

Sanders campaign reflects disgust with capitalism

By Martha Grevatt

Bulletin: Bernie Sanders is the winner of the Feb. 11 New Hampshire primary with 26 percent of the vote.

The path to becoming president of the United States — the so-called “democratic process” — is full of undemocratic obstacles that nearly always send a

wealthy, white, cisgendered, heterosexual, Christian-identified man to the White House.

Just to become a contender requires massive amounts of cash, most coming from wealthy donors. Then comes the Electoral College, which is based not on the popular vote but on the number of electoral votes allotted to each of the 50 states. This system, created

by slave-owning “founding fathers,” is biased against big cities, and allowed Donald Trump to become the 45th president, even though he had 3 million fewer popular votes than his opponent.

The long, drawn-out procedure of choosing the Democratic Party presidential candidate includes months of debates, followed by a primary season that runs from February to June, culminating in a convention in July.

Currently, two Black candidates and one Latinx candidate have dropped out of the race, while the Democratic National Committee has changed the rules to allow the participation of billionaire former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg in the next debate.

The first contest for convention delegates is always the Iowa caucuses. This year those took place Feb. 3, to be followed by the New Hampshire primary Feb. 11.

Success in these two states can give a candidate a distinct advantage going forward. Yet combined, these two states have a population of only 4.5 million. By contrast, almost 33.3 million people live in the country’s two largest metropolitan areas — centered on Los Angeles and New York City.

Among the country’s “whitest states,”

New Hampshire is number three and Iowa number five — and both also have a low union density. Why do these two states, which in no way represent a cross section of the voting population, go first?

The caucus system in Iowa makes it particularly difficult for working people to participate. In a primary election, voters go into a polling place, cast their votes and leave. Caucus voters, however, need to commit hours of their day to a complex procedure which involves meeting, discussing the candidates, voting, more discussion and then a second vote.

Where is the “democracy” if people with jobs or other responsibilities and obstacles can’t participate? Total voting in the caucuses numbered around 175,000 this year.

Glitches and bias

Returns from the Iowa caucuses were expected to be released Feb. 3, after the polls closed. However, a glitch in a smartphone app designed to tally votes led to major delays, with the full results released days later.

Shadow, the company that developed the app, has Democratic Party ties. This has fueled suspicion that the process may have been tainted to weaken the only

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Rallies for ‘democratic socialist’ Sanders draw thousands of young and oppressed workers, here at Queensbridge Park, New York City, Oct. 19, 2019.

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Chinese workers had the 1,600-bed Leishenshan (Thunder God Mountain) Hospital ready to accept patients three days after completing the 1,000-bed Huoshenshan (Fire God Mountain) Hospital, built in ten days.



Black History Month 3, 6-8

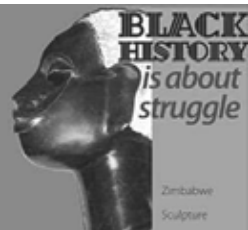
Chuck Africa: Home at last

Black labor:

Chattel to wage slavery

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John Brown, abolitionist



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Pensacola

Movement fights flood of anti-LGBTQ2+ bills

By Devin C. Pensacola, Fla.

Over 65 people gathered Feb. 2 at historic Seville Square in downtown Pensacola to kick off the fightback against 10 anti-LGBTQ2+ bills introduced into the Florida Legislature in the last two months. The rally, organized primarily by Strive (Socialist Trans Initiative), made Pensacola the first Florida city to come out so quickly against the right-wing bills.

Most pressing is HB1365/SB1864, which would make it a second degree felony, punishable by up to 15 years in prison, for a doctor to prescribe hormone replacement therapy or puberty blockers to transgender youth. Lack of access would force transgender youth to either delay or stop their transitioning process. The many trans youth already on blockers or HRT would be forced to stop. The rally focused on transgender youth because of this heavy impact.

A 16-year-old transgender man and high school student spoke to the crowd with a sense of urgency and fear: “If I didn’t have HRT, I wouldn’t have the confidence to walk up here and speak.” During the rally, five right-wing evangelicals attempted to disrupt, but after being called out publicly by speakers, all eyes were on them. After sizing the crowd up, the cowards realized they were outnumbered and fled as quickly as they could.

Rally speakers emphasized throughout that the reactionary legislative bills are a matter of life and death for trans youth.

A doctor who runs Pensacola’s only informed-consent clinic on gender issues spoke of the dangers of the bill. She said not only would she be forced to stop treating a lot of her transgender clients who are youth, this would lead to dangerous turmoil in the lives of trans youth. She cited



The famous graffiti bridge in Pensacola calls for trans rights as part of campaign to stop Florida anti-LGBTQ2+ bills.

thoroughly researched statistics on the amount of bullying, harassment, and suicidal thoughts and attempts that transgender youth go through. With HRT and blockers, these rates decrease significantly. Additionally, she could face prison time and the loss of her medical license if this bill passes, and she continues to help any trans youth further their transition.

In addition to the bill directly affecting trans youth, the other Florida bills (HB305/SB1126, HB3/SB1336, HB537/SB778 and HB1059/SB1634) are beginning to gain traction as multiple House and Senate committee hearings are held one after the other by right-wing Republican extremists. This is a tactic to get fascistic legislation passed by exhausting and wearing down LGBTQ2+ organizers.

But the Pensacola rally was just the beginning of what is now a statewide movement. Multiple organizations, including Strive and Students for a Democratic Society, have merged to form the Florida Coalition for Transgender Liberation, dedicated solely to defeating the bills.

The fight is on! Queer/trans Southerners are shouting, “No more LGBTQ dead! Kill the fxxking bills instead!” □



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

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

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

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

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

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

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

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Released at last Welcome home, Move 9 member Chuck Africa!

By **Betsey Piette**
Philadelphia

Imprisoned since he was only 18, Charles Sims Africa was finally released from Pennsylvania's SCI Fayette on Feb. 7. The youngest and the last of the MOVE 9 to be paroled, Chuck, now 59 and recovering from cancer, was first eligible for parole in 2008 — after 30 years of incarceration.

Like all MOVE 9 members, he was repeatedly denied parole because he refused to renounce his political beliefs or admit guilt for a crime which he, and the others in the MOVE 9, did not commit. The nine had all been sentenced to 30-100 years for the murder of a Philadelphia police officer in 1978, despite overwhelming evidence of their innocence.

Chuck was brought home by a nephew, Mike Africa Jr., whose parents, Debbie Sims Africa and Mike Africa Sr., were released in 2018. It was Chuck's first reunion with his family in 42 years. Current parole restrictions prohibit him from greeting other MOVE 9 members now living in Philadelphia.

For Mike Africa Jr., born in a prison cell shortly after the Aug. 8, 1978, police siege of the family's Philadelphia home, his uncle's release marks the end of a long and trying campaign: "It's been 41 years, and now we will never have to shout 'Free the MOVE 9!' ever again."

MOVE 9 members Janet Africa, Janine Africa and Eddie Africa were released last year. Delbert Africa was released on Jan. 18. Merle Africa and Phil Africa mysteriously died in prison.

Nearly 42 years behind bars have taken a severe toll on Chuck's health. He is recovering from cancer. Private, for-profit health care in the prisons too often turns delayed and denied paroles into death sentences.

"I'm appreciative of all the support from everyone. I'm recovering from another round of chemotherapy and trying to spend time with my family right now," Chuck told WW. His release marks the end of an historic struggle to free the MOVE 9, but it is by no means the end of their struggle to expose the racist, unjust system.

1978: 'Rizzo went nuts'

On Aug. 8, 1978, hundreds of Philadelphia police officers — with machine guns, tear gas, bulldozers and water cannons — surrounded the MOVE home. The siege followed a prolonged blockade and occupation of the neighborhood, beginning in May 1977.

At a press conference this January, Delbert Africa described the confrontation brought on by Philadelphia Police Commissioner Frank Rizzo: "MOVE was peaceful, but we were suffering brutality at the hands of the police, so brutal that they physically kicked a baby out of



Twitter photo of Chuck Africa, posted by his lawyer, Brad Thomson, on Jan. 7.

the womb of one MOVE member and murdered Janine Africa's baby, Life Africa.

"We made up what people thought were weapons so we could make an impression on city officials who saw a bunch of primarily Black people rescuing animals and growing our own food in an area of Philadelphia where the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel wanted to expand.

"Rizzo went nuts and started a blockade — not so much to keep us in but to keep community supporters out. But the neighborhood responded and brought us food. The city tried to evict us; they got warrants naming people who never lived in the house. But just because it's legal, don't make it right. Slavery was also 'legal.'

"On Aug. 8, 1978, neighbors warned us that police were surrounding the house. We got the children and everyone into the basement. They emptied water cannons into the basement. At a press conference after the attack, police bragged about emptying rounds of machine-gun fire into the house."

Delbert Africa, who spent time in prison with Chuck, told WW: "It is with the strongest gratitude that I thank all for their support in getting the last of the MOVE 9 off this 'prison activity' we had to do on this revolutionary road. Now it's on to getting Mumia Abu-Jamal out!"

We will never forget

The struggle to free the MOVE 9 has played a key role in the last five decades of Philadelphia's political movement, going back to the state's attacks on the Black Panther Party.

When Mumia Abu-Jamal joined the Black Panther Party at age 16, he became a target of Cointelpro. Now a world-renowned journalist and political prisoner, Abu-Jamal defended MOVE against Rizzo's attacks. In 1982 he was unjustly accused of and imprisoned for the murder of a Philadelphia police officer.

As police commissioner, Rizzo launched widely publicized raids on three Black Panther Party headquarters in August 1970, just before the Panthers planned the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention in this city. Heavily armed police attacked the BPP offices, arresting men and women, forcing them to strip naked, then handcuffing and photographing them at gunpoint.

MOVE members have suffered decades of imprisonment and the loss of loved ones. Following Abu-Jamal's imprisonment, and still determined to wipe out MOVE, the state launched an attack on the group's home on May 13, 1985, dropping a C-4, military-grade bomb on the compound. The resulting explosion and purposely uncontrolled fire murdered 11 men, women and children and destroyed 62 homes in the Black neighborhood.

Two who died in this horrific inferno were children of imprisoned MOVE members Janet Africa, Janine Africa and Phil Africa as well as Chuck Africa's cousin Frank Africa. May 13 marks the 35th anniversary of this tragedy. For the first time the surviving MOVE 9 members will be able to join in the commemoration.

Many view Chuck's release as the end of the struggle, but Pam Africa, Minister of Confrontation for the MOVE organization, told WW: "MOVE will continue to fight. When people say the war is over, we say no, no, no! There are a whole lot of people left behind in the prisons, and not just political prisoners. A lot of people are suffering under the stranglehold of this government.

"To have Chuck pulled out of there is a victory. Now our concentration is to bring Mumia home!" □



MOVE members in front of their house in 1977. The MOVE 9 were arrested following a massive police siege of their home.

Sanders campaign reflects disgust with capitalism

Continued from page 1

candidate who identifies as a socialist — Bernie Sanders. That is speculation, but when only 62 percent of the returns were in, the media immediately portrayed Pete Buttigieg as the clear leader.

Only later was it announced that Buttigieg and Sanders were nearly equal in pledged delegates, with Sanders holding a clear lead in popular votes. Reports from the urban areas, where Sanders had the most support, came in last.

