



Not a riot — REBELLION!

By Monica Moorehead

June 1 — A militant, youth-led uprising, ignited by police terror, has swept across the United States like wildfire, and is now entering its second week. Even Trump’s proudly declaring himself the “law-and-order” president by threatening the presence of federal troops in many cities — and the present catastrophic COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in over 102,000 U.S. deaths and rising — have not been able to contain this uprising sparked by a horrific videotaped police murder exposed on May 25 for the whole world to see.

For almost nine minutes, George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man, was tortured and then lynched by Minneapolis police as he lay face-down and handcuffed in the street. One police officer pressed his knee to Floyd’s throat while two police officers pinned him down on his stomach. Before Floyd completely lost consciousness, he was yelling “I can’t breathe” and calling for his late mother. Floyd was initially detained after being accused of using a counterfeit \$20 bill.

Even though the police officers — Derek Chauvin, Thomas Lane, J. Alexander Kueng and Tou Thao — were fired after the incident, none of them were immediately arrested and charged with Floyd’s death. It took four days after the lynching for John Harrington, commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, to announce that Chauvin was arrested and charged with third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. The other officers still have not been arrested or charged.

The Floyd family is demanding that officers Lane, Kueng and Thao be charged with

various degrees of murder, and Chauvin be charged with first-degree murder.

An independent autopsy on June 1, paid for by the Floyd family, found that police were responsible for his death by “medical asphyxia” when he was deprived of oxygen to the brain for almost five minutes. He died at the scene, not at the hospital. This autopsy’s findings contradict the initial findings released by the Hennepin County medical examiner, which claimed that pre-existing conditions caused Floyd’s death, not homicide by cops.

On May 26 protests began to erupt in Minneapolis and other cities demanding justice for Floyd and arrests of the officers. In an audacious act on May 28, youth torched the Minneapolis Police Department’s Third Precinct headquarters, where the four officers had worked.

Dozens of curfews declared in many cities — backed up by the presence of local and state police and the National Guard — have not deterred young people from exercising their right to stay in the streets to let their outraged voices be heard, even if they had to take arrests for “civil disobedience,” if necessary. Thousands of people have been arrested for breaking curfew over six days of political outrage, expressed by burning cop cars and shutting down bridges and interstates.

Even reporters from mainstream media like CNN and MSNBC have either been detained or indiscriminately hit with rubber bullets and pepper spray, along with protesters. Isolated incidences of young people, including children, being tased, pepper-sprayed and knocked down by riot police were caught on videotape and

Continued on page 5



Minneapolis, May 27. More pictures, pp 6-7.

PHOTO: BRAD SIGAL

Defend resisters! Defend the uprising!

People are rising up, rising up against police violence! Smoldering rage ignited in a firestorm throughout the U.S. when police lynched George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25. Immediately there was public outrage, after seeing how white supremacists killed Ahmaud Arbery as he jogged through his neighborhood and after invading police shot Breonna Taylor to death in Kentucky while she was asleep in her own bed. All were Black; all are dead.

The videotape of Floyd being lynched by a cop during long minutes of deliberate strangulation propelled thousands and thousands of people — multinational, multigendered workers and oppressed people of all backgrounds — into the streets.

The people held the racist “injustice system” and the cops accountable. The Third Precinct building in Minneapolis — where the four cops who killed Floyd were stationed — was burned down. In Nashville,

Tenn., the city hall and courthouse were set on fire. Cop cars were overturned and burned in New York City, Rochester, N.Y., Philadelphia, Atlanta, Cleveland, Los Angeles and elsewhere. And, yes, “property” was damaged, the property of capitalist banks and big chains — Wells Fargo, Starbucks and AutoZone torched and other buildings caught in the spreading blaze.

For centuries in the U.S., white supremacists — as agents of the state or as vigilantes like the Ku Klux Klan who “work hand-in-hand” with the state (sometimes one and the same) — have lynched African-American people and other people of color with impunity. To this very day, it is almost impossible to get a charge of murder — much less a conviction — when a cop kills a person of color “in the line of duty.”

