórica a la ONU para el alivio de un crimen de los Estados Unidos contra el pueblo negro”. (Advertencia de activación, violencia

racista: tinyurl.com/y63w2fze)

La petición de la CDC definió el genocidio de EE.UU. como “la creación deliberada de condiciones que provocan la muerte prematura, la pobreza y la enfermedad, incluido el asesinato de personas negras desarmadas a manos de la policía y linchamientos, y la falta de la misma calidad de atención médica, trabajos, educación y vivienda como los blancos”.

Archivada en virtud de la Convención de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Genocidio, la petición definía “genocidio” como “actos cometidos para destruir, total o parcialmente, un grupo nacional, étnico o religioso”, incluido “matar a miembros del grupo”, “causar graves daños corporales o daño mental a los miembros del grupo”, e “infligir deliberadamente al grupo condiciones de vida calculadas para provocar su destrucción física total o parcial”. (tinyurl.com/y3lmtfvv)

La Convención tipifica el genocidio como un delito punible según el derecho internacional, ya sea que se cometa “en tiempo de paz o en tiempo de guerra”.

A través y durante la epidemia de coronavirus, la clase dominante de los EE.UU., junto con su gobierno capitalista, está librando una guerra no declarada y muy real contra los oprimidos y los trabajadores de este país, incluido el uso de la policía y el terror de ICE.

¡Así que acusamos de genocidio! ¡Acusamos crímenes de lesa humanidad!

Decimos “¡Adelante!” en el camino hacia el socialismo, donde las muertes de los trabajadores y los oprimidos no se juzguen inevitables, donde el gobierno no se estructura para lucrarse con la gente sino para satisfacer nuestras necesidades. Avancemos paso a paso implacable, hasta llegar al lugar donde el poder del pueblo crea un mundo sano y liberado. □

Crecientes amenazas contra hogares de los obreros

Por G. Dunkel

En marzo y abril, más de 22 millones de trabajadores en los Estados Unidos perdieron sus trabajos. Hasta ahora, la tambaleante recuperación económica ha traído retornado a 12 millones, pero 10 millones de trabajadores, el 90% de ellos en el sector de servicios mal remunerados, todavía no tienen trabajo.

La mayoría de estos trabajadores son mujeres. La pérdida de empleos en el sector de servicios y la educación a distancia han tenido un impacto importante en las mujeres negras y latinas; al menos 824.000 mujeres latinas han dejado la fuerza laboral desde febrero. (NYT, 3 de noviembre)

Es difícil tener una imagen real de lo que está sucediendo en el mercado laboral y la economía en general porque las condiciones y las políticas están cambiando muy rápidamente. No está claro cuántos desempleados a largo plazo, (más de 26 semanas) hay, porque la tasa de participación en la fuerza laboral (el porcentaje de la población en edad de trabajar que trabaja o busca activamente empleo) es muy baja, incluso más baja que durante la Gran recesión del 2008.

Para la semana que finalizó el 14 de noviembre, los reclamos iniciales por desempleo estatal estuvieron ligeramente por

encima de 743.000, un salto con respecto a la semana anterior, y hubo 320.000 reclamos presentados ante los programas federales de desempleo. Esto no indica una recuperación económica real con la creación de más puestos de trabajo.

El tiempo que un trabajador desempleado recibe los beneficios y lo que les sucede cuando se agotan, varía de un estado a otro. La prioridad del gobierno es evitar que los trabajadores obtengan beneficios estatales de manera fraudulenta, no garantizar que los trabajadores obtengan lo que les corresponde. En algunos estados, los beneficios de los trabajadores se han retrasado cuando sus reclamaciones se marcan erróneamente como fraudulentas.

Desalojos masivos en el horizonte

Una cosa está clara. Esta pandemia está afectando mucho a los inquilinos de bajos ingresos. El Centro Conjunto de Estudios de Vivienda de la Universidad de Harvard informa que más de la mitad de los inquilinos que ganan menos de \$25.000 al año perdieron sus salarios entre marzo y septiembre. “Mientras que el 15% de los arrendatarios blancos en ese nivel de ingresos están atrasados, el 25% de los arrendatarios negros e hispanos están atrasados”, dijo Chris Herbert,



Un edificio de apartamentos, de alquiler controlado, Washington, DC.

director gerente del centro. Este es otro reflejo del racismo sistémico en la sociedad estadounidense.

Habrán consecuencias económicas importantes de esta crisis. El Banco de la Reserva Federal de Filadelfia ha estimado que los inquilinos de EE.UU. deberán aproximadamente \$7,2 mil millones en alquiler para diciembre. Si bien los desalojos no compensan los alquileres atrasados, sí les dan a los propietarios un atisbo de los ingresos futuros.

Existe una gran posibilidad de que comience un tsunami de desalojos en enero del 2021. La Ley CARES, el proyecto de ley de alivio de la pandemia que el Congreso aprobó en marzo, prohibía los desalojos en edificios con una hipoteca garantizada por el gobierno federal: aproximadamente la mitad del mercado de inquilinos estaba cubierto.

Hubo mucha confusión sobre estas restricciones. Los propietarios e inquilinos tuvieron problemas para encontrar información; Se requirió un papeleo complejo para demostrar que la imposibilidad de pagar estaba relacionada con COVID. Algunos propietarios recurrieron a desalojos “privados” (cambiar cerraduras, quitar la puerta principal, detener el mantenimiento, contratar matones), la mayoría de los cuales son ilegales porque conducen a conflictos y violencia.

Los Centros para el Control de Enfermedades intervinieron y restringieron los desalojos con el argumento de que contribuirían a la emergencia sanitaria actual. Varios estados e incluso algunas ciudades aprobaron restricciones similares.

Incluso en estados como Arizona y Arkansas, donde las protecciones para los inquilinos son escasas, los desalojos supervisados por la corte se redujeron drásticamente y, en ocasiones, los desalojos “privados” se revirtieron. Aún así, el Laboratorio de Desalojos de Princeton ha contabilizado más de 100.000 solicitudes de desalojo durante la pandemia en las 25 ciudades que rastrea. Sin embargo, estas prohibiciones contra los desalojos están programadas para expirar el 31 de diciembre.

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