Sanders' version of "socialism" is really a program to reform capitalism. But the capitalist class is in no mood for reforms like free college tuition, Medicare for All or rolling back the anti-union Taft-Hartley Act. Many among the wealthy could live with a moderate Democrat like Joe Biden or Pete Buttigieg, but want to make sure that Sanders is not the nominee in July.

With Biden trailing Sanders, Buttigieg and Elizabeth Warren in the Iowa contest, corporate dollars are starting to flow to the safest of the three: Buttigieg. Yes, it is progressive to see an out gay man getting

such significant support. However, much of that support is tied to his so-called "electability," i.e., his moderate approach that does not even mildly challenge capitalist profit-taking.

Who's in Sanders' base?

Young people — including many youth of color — have jumped into a mass movement trying to make the senator from Vermont the Democratic nominee for president. Many are also flocking to the Democratic Socialists of America, which has grown exponentially since the Sanders campaign of 2016.

Another constituency that Sanders is making a strong pitch to, and making headway in, is organized labor. Most unions have not yet made an endorsement in the Democratic race. Many will wait to see who the party nominates at its convention. Nevertheless, four national unions and a number of state, regional and local labor bodies — including Service Employees Local 1984, with 30,000 members in New Hampshire — have already endorsed Sanders. Other unions have endorsed either Biden or

Warren.

Rank-and-file unionists are gravitating to Labor for Bernie. These workers know they have nothing to fear from a program tagged "socialist." Relatively speaking, this represents a move to the left in mass consciousness, which should be welcomed.

In response, Biden socialist-baited Sanders in the Feb. 5 New Hampshire debates, saying, "Every Democrat will have to carry the label Senator Sanders has chosen for himself. He calls himself — and I don't criticize him — he calls himself a democratic socialist." (cnbc.com, Feb. 6)

Trump, meanwhile, used his State of the Union address to attack the whole Democratic Party for being socialist. That's the epithet 45 uses to attack the Affordable Care Act, food stamps and other human needs programs, many of which were won during the class battles of the 1930s — which were led by socialists and communists.

The ultraright, under Trump's leadership, has added socialist-hating to its arsenal of reactionary ideological tools, which include white supremacy, xenophobia,

misogyny and anti-LGBTQ2+ bigotry. These forces want to build a base of support among backward white workers as well as the middle class.

While Trump calls them socialists, most Democratic elected officials are going out on a limb to show they are nothing of the kind. Taking a cue from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, they jumped to their feet and applauded when Trump, during his State of the Union campaign speech, attacked Venezuela as "socialist" and recognized Juan Guaidó, an insignificant politician inside his own country, as "president" of Venezuela.

Even Sanders called the real president, Nicolás Maduro, a "dictator" during one of the presidential debates.

While reform-oriented social democrats are growing their base in tandem with the Sanders movement, this may be a transitional phenomenon.

Interest in real, revolutionary socialism — the overthrow of the capitalist class, what Marx called "expropriating the expropriators" — is also on the upswing. □

Portland longshore workers resist union busting

By Patrick Cate and Lyn Neeley
Portland, Ore.

In November a federal jury in Portland, Ore., fined the Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) \$9.6 million. The jury sided with the Philippines-based International Container Terminal Services (ICTSI), a labor-rights abuser worth \$1.36 billion that sued both the national ILWU and Portland’s Local 8.

The Port of Portland leased Terminal 6, Oregon’s only shipping container port, to ICTSI in 2010. According to dockworkers, ICTSI developed a hostile, unsafe work environment and intimidated them. In 2014, the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspected the port and fined ICTSI \$18,360 for over a dozen safety violations at Terminal 6.

In 2012, Local 8 began a series of work slowdowns because jobs involving refrigerated containers and electrical equipment, previously held by ILWU members, were given to members of the Electrical Workers (IBEW). The ILWU stated those jobs had been part of their collective bargaining agreement.

In the lawsuit, ICTSI claimed that the years of slowdowns prevented them from making profits. They argued that the ILWU actions were an illegal secondary boycott, because the Port of Portland was responsible for assigning the jobs to IBEW.

Under the Taft-Hartley Act, secondary strikes and boycotts are prohibited, along with solidarity or sympathy strikes. In a dispute with a direct employer, any strike against another employer is illegal. ICTSI’s argument is complicated and open to interpretation.

Militant ILWU tradition of fighting for workers

The verdict was a blow to the ILWU, one of the most militant unions in U.S. history. Founded in the 1930s by labor leader Harry Bridges, the union is powerful because of its activism, strikes and work stoppages to protect members’ benefits and jobs. The ILWU has always demonstrated against war and racism and has a long history of giving solid support to other workers and unions.

ILWU President William Adams said, “The ILWU attempted to settle the case, but ICTSI’s goal appeared to be union busting on a global scale.” He said the court compensated ICTSI for a loss of profits and additional costs, but the amount was excessive, and much of ICTSI’s failure to make a profit was due to their own mismanagement. (tinyurl.com/qwo6w3j)

Susan Harriman, the union’s lawyer, said the ILWU wanted its workers “to succeed, but they were treated like donkeys and belittled and fired without cause.” She said ILWU members “helped build Terminal 6, and they literally broke their backs trying to make Terminal 6 a success.” She told

the jurors “labor and employment practices were driving slowdowns.” (tinyurl.com/uxq2rz7)

Nearly all of ICTSI’s business is with countries with extreme exploitation of workers. These countries include Honduras, Mexico, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Indonesia and Pakistan. ICTSI aggressively drives down wages, imposes horrible working conditions, refuses to pay overtime and outsources work — even against a government’s orders.

Paddy Crumlin, president of the Transport Workers Federation (ITF), said ICTSI’s labor record was like a cancer spreading around the world.

“ICTSI has built its business by exploiting workers in port after port, reinforcing a business model of deliberately prioritizing countries where human and labor rights are most vulnerable and by partnering with some of the worst anti-democratic regimes implicated in crimes against humanity.” (tinyurl.com/vs6vtrm)

The ILWU has filed a motion to postpone a final judgment. They want to appeal the verdict because the \$9.6 million they are being sued for is not consistent with the



PHOTO: OREGON HISTORY PROJECT

The West Coast Longshore strike in 1934 shut down docks from California to Washington state. Here, police help strikebreakers cross that picket line in Portland, Ore.

evidence. That amount could bankrupt the union. The judge has agreed to delay the decision until the court hears more from ILWU lawyers. If the courts don’t reconsider, the union may have to seek federal bankruptcy protection to recover its finances as soon as possible.

In 2017, ICTSI ended its contract with the Port of Portland early. Currently, ILWU members are working directly for the Port of Portland, which is operating Terminal 6, and bringing in new business. □

A good job is hard to find these days

By G. Dunkel

The constitutionally mandated State of the Union address opened Feb. 4 with the first of many boasts: “Jobs are booming, incomes are soaring, poverty is plummeting.” Trump went on with the lie, “The average unemployment rate under my administration is lower than any administration in the history of our country.”

Actually, the current unemployment rate is 3.5 percent, greater than the 2.5 percent in 1953 under President Dwight Eisenhower, when the U.S. war on Korea stimulated the capitalist economy. But that’s not the worst distortion the president made. The real question is the ability of the new jobs to provide an adequate income.

While the unemployment rate has gradually declined over the last 10 years, the number of high-wage jobs has declined and the number of low-wage jobs has increased. Pay for high-wage jobs is defined as above the median wage of around \$15 an hour; low-wage jobs pay below that median.

While Trump’s tax cut gave a tremendous trillion-dollar boost to the incomes of the wealthy, some 38.1 million people

still live below the federal poverty threshold in the U.S. As per the U.S. Census Bureau, that was \$25,465 for a family of four people in 2018.

Researchers associated with Cornell Law School, together with some liberal think tanks, have established an index that associates a weekly wage above the median with high-quality jobs and a weekly wage below the median with low-quality jobs. They compute the weekly wage as the hourly wage times the number of hours worked.

Using government data and studying production and nonsupervisory jobs, researchers have determined that high-wage jobs provide an average workweek of 38.26 hours and low-wage jobs provide an average workweek of 29.98 hours. Note that the law protecting benefits, such as health insurance and retirement income, applies only to those who work 30 hours or more.

These researchers say the lower average workweek in low-wage jobs reveals an enormous “slack” in the total number of jobs seen as available — and that’s a weakness in the economy. They calculate that if these 60 million low-wage workers, who are now underutilized, worked the

same 38.26 hours weekly as high-wage workers, this would translate into 12.6 million more jobs at 38.26 hours weekly. (Pamphlet available at www.jobqualityindex.com.)

The official unemployment rate hides these 12.6 million missing jobs that would exist if the capitalist economy was really thriving. This analysis explains why so-called “full employment” has actually meant weak wage growth. There is a lot of slack in the job market; 12.6 million full-time jobs are needed to absorb the “reserve army of labor” stuck in part-time work.

Moreover, workers who are in unstable or precarious jobs — many of whom are Black and Latinx workers and women workers — are in a difficult position to demand more pay. Difficulties in union organizing of precarious workers have kept wages down. And the gig economy includes more than 57 million U.S. workers, or 36 percent of the total workforce, which plays a big role in keeping wages low. (Forbes, Aug. 31, 2018)

What is even more shocking is that 40 percent of all young workers — between the ages of 26 and 32 — do not know from one



PHOTO: TERAN POWELL

A Milwaukee, Wis., job fair in November 2019 verifies the fact that unemployment is high in Black communities in cities.

week to the next what their hours will be.

The Fight for \$15 per hour, which unions have been waging, has led a number of states and cities to increase their local minimum wage. These increases have boosted the national income figures for low-wage workers, which Trump’s boasting ignores. The federal minimum wage has been \$7.25 an hour since 2007. To no one’s surprise, Trump’s State of the Union speech made no mention of raising it. □

Honor Black History Month — Support WW

Workers World makes a big deal about Black History Month because racism pervades every aspect of life under capitalism. Everything — from fighting for living-wage jobs to ending police terror, for affordable housing and community-control schools — is rooted in the centuries-long struggle to end this country’s vicious history of racism, rooted in the worst, violence-driven, superexploitation — slavery.

That’s why every month, not just February, the newspaper chronicles the struggles of peoples of African descent to eradicate institutionalized, systemic white supremacy. Case in point is our

continuing coverage of the struggle for political prisoners, like Mumia Abu-Jamal and Chuck Africa, the last of the MOVE 9 who was just released after 40-plus years of criminal incarceration.

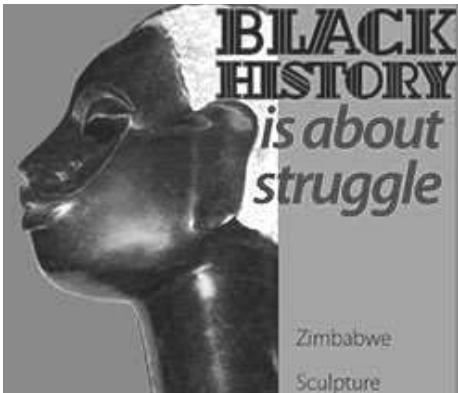
WW bases our weekly coverage of the Black struggle here and in the African diaspora on breaking imperialist chains and the principle of self-determination. Oppressed people have the right to fight to end all forms of inequality and injustice — by any means necessary.