It took four days of countrywide protests and physical rebellions to get just one of

Continued on page 10



JUNE IS PRIDE MONTH
LGBTQ2+ solidarity 8
Larry Kramer, 1935-2020 9

SOCIALIST DEMANDS FOR THE COVID-19 CRISIS

1. Free healthcare for all
2. Nationalize the healthcare system under community control. Build emergency hospitals
3. Full pay, benefits and guaranteed income for all
4. Food, housing, medical supplies, & utilities including internet for all
5. Suspend rent, evictions, mortgages, utility shutoffs & ALL debt

6. Prioritize resources for communities of color, migrants, LGBTQ2+ people, seniors, youth, people with disabilities
7. Empty prisons & detention centers. Shut down ICE. End racist attacks
8. Community control. No cops, military
9. \$2 trillion to workers, not the banks
10. End U.S. wars, sanctions, and environmental destruction

WORKERS WORLD PARTY

Workers and oppressed of the world unite! workers.org

Food, housing and water 3
Trump, WHO, Big Pharma 3

Anti-Racist Protests
• Photos from around U.S. 6-7
• Whose violence? 10
• Worker solidarity 11

TEAR DOWN THE WALLS

4-5

- Celebrating Mumia’s birthday
- Resistance roundup
- Empty Cleveland jail!

Workers World

A communist newspaper, a collective organizer

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

This is a slightly edited version of a talk given during the “What Road to Socialism?” webinar held by Workers World Party on May 16.

When I first started writing for Workers World/Mundo Obrero newspaper, longtime comrade Leslie Feinberg said to me that older comrades always told hir, “Remember, no Party action is over until it’s written up for the paper!” That’s because the newspaper is an integral gear in Workers World Party’s Marxist-Leninist democratically centralized process.

That perspective comes from V. I. Lenin’s 1901-1902 book, “What Is to Be Done?” In one section, “Plan for an All-Russia Newspaper,” Lenin sharply argued that a national revolutionary newspaper was needed to effectively accomplish communist organizing in the vast territory of imperial Russia, including its conquered nations.

Lenin argued against social democratic proposals that there should be only local individual newspapers. These democratic socialists predicted that a party structure — and ultimately revolution — would somehow coalesce (!) out of these small, separate efforts.

Instead, Lenin advanced a structure for a national revolutionary communist newspaper. First, comrades report on the facts of local conditions from far-flung and disparate locations to the national newspaper. Next, national editorial and political comrades analyze that information from a Marxist perspective to glean insights into the overall current state of the working class under imperialist capitalism.

Finally, through the reports chosen and the analyses developed for the national newspaper, the theoretical impact of local reporting circulates back to organizers and readers. They then undertake the next round in revolutionary action — and reporting.

Over a hundred years ago, Lenin described Workers

World newspaper: “A [communist, revolutionary] newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organizer. ... [It] may be compared to the scaffolding erected around a building under construction; it marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication between the builders, permitting them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organized labour.”

When Workers World Party was established in 1959, the founders followed Lenin’s lead in immediately establishing Workers World as a national newspaper, with the first issue coming out in March 1959. Now — 61 years later — the paper continues to publish on a daily basis on the web and in a downloadable weekly PDF print edition.

The process Lenin outlined is still followed by Workers World/Mundo Obrero. Every week an appeal for news and suggested articles is sent out to the entire membership and branches, along with an invitation for any comrade or candidate to participate in the weekly national editorial meetings, held by phone and on the web.

In these meetings the editorial staff discusses news and topics of the week from a revolutionary Marxist perspective, and a new issue of the paper is put in motion. These analyses and reports then return to the local level through the newspaper for review, study and growth in action.

For more on “WW Newspaper and Communist Organizing,” see our online class at workers.org. And final news flash! There is a new, dynamic Prisoner Page in WW called “Tear Down the Walls!” that is bringing forward the struggles of incarcerated people as an integral part of the global working class.

You can read those stories and more in Workers World/Mundo Obrero every day at workers.org — where as Marxist-Leninists, we “write it up for the paper!”

Pratt, born and raised in Alabama, is an anti-racist, white, Southern lesbian and one of the managing editors of Workers World/Mundo Obrero newspaper.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



♦ In the U.S.