If you appreciate our coverage, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program or renew your membership promptly. WW Supporter Program

was established 43 years ago so readers could help WW publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build campaigns needed to fight for revolutionary change leading to socialism.

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A prisoner speaks out on why Anatomy of a hunger strike

Part 1

Many protests against mass incarceration have taken place on the streets of U.S. cities over the last decade. Many resistance struggles have also been waged by individuals or groups of prisoners inside the prison walls, often without any support from or knowledge of by people or press on the outside.

One of the many methods of resistance used by prisoners worldwide has been the hunger strike. Prisoners from Ireland to Palestine, California to Pennsylvania have refused to eat for weeks or even months, hoping to win prison reforms or political demands, and sometimes attracting publicity in the mass media in the process.

Demetrius “Dee Jay” Grant (FY6063), an African-American prisoner in Pennsylvania, conducted a months-long hunger strike in 2019 over prison conditions at State Correctional Institution Albion. Grant is known as the “Pro Se Litigator,” the person who exposed the mistreatment of mentally ill prisoners by former Correctional Officer Charles Graner at SCI Greene before Graner became infamous for mistreating Iraqi detainees. Here is Workers World’s interview with Grant about his experiences.

Workers World: How long have you been imprisoned?

Dee Jay: I have been in prison for 26 and a half years, since May 3, 1993, for three counts of aggravated assault and one count of robbery. During that period I successfully escaped from prison three times. I have been at SCI Albion since June 19, 2018. I have been at 10 other prisons in my 26 years. I was put out of each one due to protesting and litigating against prison officials.

WW: What conditions caused you to go on strike?

Dee Jay: I went on a hunger strike because of the unconstitutional, inhumane and repressive conditions being created by SCI Albion officials. They have little to no regard for prisoners’ constitutional rights or their own policies that are

supposed to benefit prisoners.

SCI Albion has over 545 correctional employees, but only 51 are African-American, 10 Hispanic, two Asian and two Indigenous. There are no African Americans on the administrative or psychologist staff for over 1,000 African-American inmates.

Ever since the PA DOC [Pennsylvania Department of Corrections] authorized correctional officers to use chemical agents to suppress disturbances, they’ve been misusing them, especially on mentally ill prisoners.

In addition, there is incompetent medical service by staff. Solitary confinement is a fire hazard due to padlocks on doors. Administrators allow subordinates to place false entries in prisoners’ institutional records.

Prisoners are receiving only one and a half to two and a half hours of law library time per week. Other DOC facilities provide prisoners a minimum of two and a half hours per session, three times a week. If you can show a current court deadline, you can request two additional law library slots over a 30-day period. If you miss your law library slot for any reason — a visit, a legal call, etc. — your name is removed from the law library list and you have to reapply, which takes time to get back on. Other DOC facilities allow two unexcused absences.

The kitchen is dirty and unsafe to the point that prisoners are getting seriously injured all the time. The food is unhealthy, and the portions are small so the PA DOC can save money.

Prisoners with mental illnesses are being allowed to work in the kitchen despite their inability to keep up with the work demands of the kitchen.

Physical abuse, denial of medical care

The guards are all the time physically and verbally abusing these prisoners during mental episodes. This is due in large part because the guards are not being trained to respond properly, resulting in excessive and unnecessary force (pepper spray and tasers), causing serious injuries. When this happens, medical will cover for the guards by not accurately

‘I went on a hunger strike because of the unconstitutional, inhumane and repressive conditions.’



documenting how the prisoner got their injuries.

Prisoners are being denied adequate medical care and/or treatment. They are enduring pain and suffering needlessly and in some cases are suffering permanent injuries, even death. Example: A good friend of mine has multiple sclerosis and must receive blood tests, but medical has failed to provide these tests on a regular basis. Medical staff have even lied to his family and attorney, saying they gave him the blood test when they know they did not. And now he must file grievances just to get the medical treatment he should be receiving. An investigation into SCI Albion’s medical department is absolutely necessary to stop and expose these abuses.

Recently, SCI Albion, via the PA DOC, has instituted a violence prevention policy which, among other things, forces prisoners to snitch on one another in order to avoid being arbitrarily locked up for long periods or losing privileges and/or their parole. The state-sponsored snitching was created to divide and control prisoners, which results in prisoners being labeled a snitch and placed in jeopardy of being seriously hurt.

Additionally, SCI Albion has created an environment wherein they condone and/or encourage the guards and staff to be hostile and aggressive toward prisoners, resulting in prisoners being assaulted, verbally abused, having their properties lost and/or stolen, having

false/fabricated misconduct reports filed against them, being subjected to excessive or unnecessary force and being celled with mentally ill prisoners who are not compatible. This has resulted in prisoners being assaulted and even killed.

Complaints bring retaliation

WW: What did you do to solve these problems, before deciding on a hunger strike?

Dee Jay: Prior to going on the hunger strike, I spoke with and/or wrote prison officials about my complaints a number of times. I eventually had to file grievances and still nothing was done to correct the problems — except I was retaliated against.

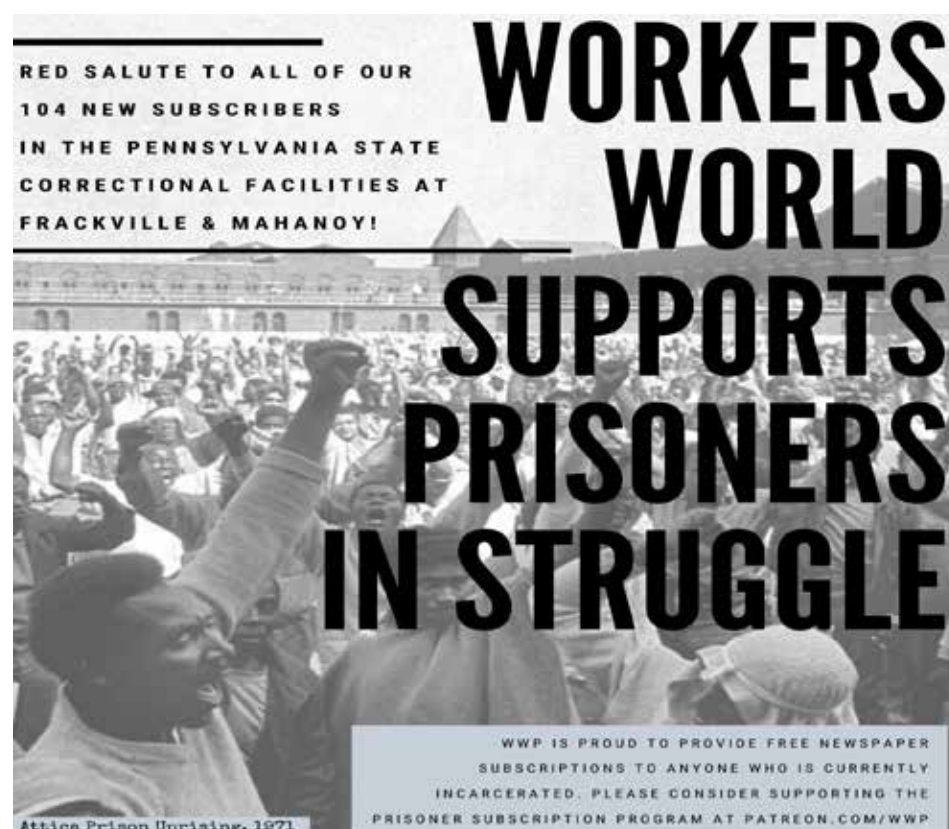
I filed a grievance about the kitchen food trays not being properly washed, sanitized and dried, which is causing mold to build up on the trays, causing prisoners’ health issues. The DOC has an established policy each facility is supposed to follow. SCI Albion is not following its policy, nor is the PA DOC reprimanding Albion for not functioning pursuant to the policy.

I filed another grievance about the cable TV constantly going out for days and weeks at a time and us still being charged for it, despite the cable contract stating prisoners are to be prorated for any time the cable was out due to equipment problems. After filing a grievance, my cable was arbitrarily turned off for 26 hours in retaliation and my grievance was ignored. Also, my account was not prorated for all the times the channels were out. I have since canceled my cable and will never have it connected again.

Outside of filing multiple lawsuits, which I cannot afford, I was forced to go on a hunger strike in order to get prison officials to do what they are legally required to do already, but are refusing to.

Joe Piette edited this talk in communication with Grant. Next: Part 2: Dee Jay Grant begins his hunger strike.

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—Makasi Motema

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Workers World is an independent, revolutionary communist newspaper that began publication in 1959, and has grown to be published weekly in print and daily on the web. We are committed to building solidarity among workers and oppressed peoples around the globe. For that reason Workers World has always provided FREE subscriptions and other radical printed materials to prisoners in the U.S. One in three subscribers to Workers

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Black labor: From chattel slavery to wage slavery

Part 1 The compass and the slave trade

By Sam Marcy

The following is excerpted from Chapter 2 of Marcy’s “High Tech, Low Pay: A Marxist analysis of the changing character of the working class,” first published in 1986. Marcy is the late chairperson of Workers World Party. “High Tech, Low Pay” is available as a free download at workers.org/marcy.

The scientific-technological revolution has affected and will continue to affect Black workers much more significantly than is commonly acknowledged by the capitalist press. Automation takes even more than its usual toll when oppressed people are concerned. It intensifies racist oppression and increases unemployment among Black people even when a capitalist economic recovery is said to be sharply on the rise, as in 1983-84.

But the impact of the scientific-technological revolution on Black people is not only a recent phenomenon. It has historical roots that go back to the beginnings of the slave trade.

The compass and the slave trade

The speed and momentum with which the scientific-technological revolution has taken off in recent years have tended to shrink into insignificance inventions which exercised a profound influence on developing social relations in the early stages of the capitalist system. Take the compass, which is regarded today as a basic direction-finding device in

navigation. It is not a capitalist invention. It is said to have been discovered as early as the year [200 B.C.] in China, and may have also been discovered independently in Europe somewhat later; it was used by Arab sailors in the early 13th century.

Its development and perfection over the years became indispensable to world trade. While not invented in a period of capitalist development, the compass and other navigational instrumentation were appropriated from earlier modes of production by capitalist shipping companies at the very crest of the period of colonization — what is called the “age of discovery.” It gave a tremendous impulse to world trade and commerce.

But what was the content of this trade? Why is it important in relation to our study here? Because as trade became a world phenomenon, it was essentially an international trade of slaves.

Millions upon millions of Black people were kidnapped, tortured and brought on slave ships to the vast new continents of the Western Hemisphere. The slave trade began in the mid-15th century when Spain and Portugal began importing a significant number of Black slaves to their plantations on the Canary and Madeira islands. Most of the very same leading imperialist powers that are today concerned with maintaining the South African regime in the face of the revolutionary mass movement there earlier participated in, promoted and in fact fought ferociously to maintain the slave trade and obtain a monopoly over it.

Modern transnational monopolies differ fundamentally in their economic content from those days, but they still show the same greed and avarice, the utterly unprecedented cruelty and barbarous treatment which characterized the slave trade. This is what lay behind the flourishing of world commerce, and laid the development for what Marx later called the primitive accumulation of capital.

The word “primitive” was not a characterization of the many millions of people captured as slaves. The term primitive was applied to the fiendish method by which the early capitalists accumulated the primary, original capital that was so indispensable for the development of their system of oppression and exploitation. Not only Spain, Portugal, England, France and Holland, but also Denmark, Sweden and Prussia participated, garnering fabulous profits as a result of the slave trade.

The compass was one of the things that made the slave trade possible, but it alone can’t be held responsible for the transportation of this vast number of human beings from one continent to another thousands of miles away — away from their homeland and loved ones to a strange new country where the whip and the gun held them at bay.

Scandinavian people had made a transoceanic voyage earlier, in the [10th century]. They too may have had a compass of a sort, for it is well known that the Vikings undertook long voyages and established settlements in Iceland, Greenland and even Labrador.¹ But these voyages differed fundamentally in that they were oriented toward settlements in the northern part of the world in harmony with the climatic conditions of the Scandinavian countries.

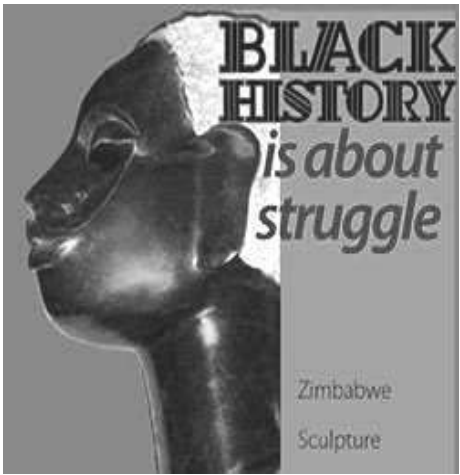
Until the development and perfection of navigational instrumentation such as the compass, the Western world was mainly confined to the Mediterranean and the coastal areas of the Atlantic so far as maritime commerce was concerned. The new era of discovery and colonization opened up the Atlantic for the first time. This could not have been done without the necessary technological improvements in navigational instrumentation as well as in the making of ships.

By 1745 the English inventor Gowin Knight had perfected a method of efficiently magnetizing needles of harder steel. He designed a compass with a single bar needle large enough for a cap resting on the pivot to be screwed into its center. He thus greatly improved the compass.² This significantly shortened the time of voyages, increased the safety of the ships and — what is of greater social and political significance — increased the volume of slavery.

As Marx was to write, “It is slavery that gave the colonies their value; it is the colonies that have created world trade, and it is world trade that is the precondition of large-scale industry. Thus slavery is an economic category of the greatest importance.”³

The contract for supplying slaves to the Spanish colonies was called the Asiento. While British slave traders provided the necessary laborers for their own plantations, Spain contracted with the slave traders of other nations to supply its needs. The first Asiento was granted in 1518 to a Flemish company, and it specified that a certain number of tons(!) of slaves be delivered to the Spanish colonies.⁴

The Portuguese were the first traders to hold the Asiento, but the other rising capitalist powers were not to be outdone. The



Dutch broke into this very lucrative form of trade around 1640, and Spain, France and Britain followed soon after.

The war for the Asiento continued until the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) when the English triumphed over their competitors. The English bourgeoisie from then on maintained control of the slave trade through the Royal African Company. This slave trade covered not only the English, French and Dutch colonies in America and the West Indies but also the vast land of Brazil. It was in this way that such a vast portion of the African people were uprooted and thrown into the vortex of capitalist slavery.

In connection with Holland, it should be noted that earlier, in the years 1636-37, the Dutch had engaged in a flourishing trade and development of tulips, for which they are still world famous today. But that trade attained extraordinary speculative proportions so that at one period just one tulip was valued at thousands of dollars.

Eventually the market broke and the Dutch bourgeoisie turned from trafficking in “a thing of matchless beauty” to the slave trade, one of the most odious, foul and certainly most inhuman forms of commerce ever seen in history. This illustrates with what ease and facility the capitalists can plunge from one area to another in their insatiable appetite for profits, without any regard for human values whatever. The latter are totally irrelevant in the process of capitalist production. Capital simply flows to wherever profits are highest. ...

The observations made over a century ago by a certain T.J. Dunning, and quoted by Marx in Capital, ring all too familiar today: “With adequate profit, capital is very bold. A certain 10 percent will ensure its employment anywhere; 20 percent certain will produce eagerness; 50 percent, positive audacity; 100 percent will make it ready to trample all human laws; 300 percent, and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged. If turbulence and strife will bring a profit, it will freely encourage both. Smuggling and the slave-trade have amply proved all that is here stated.”⁵

Next: Part 2: Marcy on “The invention of the cotton gin” and “Insurrections.”

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Anti-apartheid 1976: Youth Against War and Fascism



YAWF was the acronym for Youth Against War and Fascism, the youth organization associated with Workers World Party. Founded in 1962, YAWF carried its orange banners in the many confrontational actions of the 1960s and 1970s opposing the war in Vietnam, in solidarity with the Black Liberation Movement in the U.S., and in solidarity with all the movements around the world fighting for self-determination and liberation from imperialism.

YAWF’s December 1976 action and the flier were examples of the group’s anti-imperialist stance and a challenge to Washington’s characterization of the liberation movement in South Africa.

This action was in solidarity with the June 16, 1976, uprising of youths and students in Soweto, South Africa, and the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement in that country, led by Steve Biko, who was assassinated by five police officers in 1977.

Until 1990, when the worldwide anti-apartheid movement succeeded in freeing South African leader Nelson Mandela from decades of imprisonment on Robben Island, the African National Congress and its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), were listed as international terrorist organizations by the CIA and the U.S. State Department. □

Reparations & Black Liberation

By Monica Moorehead

Workers World first published this article on June 6, 2002.

Lawsuits have been filed in New York and New Jersey targeting corporations that profited from the slave trade. These class-action lawsuits name three companies: Fleet Boston Financial, Aetna and CSX.

Fleet Boston grew out of a bank established by a merchant whose ships transported African slaves.

Aetna is an insurance company that encouraged slave owners to insure human property — not to protect their slaves, but to protect their investment in case of the slaves' deaths.

CSX emerged from another company that used slave labor to build railroad lines.

The lawsuit estimates that the wealth in the United States created by the unpaid wages of slave labor is today worth \$1.5 trillion.

Deadria Farmer-Paellman is the lead plaintiff and initiator of this suit. At a recent press conference, she stated, "My grandfather always talked about the 40 acres and a mule we were never given. These companies benefited from working, stealing and breeding our ancestors, and they should not be able to benefit from these horrendous acts."

Political activist and attorney Roger Wareham filed this lawsuit on behalf of all African Americans. According to Wareham, the lawsuit is not about demanding monetary compensation for the descendants of African slaves in the U.S. Any money won from the lawsuit would go to a collective fund to help improve the housing, health care and education of African Americans.

Wareham, in an interview on the Black-oriented WABC-TV show "Like It Is," told host Gil Noble, "Our strength is that the reparations lawsuit is part of a movement. The stronger the movement, the greater the possibility of the success of the suit. The most important thing is the success of the movement. The suit is just another part of that river of struggle that we are involved in."

The December 12th Movement and the National Black United Front have called a "Millions for Reparations" national rally to take place in Washington, D.C., on

Aug. 17, 2002 — the 115th anniversary of Black nationalist leader Marcus Garvey's birth. The National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America is also building the demonstration.

Gov't fears exposure of slavery's legacy

The U.S. government has a despicable history of downplaying and outright dismissing the issue of reparations. To grant compensation to millions of descendants of African slaves would expose the institutionalized racism that African Americans and other people of color still suffer today.

The disproportionate number of African Americans populating U.S. prisons is just one glaring example of the legacy of slavery.

Back in 1989, Congressional Black Caucus member John Conyers from Michigan introduced bill HR 40, the "Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act." Conyers said: "African slaves were not compensated for their labor. More unclear, however, is what the effects and remnants of this relationship have had on African Americans and our nation from the time of emancipation through today. I chose the number of the bill, 40, as a symbol of the 40 acres and a mule that the United States initially promised freed slaves."

Conyers cited a number of objectives of the bill — including setting up a commission that "would then make recommendations to Congress on appropriate remedies to redress the harm inflicted on living African Americans."

Malcolm X also raised the question of reparations in a speech on Nov. 23, 1964, in Paris. "If you are the son of a man who had a wealthy estate and you inherit your father's estate," he said, "you have to pay off the debts that your father incurred before he died. The only reason that the present generation of white Americans are in a position of economic strength ... is because their fathers worked our fathers for over 400 years with no pay."

The reparations struggle intensified with the military defeat of the Confederacy at the hands of the Union Army at the end of the Civil War. The victorious Northern government promised the newly freed slaves in the South "40 acres and a mule," in effect acknowledging that brutal slave labor had not only greatly enriched

the coffers of the former slave masters but also the emerging U.S. capitalist economy.

This just compensation for the freed people never came to fruition due to the counterrevolution that destroyed Reconstruction. In the "Compromise of 1877," the Union Army



March for Reparations, Newark, N.J., 2017.

WW PHOTO

abandoned the freed slaves, who had tried to bring about real social equality in the South by establishing their own institutions for political empowerment and elevation of their living and educational standards. For 10 years, the Union Army had played the role of a buffer between this progressive, democratic process and the former Confederate forces, who regrouped during Reconstruction.

The counterrevolution then evolved into a bloody terrorist campaign that drove the freed slaves to accept semi-slavery conditions. Under sharecropping, which still exists today, the former slaves went back to tilling the land of their former owners. They weren't owned outright anymore, but had to work on the plantations for slave wages.

In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court legally sanctioned segregation as "separate but equal."

Reparations struggle has taken many forms

In his 1903 masterpiece, "The Souls of Black Folks," W.E.B. Du Bois wrote, "The problem of the 20th century is the color line." Many Black activists and writers have looked to Du Bois' words for inspiration in the continuing fight for Black liberation. Reparations became a very important focus in the Black struggle for the right to self-determination.

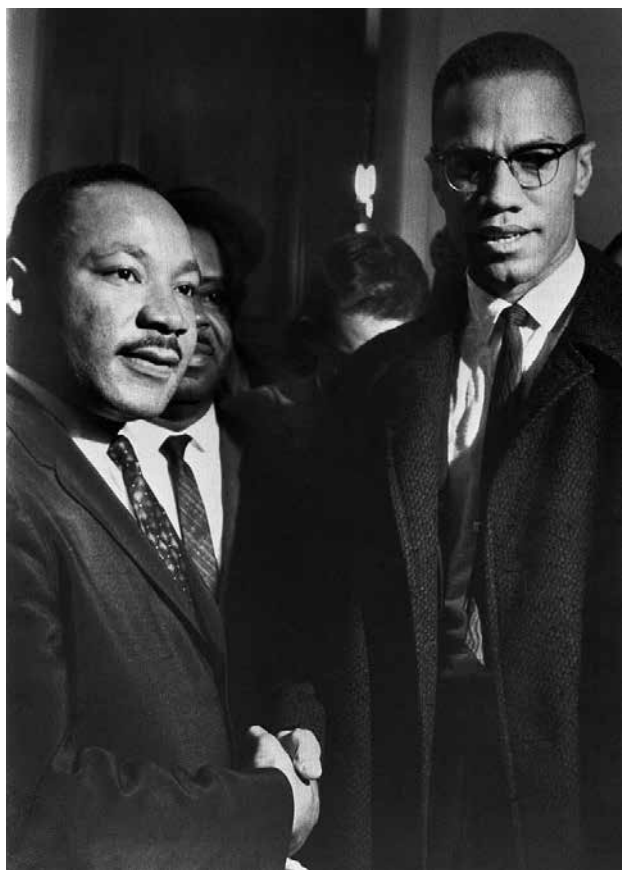
The Back to Africa mass movement in the 1920s and 1930s, led by the charismatic Marcus Garvey, was in its own way a demand for reparations. When the Black Panther Party created free breakfast programs and free access to clinics in the inner cities during the 1960s, this was another unique call for reparations. Affirmative action programs are also a form of reparations.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.,

leader of the traditional Civil Rights Movement, made a plea for reparations in his 1964 book, "Why We Can't Wait." He wrote, "No amount of gold could provide an adequate compensation for the exploitation and humiliation of the Negro in America (or the Caribbean or Brazil) down through the centuries. Not all the wealth of this affluent [U.S.] society could meet the bill. Yet a price can be placed upon unpaid wages. The ancient common law has always provided a remedy for the appropriation of one human being by another. The law should be made to apply for American (Caribbean and Brazilian) Negroes."