Not a riot — rebellion.....	1
WW: communist newspaper, collective organizer ..	2
Big banks profit from COVID-19	3
Economics behind the rebellion.	3
Striking packinghouse workers win	3
Trump, WHO and the pandemic	3
Marc Lamont Hill on Mumia’s birthday.	4
Behind the Walls: Resistance roundup.....	4
Cleveland action demands prisoner release.	5
Historic uprising resists racism, killer cops	6-7
Solidarity with all LGBTQ2+ workers!	8
Organizing health care for patients, not profits.	8
Women and gender-nonconforming people fight ..	8
Workers’ assemblies.....	8
Workers unite to fight racism, cops, pandemic.....	9
To rebel is justified	10

♦ Around the world

Bolsonaro the ‘biggest threat’ to COVID response ..	11
---	----

♦ Editorial

Defend resisters; Defend the uprising!	1
--	---

♦ Noticias en Español

Justicia para George Floyd?	12
Crisis económica	12

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



Vol. 62, No. 23 • June 4, 2020
Closing date: June 3, 2020

Editor: Deirdre Griswold

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

Web Editors: ABear, Harvey Markowitz, Janet Mayes

Prisoners Page Editors: Mirinda Crissman, Ted Kelly

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

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

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

Mundo Obrero: Teresa Gutierrez, Carlos Vargas

Supporter Program: Coordinator Sue Davis

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Austin
austin@workers.org

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

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

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

Cleveland
216.738.0320
cleveland@workers.org

Dallas
dallas@workers.org

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

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

Pensacola, Fla.
pensacola@workers.org

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

Portland, Ore.
portland@workers.org

Salt Lake City
801.750.0248
slc@workers.org

San Antonio
sanantonio@workers.org

West Virginia
WestVirginia@workers.org

Big banks profit from COVID-19

Food, shelter, even water at risk for millions

By G. Dunkel

On top of COVID-19, another epidemic — one of growing hunger, evictions and foreclosures — now looms over millions of poor people in the United States.

They are disproportionately Indigenous, African American, Latinx and other people of color. Many live far from big population centers.

From March to the end of May, more than 40 million workers lost their jobs and applied for unemployment insurance. That doesn't include the millions of undocumented workers who are out of work and don't qualify for the benefits.

Since 40 percent of U.S. households live paycheck-to-paycheck, without enough savings to cover an unexpected \$400 bill, they urgently need the money provided by unemployment insurance. But the UI systems, which are state-run with federal oversight and emergency financial support, couldn't handle the burst of applications.

Their computers were overloaded and crashed. Their telephone lines — many states require a call to verify eligibility — were so flooded that some people had to call thousands of times before they could get through. In some states, particularly Florida, applicants had to pick up the forms at libraries or government offices and mail them in, creating major delays.

Just to put food on their table, workers

by the tens of millions turned to food banks. But the major federal program — Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program — requires a time-consuming application-verification process.

Most food banks are private, nonprofit initiatives, staffed by volunteers and often funded by the state or city. However, city money has mostly gone to replace school breakfast and lunch programs that ended when public schools closed.

Given the tremendous shock that COVID-19 expenses have inflicted on state/city revenues, the funds devoted to feeding the hungry in the United States must come ultimately from the banks. They will only lend the money if they expect to make profits — meaning if state/city borrowers don't default.

Money for rent and mortgage payments running out

Housing in the United States is divided into two separate markets — home owners and renters.

In the rental housing market, some big landlords control tens of thousands

of units, while small landlords control a handful. Affordable housing—where units rent for up to \$600 a month—is almost always provided by small landlords.

The financial media were surprised that 90 percent of renters were somehow able to pay their rents in May. They explain that the \$1,200 federal stimulus checks and access to a federal add-on to unemployment insurance—\$600 a week for many workers—provided a cushion. Also, many states have imposed restrictions on evictions that let workers who couldn't make their rent still stay in their homes.

But the federal money basically sunsets on July 31, while eviction prohibition generally expired on June 1. What happens next?

Bexar County, Texas, for example, which includes the city of San Antonio, expects to be deluged with evictions. Last year, even before the pandemic and economic crisis, landlords filed more than 21,000 eviction cases in the county.

The banks and pension funds that hold the mortgages on most of these rental properties have evidently decided that eviction

is the proper response to not paying your rent, no matter what tragedy dislocation and homelessness may bring. Many small landlords would rather make a deal, but the banks ultimately call the shots.

Even water isn't safe

Water is part of the essential social safety net that has become unavailable to many.

Poor communities in the desert or arctic areas of the United States, where many Indigenous and people of color live, struggle to sell the bonds they need to supply residents with water and sewerage. Interest rates set by the banks are more than these communities can afford.

In Utqiagvik, Alaska, for example, the most northern community in the U.S., where the Inupiat are the majority, it costs \$7,000 to connect a house to the water/sewerage/electric grid.

Some 40 percent of households in the Navajo Reservation, which is spread over three states in the Southwest and is home to 250,000 people, have no access to running water.