"The payment should be in the form of a massive program by the government of special, compensatory measures, which could be regarded as a settlement in accordance with the accepted practice of common law. Such measures would certainly be less expensive than any computation based on two centuries of unpaid wages and accumulated interest. I am proposing, therefore, that just as we granted a G.I. Bill of Rights to war veterans, [the U.S.] launch a broad-based and gigantic Bill of Rights for the Disadvantaged, our veterans of the long siege of denial."

The struggle for reparations received a tremendous boost at the World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa [in 2001]. The call for reparations, along with equating Zionism with racism, compelled the U.S. and Israeli governments to withdraw their high-level delegations from the conference. The Durban conference helped to provide worldwide exposure about the long-term, devastating impact of Western imperialism and colonialism on nationally oppressed people everywhere. □



Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X.

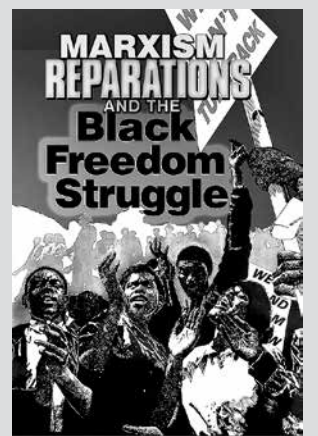
Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper.

Edited by Monica Moorehead.

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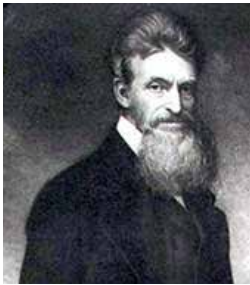
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Part 1 Over 160 years since ‘Bloody Kansas’ The legacy of John Brown

By Shelley Ettinger

May 9 marks the 220th anniversary of this great abolitionist's birth. This article was originally published in Workers World on Sept. 14, 2006.



John Brown.

Many historians agree that the Civil War really started on a flat patch of land known as “Bloody Kansas” 150 years ago, in the spring, summer and on into the autumn of 1856.

This area of land covering some 82,000 square miles now sits at the geographic center of the continental United States. It rarely gets national attention these days, and when it does it’s usually for reactionary developments, like the effort to ban evolution from the public schools’ science curriculum.

Yet this was once the hub of the most important political conflict of its day, indeed of all U.S. history: the struggle over slavery. This was where diametrically opposed forces — abolitionists and pro-slavers — clashed.

When 1856 began, the pro-slavery forces had looked to be ascendant. Congress had passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act on May 30, 1854. The law provided for popular sovereignty — voting by white male landowners, that is — to decide whether Kansas and Nebraska would be free or slave states. Kansas had since been the scene of a violent terror campaign, based across the border in Missouri.

Death squads, known as Border Ruffians, aimed to kill or drive out those who opposed the spread of slavery to Kansas, and to flood the territory with their own numbers. Jesse and Frank James, glorified as “rebellious” outlaws in the movies and folklore, were the most well-known of these ruffians.

The Border Ruffians hunted down and murdered African Americans who had escaped slavery and were heading north to Canada. They brazenly assassinated Underground Railway station operators and anti-slavery newspaper editors.

It had started to seem like a foregone conclusion that Kansas would enter the union as a slave state. Then John Brown arrived.

With a small, brave band of stalwarts, he took on the slave owners’ death squads in direct combat, and bested them. He revived and rallied the anti-slavery forces.

At the Battle of Osawatimie, on Aug. 30, 1856, his brilliant tactical maneuvers led to the defeat of a pro-slavery force of 300 soldiers by his group of under 20 — and from then on he was affectionately known as “Old Osawatimie” by admirers around the country.

In Lawrence, Kansas, in the first two weeks of September, he led the military defense of the state capital against a pro-slavery assault — and ever after was respectfully called “Captain Brown” by those who fought alongside him.

But before Osawatimie, before Lawrence, John Brown had already become a legend. That happened at Pottawatomie Creek.

A daring raid

At Pottawatomie on the night of May 24-25, 1856, John Brown led an armed band in a lightning raid against an encampment where he knew he’d find

several of the worst of the Border Ruffians who were terrorizing the territory.

When Brown and company rode off, they left the dead bodies of five racist thugs. The criminals Brown and his band killed had been responsible for many assaults and murders; they were also known for capturing Native women and forcing them into prostitution and sexually assaulting Free State women.

Until Brown acted, the slaveocracy had been waging an undeclared war with what seemed like impunity. And not just in the fields and towns of Kansas. On May 22, two days before Brown rode to Pottawatomie, Preston Brooks, a member

of Congress from South Carolina, strode onto the floor of the U.S. Senate and beaten anti-slavery Sen. Charles Sumner of Massachusetts nearly to death as retaliation for Sumner’s speech “The Crime against Kansas.”



A depiction of John Brown moments before execution, Dec. 2, 1859.

of Congress from South Carolina, strode onto the floor of the U.S. Senate and beaten anti-slavery Sen. Charles Sumner of Massachusetts nearly to death as retaliation for Sumner’s speech “The Crime against Kansas.”

After Pottawatomie, all this changed. The slaveocracy did not surrender — it would take the Civil War for that. But from Pottawatomie word went out.

No longer would the racist death squads have free rein in Kansas. A new force, a force for freedom, was fighting back.

For years afterward, in fact to this very day, bourgeois historians have misrepresented what happened at Pottawatomie. It has been portrayed as an insane, isolated event, as a senseless, inexplicable act of violence — and its perpetrator as a wild-eyed, crazed, fanatical maniac. The official bourgeois version removes the Pottawatomie raid from its historic context — the bloody terrorist war the Border Ruffians were waging — and omits the fact that the men Brown’s troops killed were racist murderers.

John Brown was no lunatic. He was a hero. By first frost in the fall of 1856, he had accomplished what six months earlier no one thought possible. The territory had been secured. Kansas would enter the union as a free state.

The victory came at a high personal cost for Brown. His son Frederick died at the Battle of Osawatimie. Another son, John Brown Jr., was captured by the pro-slavery forces and tortured horribly while held prisoner, which led to many years of illness and anguish.

Brown himself was now a wanted man. A price on his head, he went underground, leaving Kansas. He headed

toward the Northeast.

There he would spend the next three years raising funds, recruiting troops, writing, speaking and planning. His goal was nothing less than to launch a guerrilla war, whose leadership would be taken up by African Americans, to end slavery and establish full freedom and equality for all.

On to Harpers Ferry

Before, during and after his time in Kansas, John Brown was keen to learn how to wage the kind of guerrilla warfare he believed would be necessary to destroy slavery. To whom did he look as his teachers?

To Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey and other enslaved African American leaders of U.S. slave revolts; to the Seminole nation that had resisted domination

first ever where Black and white families lived and worked as equals.

Along with farming and guiding escaped slaves along an Underground Railroad route across the border to Canada, Brown would spend those three years preparing for the action he was determined would give rise to a generalized mass uprising by enslaved Black people. He would write a new constitution for the United States which first and foremost proclaimed race and sex equality.

He would travel to Canada and recruit several African Americans, including Osborne P. Anderson, who would fight alongside Brown at Harpers Ferry, Va. (now W.Va.), and live to write about it. He would meet often with the great organizer and orator, Frederick Douglass, and the two would become close friends. Douglass had escaped from slavery as a young man.

He would confer with the “Moses” of the Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman, whom he always respectfully referred to as “Gen. Tubman.” Some believe that Tubman helped plan the raid on the U.S. Army arsenal at Harpers Ferry and would have taken part in it had she not fallen ill.

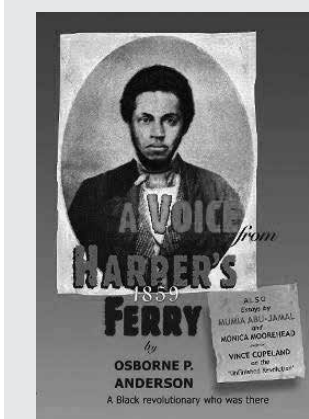
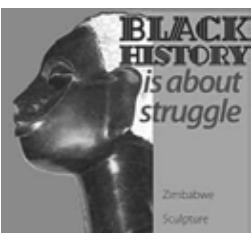
African-American freedom fighters Dangerfield Newby, Lewis S. Leary, John Brown’s sons Watson and Oliver, and six others of their number would die at Harpers Ferry in October 1859. Five would escape and survive. Seven, including John Brown, would be captured and hanged.

Gen. Robert E. Lee, who scant months later would lead the secessionist Confederate army, led the opposing force that captured John Brown at Harpers Ferry. John Wilkes Booth, who would assassinate President Abraham Lincoln in 1865, was among the troops guarding the scaffolding on the day they hanged John Brown.

On that day, Dec. 2, 1859, just before they led him from his cell to the gallows, this great soldier for human liberation would write, “I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood.” Brown was buried in the majority Black cemetery in North Elba, a fitting tribute indeed.

In April 1861 the Civil War would begin.

Next: Part 2: "Spirit of Harper's Ferry Raid lives on."



A Voice From Harpers Ferry

Osborne P. Anderson’s account of the raid on Harper’s Ferry appeared in pamphlet form in 1861 right after the start of the Civil War. Now in book form, with essays by Mumia Abu-Jamal, Monica Moorehead and Vince Copeland.

Available as a FREE download at workers.org/books.

How socialist base helps China combat coronavirus

By Sara Flounders

China is showing the world what is needed — and possible — to combat the outbreak of a new, highly contagious virus.

The steps China has taken around the coronavirus are unheard of in capitalist countries. They reaffirm the basic socialist character of the Chinese state. In a crisis or emergency, the welfare of the people comes before capitalist profits.

A capitalist class exists in China. There are millionaires and even billionaires. But in a crisis, the Communist Party controls the state and has the leverage to make decisions not dictated by capitalist profits.

Starting three weeks ago, China imposed a limited quarantine on 35 million people in Wuhan city and Hubei province. That has now been extended far wider and restricts all unnecessary social interaction until more is known about the virus.

Lunar New Year celebrations were canceled nationwide. Schools, factories and workplaces were closed an additional week to control contagion. The whole population was asked to self-quarantine and limit social interaction. Only food deliveries and other essential services continued nationwide.

China has made an all-out effort to learn and share with the world the genome of the virus, how contagious it is, its symptoms, what organs it attacks, the mortality rate, and what treatments or combinations of treatments are most successful.

Why China is so concerned

Worldwide, influenza causes up to 5 million cases of severe illness annually, killing up to 650,000 people, according to the World Health Organization. Some viruses are new and more dangerous than others because humans are not yet immune to them and vaccines have not been developed to control their spread.

The H1N1 swine flu virus, which began in the U.S. in 2009 and spread worldwide, infected more than 1.63 million people and caused 284,500 deaths, with a fatality rate of 17.4 percent. No efforts were made by the U.S. government to slow the spread of that particularly dangerous flu, which especially targeted young people.

China's massive efforts around the current outbreak of the coronavirus, however, have restricted the fatality rate so far to around 2.1 percent — lower than usual for a new disease. By Feb. 1, the number of people cured in China exceeded the deaths, indicating that the epidemic is controllable. But it is not yet controlled, and determined work is continuing, including building solidarity with Wuhan.

Each day new medical teams go to Wuhan and Hubei from other parts of China. More than 6,000 medical staff arrived on Feb. 9, following a national call for “pairing-up support for Hubei.” One-on-one support systems have been established in 16 provinces and municipalities to help cities in Hubei battle the epidemic.

Faster diagnosis and treatment plans are being aggressively tested and immediately disseminated worldwide.

U.S. has no policy

What China is doing stands in sharp relief to current U.S. policies. In an emergency or crisis in the U.S., maintaining property relations is the first and strongest consideration.

Time and again, National Guard units are mobilized to

stop desperate people from “looting” stores for needed supplies or to keep people fleeing floods and earthquakes from moving into unoccupied hotels and resorts. But no government measures are taken to stop businesses from hoarding, speculation and price hikes. Even food, water, blankets and generators donated to charities can end up sitting in warehouses.

This happened when Hurricane Katrina flooded New Orleans in 2005, and happened again in the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico with the disastrous hurricanes of 2017 and recent earthquakes, as well as the fires in California in 2018 and 2019. Millions are left on their own to survive as best they can in armories and overcrowded stadiums. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Red Cross are immediately overwhelmed.

Those with resources can leave the area, try to rebuild their lives, file insurance claims and wait years for settlements. But orders to evacuate don't help people without cars or with nowhere to flee.

When a contagious virus causes a health crisis, millions still go to their jobs sick because more than 40 million workers in the U.S. lack paid sick leave. Staying home to care for sick family members means many workers are at risk of losing a job. Advice on what to do is limited to telling people to get a flu shot, along with a series of ads for cough drops and fever meds.

Spending government funds in preparation for an impending health crisis or natural disaster is just not on the U.S. agenda.

So far this season the flu virus has sickened 22 million people in the U.S., with 210,000 hospitalizations and 12,000 deaths, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But no special provisions are being made, even though the death toll here already far exceeds the 1,000 coronavirus deaths in China.

Hospital emergency rooms across the U.S. are already overwhelmed, according to the Feb. 8 New York Times. Vital medical supplies, including medications, ventilators and respirator masks, are in critically short supply. To maximize profits and cut costs, large for-profit medical conglomerates with hundreds of hospitals keep inventories of even basic items like masks, gowns and gloves in short supply.

The CDC says that 20 percent of people in the U.S. come down with the flu each winter. In a bad season, like the one in 2017-18, the flu killed more than 60,000.

But the idea of shutting down factories, schools, shopping malls, movie theaters, restaurants and sports arenas to save thousands of lives is inconceivable.

China shows the way

China just built two major hospitals in 10 days, with a combined capacity of 2,600 beds. It has mobilized



Chinese medical workers in Wuhan, Hubei Province, use antivirals developed by the Cuban biotech industry to treat patients diagnosed with the coronavirus.



PHOTO: CHINA DAILY

Chinese workers built the 1,000-bed Huoshenshan hospital in the city of Wuhan in 10 days.

thousands of health care workers. How? Through socialist planning and the cohesive leadership of the Communist Party.

Thousands of medical volunteers have responded to the government's call to assist in Wuhan. With mass transit shut down to lessen contagion, squads of free taxis are operating for those who need health care or shopping. Food is easily available and quickly delivered. Fresh fruits and vegetables are being shipped in. There are no desperate people breaking into shops for food.

As of Feb. 10, Beijing's vast subway system is operating again. Subway stations and train compartments are disinfected every hour.

China Global Television Network, CCTV English, Peoples Daily and Global Times provide up-to-date information. Coverage focuses on the role of science, technology and a broad-based people's campaign to adhere to the quarantine and observe strict health measures. The shortages, price spirals and mass chaos predicted by the U.S. media are not happening.

Why capitalism can't do this

When the Chinese government imposed a partial quarantine on the 35 million workers in Hubei province, it also declared that rent and payments on loans and credit cards were frozen.

Could a capitalist government do that? Would capitalist banks tolerate freezing credit card debt, car payments, insurance premiums and mortgages?

Would the mega sports entertainment industry tolerate canceling the Super Bowl or other professional sports events that generate billions in advertising revenue?

Would landlords, large or small, tolerate freezing rent payments?

Would corporate giants allow major factories to temporarily close when profitable orders were waiting to be filled? Every week that Chinese factories are closed cuts \$26 billion in world trade. (New York Times, Feb. 8)

Would the pharmaceutical industry allow essential medicines to be distributed at cost or free? This industry is the most profitable sector of the U.S. economy, with the highest prescription drug costs in the world. Millions of adults in the U.S. skip their medications due to high prices, according to Harvard Health Reports.

But rather than spend billions to improve health care or basic infrastructure, Washington lavishes money on military bases to surround China and new weapons to threaten the world.

Workers here need to know the truth about China and demand the levels of health care, monitoring and national planning that everyone has a right to expect. □

An epidemic of racist U.S. propaganda

By Joshua Hanks

The novel coronavirus that first appeared in Wuhan, China, had by Feb. 10 spread to 28 countries and territories, leading to over 40,000 confirmed cases. Spreading faster than the virus itself, however, is widespread racism against all people of East Asian descent.

The virus presents much less of a threat than seasonal flu, which killed over 60,000 people in the U.S. alone during the 2017-18 flu season. Yet, despite swift and effective efforts by the Chinese government to slow the spread of the epidemic, fear and racism continue to metastasize throughout the world, especially in Western capitalist countries.

Sensationalist tabloids like the Sun and Daily Mail in Britain, as well as allegedly professional “journals of record” like the New York Times and Wall Street Journal,

have had a field day with the coronavirus, running story after story with provocative, ideologically tinged headlines and content. While crises elsewhere can bring out sympathy and aid donations from the world's richest countries, the coronavirus has been turned into a propaganda weapon to condemn the government of China and add fuel to anti-Chinese racism.

For example, a Feb. 4 article in the New York Times titled “Coronavirus Crisis Shows China's Governance Failure” opined that the Chinese people “are getting a rare glimpse of how China's giant, opaque bureaucratic system works — or, rather, how it fails to work.”

Praise for China's response

Yet both the United Nations and World Health Organization have commended China's rapid response. This has included over \$10 billion spent on controlling

the epidemic, including a mass mobilization of health care workers, People's Liberation Army soldiers and Communist Party members who are on the front lines of the battle against the epidemic.

“China is doing the right things, and China is responding in a massive way. We've seen no obvious lack of transparency,” Dr. Michael Ryan, executive director of the WHO Health Emergencies Program, told reporters. (Newsweek, Jan. 29)

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom told reporters at a Jan. 29 press conference in Geneva: “China has been completely committed to transparency, both internally and externally, and has agreed to work with other countries that need support. ... The level of commitment of the leadership in China is incredible; I will praise China again and again, because its actions actually

Continued on page 10

Venezuela, Trump and the Democrats

A rare moment of public truth occurred in Trump’s Feb. 4 vile State of the Union speech when the two U.S. parties representing the ruling class — apparently hostile to each other on many other issues — came together in unity.
As the Feb. 5 New York Times reported: “In one of the night’s few bipartisan moments, Republicans and Democrats stood to applaud Mr. [Juan] Guaidó,” whom Trump introduced as “the president of Venezuela.”
This was a night when Democrats had a green light from their leaders to boo the impeached but acquitted Trump, and when “Squad” members either stayed away or walked out. After the State of the Union, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi even ripped up a printed copy of the speech in Trump’s face.
But at Trump’s introduction of Guaidó, most Democrats stood up and applauded for the self-appointed Venezuelan

non-leader.
If any new lesson was needed to show that, yes, the Democratic Party leaders represent vicious and oppressive U.S. imperialism, there was the proof.
The irony is that, while the Venezuelan traitor Guaidó has the backing of the White House, the State Department, the CIA — and the Democratic Party leadership — he has virtually no support in Venezuela, not even within the Venezuelan right wing.
Guaidó was little known outside of his local district a year ago when, with the encouragement of Trump, Mike Pence and other U.S. imperialist gangsters, he acquired sufficient arrogance to appoint himself president of Venezuela. During the year, with U.S. backing, he attempted to overthrow the elected Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro no less than five times.
Each time Guaidó failed because he

had backing only from outside Venezuela. Meanwhile the Bolivarian revolutionary government in Caracas, led by Maduro, had the loyalty of the Venezuelan people in general, even after years of the strict U.S. economic blockade. The government also had the loyalty of the armed forces and had mobilized and trained a popular militia.
Guaidó’s flops lost him whatever backing he had a year ago from the Venezuelan capitalists. In a vote in the Venezuelan National Assembly this January, the various rightist, anti-revolutionary parties actually voted to depose Guaidó and replace him as head of the Assembly.
But, useless as Guaidó might be as a political leader, he still poses a threat to Venezuelans because he has the backing of Washington and other reactionary capitals in Latin America and Europe.
That means anti-imperialist, anti-war and any progressive people in the United

States have a duty to defend the existing Venezuelan government.
There is an opportunity now in the United States to defend Venezuela by defending the Venezuela Embassy Protectors. They are political activists who occupied the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington last spring in solidarity with the Venezuelan people. They were able to delay the embassy takeover by Guaidó’s gang.
Four of the protectors — Kevin Zeese, Margaret Flowers, Adriene Pine and David Paul — each face a year in prison and \$100,000 fines for their courageous legal actions. Their trial began Feb. 11 in Washington. Workers World encourages all who can to go to court to support them.
For more information about how to help defend the protectors, see defendembassyprotectors.org.

Sanctions Kill protests

By Nathaniel Chase

Organized popular resistance has made it increasingly difficult for U.S. imperialism to impose its will around the world through military intervention. From Iran to Venezuela, from People’s Korea to Zimbabwe, working and oppressed people are fighting back.
In the face of this growing resistance, the U.S. is increasingly relying on weapons other than direct military assaults to achieve its aims. Chief among these is the imposition of sanctions, also known as Economic War or Unilateral Coercive Measures.
Imposing sanctions means using the enormous influence the U.S. holds over the global economy to block the sale of basic goods to a country and to prohibit a country from accessing SWIFT, the worldwide payment system used for international trade. These measures have devastating economic impact on

targeted countries, with damage most strongly felt by the poorest, most vulnerable members of society: women, children, elders and people with chronic illnesses or disabilities.
The International Campaign against Sanctions and Economic War is calling for coordinated days of action around the world March 13-15 to raise consciousness around and fight back against sanctions imposed by the U.S. and its junior partners.
More information about the campaign, including a call to action translated into 17 languages, a list of over 1,000 endorsers, educational materials and resources for planning an action can be found at sanctionskill.org.
Can you organize a demonstration, meeting or educational event in your city?