So hundreds of thousands of the poorest people in the U.S. lack the water they need to flush toilets or even wash their hands — a basic sanitary measure essential to limiting the spread of COVID-19.

This reality of extreme inequality is one of the biggest reasons the U.S. now leads the world in COVID-19 cases. □

Economics behind the rebellion

Between March 18 and April 10, over 22 million people lost their jobs as the unemployment rate surged toward 15 percent. Over the same three weeks,

U.S. billionaire wealth increased by \$282 billion, an almost 10 percent gain.

— Institute for Policy Studies.

Striking packinghouse workers win signed agreements for safety

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

Immigrant workers, on strike against Washington state fruit packinghouses since May 7, won another victory on May 28. The workers' negotiating committee came out from Allan Brothers with a signed agreement and their fists held high.

The Latinx workers in Yakima have won three signed agreements so far with the nonunion companies. The workers in Yakima Valley made their mark by joining a growing working-class movement for basic health and safety on the job and against racist disrespect by the bosses. The fruit packers are still striking two obstinate and racist bosses.

On May 26, the striking workers caravanned to Olympia, the state capitol. They went to Gov. Jay Inslee's mansion and the state Department of Labor and Industries. They brought over 200 safety complaints against their bosses and demanded better standards from the state government.

Yakima County has the highest rate of COVID-19 cases on the West Coast. (tinyurl.com/y7e25htm) The

agreement at Allan Brothers won increased safety measures in the crowded packinghouses and includes masks, plastic shields and a \$1-an-hour raise. Negotiating committee member Agustin Lopez said, "I am very happy, because employees will go back to work with their heads held high and with a lot of pride." (tinyurl.com/yddgtcdw)

On May 30, an 85-car solidarity caravan from the labor movement drove to the picket lines in Yakima from Seattle, the Tri-Cities and Spokane. Larry Brown, president of the Washington State Labor Council AFL-CIO, told strikers that unions have to fight against the murderous police racism of Minneapolis, while understanding that packinghouse workers are also part of the struggle against racism.

Essential im/migrant workers fight for justice

Since May Day, im/migrant workers, many considered essential, have protested against being completely excluded from the CARES Act. Passed by Congress and signed by Trump, this \$2.2 trillion legislation doles out most of its funds to big business. But not one cent of the \$1,200 checks or any unemployment compensation was



Striking Washington state fruit packers.

given to undocumented workers!

Thousands more essential workers are now coming to Yakima for the cherry harvest and later the apple harvest. The packinghouse workers and their supporters have complained loudly to the government about lax safety in the agricultural industry.

State regulations allow for farmworkers to be double-bunked in rooms of up to 15 workers. Farmworkers are usually crammed tightly into vans when they are driven to the fields. COVID-19 spreads very easily under these conditions. At a farm in Tennessee, 100 percent of the 200 produce workers recently tested positive for COVID-19.

Solidarity with packinghouse workers needs to extend to farmworkers. □

Trump, WHO and the pandemic

By Deirdre Griswold

Smack in the middle of the biggest pandemic in a century, President Donald Trump has announced he is withdrawing the U.S. from the World Health Organization.

One would expect Trump's decree to bring an outcry from all the people here who specialize in public health. That's happening, but it's not getting the news coverage it deserves.

What gives the White House occupant the power to disregard the medical community and dis all the countries in the world that rely on WHO's expertise

to battle multiple diseases? Does Trump join imperial Rome's Nero in spewing out dictats just for the gratification of his ego?

But there's more to it than that.

What's the motivation for Trump's move? Clearly, it's not to protect the health of the population. Just the opposite. COVID-19 is a worldwide problem. People in the U.S. will benefit when a vaccine against COVID-19 is made available, no matter which country's scientists are able to come up with it.

U.S. fatalities from COVID-19 are the highest in the world of any one country. It has killed more than 106,000 people here

as of the end of May. And already tens of millions of workers in the U.S. have lost their jobs, due to the economic disruption caused by the virus.

It is a matter of extreme urgency that a breakthrough be made to prevent further spread of the disease.

Recently, the WHO announced measures to stimulate international cooperation in the development of a vaccine to counter COVID-19 and to make it available to all countries. That is exactly what the wealthy U.S. pharmaceuticals do not want.

Poorer countries are extremely worried that when a cure or preventive medicine

is found, it will be patented by one of the U.S. pharmaceuticals and sold at a price that can bankrupt not just individuals, but nations themselves.

The one bright spot right now is that scientists in the People's Republic of China are working hard on creating a vaccine, and China has announced that it will be made available to the world.

This pandemic makes it clearer than ever that we need to get rid of the capitalist system that profits the very few and build a socialist society that can plan economic development to satisfy human need, not corporate greed. □



Marc Lamont Hill

‘Outside the logic of the Prison’ on Mumia’s birthday

By Marc Lamont Hill

These slightly edited remarks on the need to move away from prisons for resolving the problems of society and ending prisons were given April 24 at the “U.S. Empire vs. Political Prisoners” webinar teach-in sponsored by Mobilization4Mumia and held in honor of the 66th birthday of political prisoner and revolutionary Mumia Abu-Jamal.

It’s such an honor to be here tonight, surrounded by so many brilliant thinkers and courageous activists, freedom fighters who have been long distance runners, and political prisoners who have made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their all, their very bodies to the struggle.

Tonight what brings us together is the 66th birthday of our dear brother Mumia Abu-Jamal, one of the great freedom fighters, one of the greatest truth-tellers that we’ve ever seen — and a political prisoner.

Since 1981 we’ve been battling and fighting and struggling to liberate Mumia. Mumia is such a passionate voice, such a courageous voice, we need him so desperately on the other side of the dungeon. And we’re gonna continue to fight until he’s out.

If anybody knows Mumia, they know that he wouldn’t want us here talking about him. Mumia would want us to talk about his case, but he’d also want us to put his case in the context of everybody else’s.

Mumia is being held under the most absurd, violent and ugly circumstances that

we’ve seen. Just last week, people received a phone call saying that he had been taken to the hospital with COVID-19, making us think that he’d been given a death sentence. That’s the type of cruelty and the type of evil the prison industry, and the prison specifically targeting Mumia Abu-Jamal, demonstrates every single day.

It’s not just about Mumia, because right now we are in a human rights crisis, a crisis of carcerality, a crisis of mass incarceration. The U.S. Empire feeds off of mass incarceration. Ever since the slave enterprise, when African people were brought here and enslaved, the U.S. has made its money, it has built an empire, it has expanded its economy off of human captivity.

Even as we moved into a postslavery moment, all we did was shift the means of captivity. Now, instead of putting people on plantations, we have people in a cage, in what we call “correctional” facilities, jails and prisons, juvenile facilities and such.

We continue to take all of our contradictions as a nation and put them behind bars, whether it’s mental illness, whether it’s poverty, whether it’s homelessness, whether it’s drug addiction — and of course, political dissent. Anyone who dares speak out against this empire ends up in a cage. That’s why we have Mumia Abu-Jamal in a cage. That’s why we have Sekou Odinga in a cage. That’s why we had Herman Bell in a cage. That’s why we continue to have everybody from here and around the globe caged, when they have the audacity to speak out against the empire.

We call for the release of all political prisoners right now because it is the right thing to do. But we also make a bolder call, a more radical call, and that is the abolition of prison itself.

Moving outside the ‘logic’ of prison

We must move into a moment that no longer uses the prison as the resolution to our social contradictions. The prison must no longer be a resolution to harm that is done. The prison must no longer be the resolution to all of our challenges in society.

We must call for the end of prison construction right now. We must call for decarceration. That means we must begin to let people out of prison immediately. We must call for ex-carceration. That means we have to stop putting people in prison. That means we have to legalize things, that means we have to dismantle laws that criminalize. We have to decriminalize, get rid of this logic of criminalization. We must think about restraint of the few; we must think about how we can protect society from harm that is done, but outside the logic of the prison.

And we must build a caring community. We must develop the resources and the infrastructure; we must find ways to protect those who are vulnerable. We must find ways to invest in those who have not been invested in. We must find ways to provide food, clothing and shelter for every single person.

That’s what this is about — what abolition is about. But we not only have the



Marc Lamont Hill

long-term abolition goal, we need to exercise abolitionist principles right now because COVID-19 has created a human rights crisis that amplifies the already existing human rights crisis.

To live in a U.S. prison right now is to live with a death sentence. Whether you’re there for three months or six months, whether you’ve gotten a life sentence, you are on death row right now if you’re in a U.S. prison. The type of social distancing that the best medical experts — not the president, but the best medical experts — suggest can’t be exercised in prison. The type of protection that you want to be able to engage in, you can’t in prison.