Visit sanctionskill.org/list-action to submit details.
U.S.-imposed sanctions affect at least 39 countries, more than one-third of the world, a fact widely unknown even within the anti-imperialist movement. Their broad scope and deadly impact receive little attention in the mainstream media, allowing the U.S. to carry out campaigns of terror around the world with minimal awareness outside the targeted country. For example, a 2019 study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research, which found that U.S. sanctions killed 40,000

Venezuelans during 2017-18, received almost no coverage.
It is imperative that all anti-war, anti-imperialist and progressive forces organize against U.S.-imposed sanctions and economic war. Awareness of the U.S. sanctions must be increased, both within the anti-imperialist movement and among the working and oppressed masses at large. Beyond raising awareness, we must build a movement that not only educates, but has the power to fight back and defeat the deadly U.S. sanctions.

An epidemic of racist U.S. propaganda

Continued from page 9

helped in reducing the spread of the novel coronavirus to other countries. We shall tell the truth and that’s the truth.”
U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told reporters at the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on Feb. 8: “It is clear that there is a massive effort that is made by China in order to contain the disease and avoid its propagation. I think that that effort is remarkable.” Guterres’ remarks got no coverage in the Western media.
U.S. media falsehoods and slanders
However, accusations of secrecy and cover-up, which are at odds with statements from international agencies like the U.N. and WHO, continue to come from outlets like the New York Times.
An opinion piece on Jan. 29 by Times columnist Nicholas Kristof put this sentiment quite bluntly: “Coronavirus Spreads, and the World Pays for China’s Dictatorship.” It was followed by a Feb. 1

Times article stating that “at critical turning points, Chinese authorities put secrecy and order ahead of openly confronting the growing crisis.”
But that same day Chinese scientists published a paper in the New England Journal of Medicine titled, “Early Transmission Dynamics in Wuhan, China, of Novel Coronavirus-Infected Pneumonia.”
The headline of a Feb. 3 Times article about China’s efforts to report all suspected cases to health authorities is titled, “China, Desperate to Stop Coronavirus, Turns Neighbor Against Neighbor.” But two days later an article titled, “China Clamps Down on Coronavirus Coverage as Cases Surge,” lamented that reports of cases were being suppressed by the government.
Yet another Times article on Feb. 6 was headlined: “Wuhan Rounds Up the Infected as Death Toll in China Jumps,” conjuring up images of a heavy-handed response. This dovetails perfectly with the West’s existing narrative of China as an authoritarian dictatorship that runs

roughshod over its people.
All this stands in sharp contrast to the statements made by leaders of the U.N. and WHO. China rapidly identified the virus, reported it to the WHO, and sequenced its genome two days later, publishing the data in Chinese medical journals as well as Western ones, including The Lancet and the New England Journal of Medicine.
Whipping up xenophobia and racism
The Trump administration has announced travel restrictions for those who have been to China, and Trump’s Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross has described the epidemic as being potentially good for U.S. businesses and a way to bring jobs back to the U.S.
The callous disregard for sick people shown by the ruling class trickles down to other segments of society, too.
In Sydney a man of Asian descent suffered a heart attack in the street and died, with no one offering to help him out of misplaced fear of the coronavirus. An

attack on an Asian woman was filmed at a subway station in New York, while pictures from around the world show signs in restaurants and stores that refuse service to Chinese people.
Chinese-owned businesses outside China have seen noticeable reductions in customers as many people avoid them due to fears of the coronavirus. That is stoked by media outlets eager for a sensationalist story to generate more views and clicks.
Sadly, the corporate media, Western governments and racists are using this epidemic as a new way to attack China, just as Trump’s trade war and Obama’s “pivot to Asia” were designed to undermine China and stymie its rise to become a global power.
Now is the time for all workers and oppressed peoples around the world to stand with the people of China in their time of need, to counter the fear-based propaganda against China, and to fight back against the epidemic of racism targeting people of East Asian descent.

Report from Puerto Rico

Organizing against earthquakes and austerity

Part 1

On Jan. 8, *WW* reporter Phebe Eckfeldt interviewed Alberto Barreto Cardona, a leading member of Partido Mundo Obrero/Workers World Party. Barreto spoke about his recent travels from Jan. 1 to 28 in his home island of Puerto Rico.

The southern coast of Puerto Rico was the epicenter of a 6.4 magnitude earthquake on Jan. 7. The same area of the island was devastated by a 5.9 quake on Jan. 11, with a 5.0 magnitude quake hitting the area on Feb. 4. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, between Dec. 28 and Jan. 15, Puerto Rico suffered over 1,280 earthquakes, with more than two dozen magnitude 4.5 or greater.

Workers World: How are people dealing with the earthquakes? How are they organizing themselves?

Alberto Barreto Cardona: It is important to notice even before the earthquake I could still see the damage that [2017 Hurricane] Maria did to the Puerto Rican infrastructure and also the grievances of the people about the lack of motivation from the government to intervene and improve the quality of life on the island. For instance, the people have discovered there are many warehouses all around the island with resources that were never delivered — that could have alleviated people’s conditions.

When the [first] earthquake happened, there was already a lack of faith among the people in the government to be proactive. The majority of those organizing the camps for the poor — the medical volunteers, the nurses, the social workers, the psychologists — were all volunteers. Our own people were taking care of our people. There was a clear movement of solidarity in all parts of Puerto Rico, including the land where the camps were.

In the aftermath of the earthquakes

I went to the camps in the south, to a town called Ponce, near the epicenter of the earthquake in Guanaco. There is doubt whether this earthquake was caused by nature. There are some people who believe that there is an interest in exploring oil in the Caribbean, and perhaps some clandestine process may have contributed to this.

I cannot testify to this because I do not have scientific evidence or information. But other islands in the Caribbean, like Cuba, have experienced a major earthquake. It is surprising that PR is shaking, Cuba is shaking, Jamaica is shaking. Is it nature or are other factors involved here?

WW: Are people living outside now?

ABC: Many people are living outside because they lost their housing due to the earthquake. Other people are living outside even though they have housing because they are so scared and panicked they do not want to sleep in anything that is cement. When I was there, I felt at least seven shakings every day. Also there is fear of a tsunami, so everyone on the coast [where the epicenter was] is trying to go to the hills. When I went to the camps, the first thing I noticed is each has a couple of people as point persons who are very organized about how food was distributed. There are portable toilets, plenty of them.

But I also saw things I did not want to see. There was a 72-year-old man who’d had major surgery two weeks before, because of cancer of the stomach. It was not the best hygiene situation for somebody who had an operation of that type!

‘Our own people were taking care of our people’

I traveled through the center of the island to Ponce where all these camps were established by community organizers, volunteers and also some landowners who allowed people to make camps on their land. I visited almost six of the camps; they were all close together. I noticed that they had enough water, enough food, because the community had intervened — not because the government had intervened.

The response of people from the north and the northeast [of the island] to the people affected was incredible. But it was Puerto Rican helping Puerto Rican, and there was no government. When I went there, they had trucks full of water and full of food and donations. They had people from the School of Psychology who volunteered to do interventions with children around post-traumatic stress disorder and trauma. After nurses finished their work day in the hospital, they went and volunteered in the camps. There were doctors

volunteering. All was organized by Puerto Ricans and without the help of the government. Now the Puerto Rican government shows up for the pictures. To be seen in the newspapers. But in each camp that I went to, there was an incredible sense of belonging. It was powerful. Although it was a critical situation, I saw the resilience of the Puerto Rican people and the love everybody was demonstrating for each other — intervening in each other’s lives. There was collective cooking; there was even a playground created for the children with toys. All produced by the people, all generated by the people’s organizing.

WW: Please talk about the role of women in response to the earthquake.

ABC: I witnessed myself the incredible strength of the women organizing in both the [camp] community and also primarily organizing around the demonstrations in San Juan against the government. It was so refreshing not to see men in front of everything. In the majority of the chanting, the organizing, the picket line, there were powerful Puerto Rican women. I also saw the women being point persons in the camps, and the linkages that people are making about women’s oppression and colonialism, patriarchy and capitalism. There are separate organizations for women that are very powerful and very confrontational and very political. They are not “polite!”

WW: Please talk about the role of women in response to the earthquake.

I gave me a lot of hope because we suffered for so many years from the assumption of leadership by men. [It was good] to see the youth and women organizing, to see that they are trying to resolve grievances right there. Not sitting and discussing — they are resolving by doing. They are resolving by taking control, rather than “Let’s sit and talk about it.” [Public] leadership is not something that Puerto Rican women have been a part of; it has

been a male problem in the left, and it continues to be a male problem. [While I was in Puerto Rico,] there were major demonstrations in San Juan in front of the governor’s house demanding the resignation of the governor — because we found products never delivered to people during Maria. I consider the youth of Puerto Rico right now to be the vanguard because they are the ones who are being more militant. They are the ones protesting almost every day about the neglect of the government. I am just happy when I return to Puerto Rico. I just want to be part of this. I don’t want a leading position. I want to be led by youth: “Tell me how I can be helpful.” I try to keep myself in check about not being paternalistic or being condescending. That is something that is a part of patriarchy, and it is also part of the bad habits that sometimes you find in the left. I think that is being corrected with action. People have grievances, but the grievances don’t stay as grievances. You see the changes in the picket line; you see the changes in the demonstrations. You also see the creative way of doing politics. Sometimes we need innovations to keep things alive, and the youth have all kinds of ideas!

Next: Part 2 of Alberto Barreto’s interview: “PROMESA and the earthquakes.”



Puerto Rican activists Oscar López Rivera (left) and Alberto Barreto on Calle la Resistencia (Resistance Street) in old San Juan, during a Jan. 20 demonstration denouncing both the colonial government’s negligence in meeting the people’s needs and the neoliberal program of the imperialist PROMESA Board.

Venezuela

Continúa de la página 12

Bakunin, Dessalines, Pétion, Bolívar, Túpac Amaru, el Negro Miguel... y a tantas y tantas mujeres trabajadoras invisibilizadas que son el cerebro y el corazón de la dignidad.

Tercera: Pero todo indica que la clara tendencia represora está acelerándose porque esta vez el mando imperialista ha coordinado el sabotaje a líneas aéreas civiles de un tercer país para que no puedan tramitar billetes a Venezuela, es decir, un mando político-militar ha torpedeado a empresas civiles extranjeras ampliando el ataque a derechos humanos elementales. Asistimos a un salto más en el reciente proceso de unificación represiva entre los servicios secretos y la política internacional lo que confirma la naturaleza del imperialismo como dinámica inconciliable con la más mínima democracia.

En ponencia que no pudimos exponer públicamente en Caracas (lahaine.org/fQ3J), recordábamos cómo en el -338, en

la Liga de Corinto, se tomaron decisiones que podríamos definir como la primera estrategia contrainsurgente internacional para derrotar el aumento de las luchas sociales desde, al menos, el -371.