So anybody who’s incarcerated right now doesn’t even have the means to defend themselves. What they’re getting is cruel and unusual punishment. In areas of the world right now, infection rates were 1 and 2 out of 1,000. Then you go into Rikers Island in New York City, and you got 54 out of 1,000.

Can you imagine being anywhere in the world with 54 out of 1,000 people as the infection rate, and not see that as a human rights crisis? Unless it’s poor people, unless it’s Black people, unless it’s Brown people. Free all political prisoners! □

BEHIND THE WALLS

Resistance roundup

By Mirinda Crissman

Prisoners are acting to protect themselves and each other in the middle of the global pandemic as they protest inhuman cages across the country and across the world. In the brutal facilities of incarceration in the U.S. alone, there have been hundreds of recorded actions related to COVID-19 since late March.

The frequency of this resistance clearly demonstrates that prison conditions are rapidly deteriorating in the present health crisis. As the prisoner support group Free Them All Connecticut says, “Jail and prison walls can’t contain the spread of the virus. What is on the outside will be on the inside, and what happens to our communities on the inside will affect us all.” (freethemallct.org/about)

Prisons, jails and migrant detention centers stand in defiance of public health needs every day. The colonizing capitalist class has murdered countless humans in a myriad of ways for hundreds of years. They will continue to do so at an unprecedented rate, unless we act in response to what those affected are calling for.

Incarcerated people are alive, ready to fight and yelling to be heard in any way they can. They have the right to resist their premature death, by any means necessary. Solidarity with our incarcerated siblings! Free Them All — for public health!

This list of prisoner actions from perilouschronicle.com is extensive — and by no means represents all actions, many unknown or unreported:



A Philadelphia caravan on March 30 demands freedom for all incarcerated in Pennsylvania prisons.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

May 20: Hunger strike at Florence Correctional Center, Ariz.

May 19: Sit-in protest at Shelby County Jail, Tenn.

May 14: Uprising at Georgia Diagnostic and Classification State Prison

May 11: Disturbance at Redgranite Correctional Institution, Wis.

May 10: Uprising at Covington County Jail, Ala.

May 9: Work stoppage at Northwest Detention Center, Wash.

May 8: Hunger strike at North Lake Correctional Facility, Mich.

May 6: Group escape from Ouachita Parish Work Release, Monroe, La.

May 6: Food strike at Marion Correctional Institution, Ohio

May 4: Protest at Dillwyn Correctional Center, Va.

May 3: Protest at Catahoula Correctional Center, La.

May 2: Fire and disturbance at Cummins Unit, Ark.

May 1: Uprising at Bristol County House of Correction, Mass.

May 1: Uprising at Southern State Correctional Facility, Vt., during May Day protest outside the walls

April 30: Strike organized by ICE detainees in Women’s Unit, Adelanto Processing Center, Calif.

April 29: Uprising at Cook County Jail, Chicago

April 28: Refusal and attack on guards at Cook County Jail, Chicago

April 22: Disturbance at Westville Correctional Facility, Ind.

April 22: Protest at D.C. Central Detention Facility, Washington, D.C.

April 20: Protest at Franklin Medical Center, Columbus, Ohio

April 20: Disturbance at Bridge City Center for Youth, La.

April 19: Disturbance at Gus Harrison Correctional Facility, Mich.

April 19: Attack on guards at Sumter Correctional Institution, Bushnell, Fla.

April 17: Disturbance at Pendleton Correctional Facility, Ind.

April 16: Escape from Columbia Correctional Institution, Wis.

April 14: Prisoners attack guards, attempt to free others at Cook County Jail, Chicago

April 12: Uprising at Cummins Unit, Ark.

April 12: Uprising at Ellsworth Correctional Facility, Kan.

April 12: Escape attempt at Southwest Arkansas Community Corrections Facility, Texarkana, Ark

April 12: Uprising at Crossroads Juvenile Center, Brooklyn, N.Y.

April 11: Uprising at La Palma Correctional Center, Ariz.

April 11: Protest at East Mesa Reentry Facility, San Diego, Calif.

April 11: Coordinated threat of suicide at Cook County Jail, Chicago

April 10: Food strike and work stoppage at Irwin County Detention Center, Ga.

Cleveland action demands prisoner release

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

May 29 — Today a combination car/pedestrian protest in downtown Cleveland called for the Cuyahoga County Jail to release more prisoners and end “inhumane treatment.” Similar actions have been taking place around Ohio, which has the highest COVID-19 prisoner death rate in the country. This demonstration was called by the Coalition to Stop the Inhumanity at the Cuyahoga County Jail.

Prisoners banged on the bars as they looked down at a large group of people in solidarity. Dozens of cars, with taped-on messages of “Free them all” and “RIP George Tamir Desmond,” circled the “Justice Center.” Desmond Franklin and 12-year-old Tamir Rice were killed by Cleveland police—Rice in 2014 and Franklin this year. George is George Floyd.

Others stood outside the building, which houses the jail as well as the courts, and chanted, “Free them all” and “Hey, hey, ho, ho, Armand Budish has to go!”

County Executive Budish is responsible for the deplorable conditions at the county jail, which led to eight

deaths in 2018 and another in 2019. An investigation by federal marshals found that prisoners faced inadequate food and sanitation, overcrowding, medical neglect and other mistreatment, including torture by guards. The jail held many because these prisoners could not afford bail.

In response, activists, prisoner family members and other concerned people in Cleveland formed the coalition in late 2018.

Since the pandemic, hundreds of prisoners have been released from the county jail, reducing overcrowding. However, the government provides no resources to survive outside jail and forces prisoners to pay over \$200 a month for required ankle bracelets. Those left inside are still being mistreated.

As the coalition pointed out in a news release: “The Cuyahoga County Jail has completely mismanaged the pandemic for the incarcerated peoples at the jail. People who have tested positive for the virus have been put into solitary confinement without medical attention. There is no way for incarcerated people to social distance and there is a complete lack of personal protective equipment. The only way to keep incarcerated people and the



WW PHOTOS: MARTHA GREVATT

Cleveland, May 29: ‘Release prisoners and provide resources.’

rest of the community safe from COVID-19 is to release them without payment, prejudice, or opposition and provide them with the resources to live on the outside.”

Organizations plan more car/pedestrian combination protests in coming weeks in Columbus and outside the state prison in Belmont. □

Not a riot — REBELLION!

Continued from page 1

shown on social media.

Young protesters have used guerrilla-like tactics to evade police, who are armed to the teeth with batons, rubber bullets, chemical irritants and even tanks. The youth have had only rocks, water bottles, bricks and even skateboards to defend themselves with.

White supremacy and police violence linked

Young people are fed up with not only what happened to Floyd, but with police killings of Philando Castile, Jamar Clark and other Black people in Minnesota.

In fact this uprising—which has spread to at least 130 large and small U.S. cities—has helped to expose the cases of other Black people who recently lost their lives to police violence. These include Breonna Taylor, the 26-year-old EMT worker who was shot eight times in her bed on March 13 by Louisville, Ky. police; Tony McDade, a trans man shot to death on May 27 in Tallahassee, Fla.; and David McAtee, a popular vendor fatally shot today, also by Louisville police—just to name a few.

The protests have linked these individual cases to all forms of police violence in Black and Brown communities, including disproportionate cases of harassment, arrests and shootings. Eighteen

complaints had been filed against Chauvin for misconduct; only two were heard.

Many of the signs carried in the protests read: “Abolish the police!” “All cops are bad!” and “All cops are bastards!”

Systemic racism has also been a big focus of the protests. Protesters cited an incident when Christian Cooper, a Black man birdwatching in New York’s Central Park on May 25, was approached by Amy Cooper, a white woman. She called 911 to tell the police “there’s an African-American man threatening my life,” which endangered him. And demonstrators raised the name of Ahmaud Arbery, an unarmed jogger who was shot to death on Feb. 23 by white supremacists near Brunswick, Ga. It took police two months to arrest them and the third person who recorded the video of the shooting.

White supremacist, pro-Confederate symbols have not escaped the wrath of the protesters, who have toppled or defamed Confederate monuments in Birmingham, Ala.; Nashville, Tenn.; Richmond, Va.; and Charleston, S.C. The United Daughters of the Confederacy Memorial Building in Richmond and the Market House, the site of a slave auction in Fayetteville, N.C., were torched.

Global defense of solidarity

Trump has been called the “number one white supremacist” — and rightfully so.

His tweets have referred to the protesters with the racist connotation of “thugs.” He has stated that when the “looting” starts, the “shooting” starts. He has declared the “antifa” movement (aka anti-fascists) a “terrorist” organization, and he has called governors “jerks” if they don’t “dominate” and arrest protesters. By their very presence, the police incite violence, not the protesters.