Las transformaciones sucesivas en las formas de propiedad privada, que han llevado a una ultracentralización y ultracentración de la gran propiedad burguesa en poquísimas manos en la segunda década del siglo XXI, han ido acompañadas de correspondientes avances en la coordinación internacional de las represiones, unido a una mayor agudización de la lucha de clases y de las contradicciones interimperialistas. Esta complejidad es la que ahora mismo explica el obsesivo ataque al evento antiimperialista en Caracas.

Cuarta: En la actualidad la economía capitalista en su conjunto y el poder de los EEUU y de la Unión Europea, se enfrentan a obstáculos cada día más dramáticos: la gigantesca deuda global que no para de crecer debido a la política suicida mantenida por la gran banca en

los últimos tiempos de lo que se llama «dinero barato», representa ya el 320 por ciento del PIB mundial y sólo hay dos formas de reducirla drásticamente hasta una cuantía mínima manejable desde los intereses del imperialismo: descargándola sobre la humanidad trabajadora, y sobre las potencias competidoras que se resisten a ser peones del imperialismo.

Pero no es la única amenaza existente; hay más, siendo la más grave la que anida en la ley tendencial de la caída de la tasa media de ganancia y en la ley general de la acumulación capitalista. Cuando los diferentes niveles de estas crisis se fusionan en una sola quiebra, al imperialismo no le queda más recurso que la destrucción masiva de valor acumulado, de trabajo muerto, infraestructuras y fuerzas productivas para intentar empezar otra fase expansiva, si es que puede. Y es por esto que no aguanta ni un segundo la mínima emancipación de los pueblos: de aquí el ataque al evento antiimperialista de Caracas.

Y quinta: Por tanto, debemos multiplicar estos encuentros, estos debates, coordinarlos, avanzar en la praxis antiimperialista porque cada segundo que perdamos es un segundo de vida que regalamos al imperialismo para que contraataque. □

El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

Fred Goldstein utiliza las leyes de la acumulación capitalista de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué el capitalismo global ha llegado finalmente a un punto de inflexión.

LowWageCapitalism.com

Cinco apuntes urgentes sobre el ataque imperialista



Miembros del Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (PSUV) en Caracas.

Elogio de la OMS

China lucha unida, pueblo y gobierno, contra coronavirus

Por Sergio Ortiz
laarena.com.ar

30 de enero – Los primeros casos de esta enfermedad fueron en la ciudad de Wuhan, provincia de Hubei, centro de China, en diciembre pasado. El contagio habría comenzado en un mercado de peces y aves silvestres donde se venden mariscos, serpientes y murciélagos. De esos animales el virus pasó a empleados del lugar, que lo fueron contagiando a otras personas.

El nombre científico puesto al coronavirus por la Organización Mundial de la Salud es 2019-nCoV, siendo parecido, no igual, al Síndrome Respiratorio Agudo Grave, SARS, que en 2002-2003 en esta región dejó 750 muertos.

Los medios de comunicación del gigante asiático daban cuenta de 106 muertos por la enfermedad, con 4.500 casos detectados y unos 7.000 más de probables infectados. Wuhan, puso en cuarentena a sus once millones de habitantes. Sumadas las 17 ciudades de otras provincias cercanas, el número de quienes están en aislamiento para evitar contagios supera los 50 millones.

El número de muertos fue aumentando, pero viene encontrando un cierto techo; según los médicos la mortalidad del 2019-nCoV no es muy alta pues ronda el 3 por ciento de los contagiados. De todos modos para el gobierno se convirtió en un asunto de máxima prioridad atender las tareas médicas y de otras órbitas del Estado, para disminuir al máximo el impacto en la población.

Lo importante a destacar, para quien observa el fenómeno desde la Argentina, son los análisis y determinaciones adoptadas por el gobierno del presidente Xi Jinping, en varios sentidos.

Primero, el brote apareció en medio de los agudos conflictos generados por Estados Unidos con China, a partir de que Donald Trump comenzó con una serie de gravísimas sanciones comerciales, y con denuncias a Beijing y extorsiones a terceros países para impedir la comercialización del 5G de la cooperativa Huawei.

En esas condiciones apareció la enfermedad. Una mentalidad algo esquizofrénica habría desconfiado o sembrado sospechas del mal a esa potencia decadente, responsable de meter enfermedades en los países con los

que tiene alguna contradicción (caso del dengue hemorrágico, sembrado por EE.UU. contra Cuba).

Beijing no apuntó en esa dirección ni culpó a la CIA, aunque no habría que descartar absolutamente toda sospecha. Se puso manos a la obra para conjurar el mal en base a su propio esfuerzo, con mucho apuro. Si después los servicios secretos chinos tuvieran alguna prueba, seguro que la presentarán ante quien corresponda.

Lo segundo que se nota es el involucramiento del gobierno central y las autoridades provinciales en las tareas de salvataje. Enviaron miles de médicos a Wuhan, reforzaron presupuestariamente la zona afectada, reunieron el Buró Político del Comité Permanente del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de China para discutir planes al respecto, el propio primer ministro Li Keqiang viajó a la zona más peligrosa para transmitir el apoyo del gobierno nacional y tomar contacto directo con esa realidad, etc.

Un verdadero ejemplo

Xi dijo que el pueblo chino ahora está sosteniendo una batalla muy seria contra la epidemia y agregó que “la seguridad y salud de las personas siempre están primero, y, por lo tanto, la prevención y control del brote del nuevo coronavirus son el trabajo más importante del país en este momento” (cable de agencia Xinhua, 28 de enero).

Eso fue dicho en la reunión que tuvo el presidente en el Gran Palacio del Pueblo de la capital, con el director general de la Organización Mundial de la Salud, el etíope Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, excanciller del país africano.

El visitante fue informado por Xi de las novedades de la lucha contra el coronavirus, aunque tenía sus propias fuentes de información, pues se había permitido que expertos de la OMS fueran a Wuhan.

Tedros declaró que “es admirable que el gobierno chino haya mostrado su sólida determinación política y tomado medidas oportunas y efectivas para abordar la epidemia. China ha emitido información de manera abierta y transparente, identificado el patógeno en un tiempo récord y compartido la secuencia genética del nuevo coronavirus de forma oportuna con la OMS y con

otros países”. Añadió lo evidente: “las medidas tomadas no sólo son para proteger a su pueblo, sino también para proteger a las personas de todo el mundo”.

Una expresión de las prioridades del gobierno socialista es que decidió construir dos hospitales con carácter de urgencia, uno para mil camas y otro para 1.600, en tiempo récord. Las tareas comenzaron el 24 de enero y culminarán el 3 de febrero en el nosocomio de Huoshenshan, a 20 km de Wuhan, y dos días después se abrirá otro en un predio de 30.000 metros cuadrados a orillas del río Yangtsé.

Las obras se desarrollan durante las 24 horas del día, a toda velocidad, tal el empeño en que no falte atención médica a quienes la demanden. Cuando la epidemia de 2003 del SARS, el gobierno hizo el Hospital Xiaotangshan en una semana. Sana envidia sentimos los argentinos porque en nuestro país el sistema de salud está muy venido a menos, no sólo en infraestructura sino también en presupuesto, número y salarios de sus profesionales y enfermeras, etc.

Quien está al frente de las tareas médicas propiamente dichas es el director de la Comisión Nacional de Salud y ministro del ramo, Ma Xiaowei. En una conferencia de prensa consignó que habían enviado a Hubei a más de 900 trabajadores médicos en siete equipos, además de un equipo médico militar de 450 miembros, con otros mil en espera.

El gobierno central asignó 143 millones de dólares para combatir la epidemia, envió sus reservas de suministros médicos, ropa de protección, mascarillas, guantes y gafas protectoras a las áreas más afectadas, detalló el ministro.

“La epidemia es un demonio. No le permitiremos esconderse”, dijo el presidente Xi. A la salida de la reunión en Beijing, el director de la OMS elogió la velocidad y la escala masiva de las acciones de China rara vez vistas en el mundo. Tedros dijo que “esto demuestra la eficiencia de China y las ventajas del sistema de China”.

Por un tiempo las agencias internacionales tendrán que dejar de lado sus calumnias a China por los motines pro-capitalistas de Hong Kong y no tendrán más remedio que reflejar la digna lucha del socialismo por la salud. □

Venezuela

Cinco apuntes urgentes sobre el ataque imperialista

Por Iñaki Gil de San Vicente en Lahaine.com

La reacción furibunda orquestada y dirigida internacionalmente contra el Encuentro antiimperialista por la Vida, la Paz y la Soberanía, que se celebra en Caracas los días 22 al 25 de enero de 2020, nos exige algunas reflexiones sobre todo a quienes se nos ha impedido acudir.

Primera: El boicot llevado a cabo por varias líneas aéreas para impedir la asistencia al evento confirma su idoneidad, su necesidad, el acierto del PSUV al convocarlo. En la actualidad hay varios frentes de batalla decisivos en la guerra entre el imperialismo y la humanidad explotada: Venezuela es uno de ellos, el más decisivo junto a Cuba para la doble tarea de recomponer las fuerzas emancipadoras de Nuestra América y tomar la ofensiva del proceso.

Pero Venezuela — y Cuba — también son importantes a nivel mundial porque además de fortalecer la alianza con otras potencias que de algún modo se enfrentan al imperialismo por diversos intereses que no podemos

analizar ahora, además de esto y, sobre todo, confirman la incuestionable lección histórica de que la soberanía de un pueblo depende de su capacidad de autodefensa. La catástrofe de Bolivia vuelve a dar la razón a la historia: el imperialismo nunca se da por vencido, siempre está actualizando sus contraataques, nunca cesa en la desestabilización, en el soborno y cooptación de seres despreciables, mercenarios designados para cumplir las órdenes de la burguesía y del imperialismo.

Segunda: Desde hace un tiempo, personas de bien, revolucionarias, venían soportando en aeropuertos crecientes restricciones y ataques a su libertad de comunicación, de movimientos, de asistencia a actos, debates y reuniones de solidaridad internacionalista en otros países.

Asistimos a un endurecimiento represivo contra estos derechos que nos recuerdan a las desesperadas medidas de muchos Estados para impedir la solidaridad en las revueltas grecorromanas y medievales, en la asfixiante vigilancia sobre los y las esclavas, en las

guerras campesinas, en las sublevaciones andinas y continentales, en las primeras revoluciones burguesas, en los comienzos de lo movimiento obrero y popular con trabas de toda índole, en los controles represivos de 1848, en las citas de la Primera Internacional, en el cerco a la Comuna de 1871, en las leyes antisocialistas de finales del XIX y el cerco a la II Internacional y en especial a la III Internacional, la comunista, en las Brigadas Internacionales y en el Socorro Rojo, la siempre fallida obsesión de amordazar y atar a Cuba y a Nuestramérica...

Recordamos aquella ridícula pretensión del rey español creyendo que enmudecería a Hugo Chávez cuya voz se escucha en este vital evento antiimperialista, junto a la de Fidel Castro, Marulanda, Argala, Allende, Camilo Torres, Lumumba, Sankara, Amílcar Cabral, el Che, Ho, Mao, Trotsky, Durruti, Nin, Mella, Mariátegui, Lenin, Zapata, Rosa Luxemburg, Jenny, Marx, Martí,

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