Trump made a veiled threat to call out his neofascist base to confront the protesters before he backed off on that threat. Thousands of protesters confronted Secret Service agents and local police in Lafayette Park in Washington, D.C., across from the White House on June 1. For several nights firecrackers exploding were loud enough for those in the White House to hear.

There is no telling how long this uprising will last, whether it will be days or weeks or longer. There is one absolute: This rebellion is unprecedented for not only being composed of predominantly young people, but it is multinational with Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian and white protesters joining together. They refuse to be silent when it comes to being in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and for condemning all forms of police violence.

This uprising, much like the pandemic, has impacted every sector of U.S. society.

Prominent amateur and professional sports figures have spoken out against racism, and in some cases, attended demonstrations along with entertainers.

Protesters have taken a knee in the streets in solidarity with former National Football League quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who first took a knee in 2016 in opposition to police brutality.

This uprising has also had a ripple effect around the globe, with solidarity actions in cities in Africa and the Middle East, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Britain, Germany, Iran, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand and elsewhere.

Liberal bourgeois and reactionary politicians and their media mouthpieces are attempting to drive a wedge between participants in the uprising, labeling many Black protesters “peaceful” and many white protesters “anarchists.”

These apologists for the ruling class are fearful of how far and how deep this rebellion could go in rupturing the fragile capitalist system, already reeling from the coronavirus pandemic and the ongoing economic crisis.

This rebellion needs political solidarity, not isolation! That is reason enough to demand: No police state! No military dictatorship! Amnesty for all arrestees! Withdraw the police and National Guard! No justice! No peace! □

DONATE A WORKERS WORLD SUBSCRIPTION TO A PRISONER

“Inmates need Workers World papers. When you’re locked up, you need an intellectual light to shine through the darkness of state oppression. If you’re a free person reading this, and you care about the struggle against mass incarceration, please take out a subscription for an incarcerated person. It means more than you could possibly imagine.”

—Makasi Motema

You can donate a subscription to Workers World Patreon to go to an inmate — today at patreon.com/wwp/.

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 World is a person who is currently behind bars — in hundreds of prisons across dozens of states.

WE NEED YOUR HELP to provide even more prisoners with FREE subscriptions to Workers World!

We receive hundreds of phone calls, letters and subscription requests from prisoners. In addition to the work we do fighting racism, imperialism, gender oppression and labor exploitation every day, we need the resources to keep operating the only revolutionary communist printed weekly in this country.

These resources also allow us to continue our daily work of organizing defense committees, coordinating prison visits, planning demonstrations and mass mobilizations for prisoners, and shedding light on prison conditions.

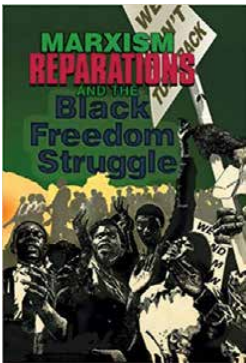
Donating now is an immediate way you can help fight this racist, capitalist system and empower our readers to tear down the walls once and for all. Donate today at patreon.com/wwp

Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper.

Edited by Monica Moorehead.

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination • Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery • Black Youth: Repression & Resistance • The Struggle for Socialism Is Key • Domestic Workers United Demand Passage of a Bill of Rights • Black & Brown Unity • Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior • Racism & Poverty in the Delta • Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions • Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation • Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion



Download it from workers.org/books. Also available at major online booksellers.

HISTORIC UPRISING RESIS

MINNEAPOLIS



American Indian Movement activists, Minneapolis, May 27.

PHOTO: BRAD SIGAL



Minneapolis, May 27.

PHOTO: BRAD SIGAL



George Perry Floyd (1973 – 2020)



Breonna Taylor (1993 – 2020)

OAKLAND, CALIF.



The Justice for George Floyd and Breonna Taylor Car Caravan in Oakland, Calif., brought out more than 7,000 cars and thousands of people with handmade signs.

SALT LAKE CITY



WW PHOTO: JOANNA STRAUGH

CLEVELAND



WW PHOTO: SUSAN SCHNUR

Over 8,000 people marched on the “Justice” Center Complex in Cleveland on May 30. Protesters ranged from youth of color to whole families, including young children with small signs calling for justice. Even after police escalated their attack on the protest, thousands of youths who stayed downtown into the evening showed great courage by countering police attacks.

GRADY COUNTY JAIL, OKLA.



Prisoners inside the Grady County Jail in Chickasha, Okla., rally for George Floyd.

WEST VIRGINIA



WW PHOTO: OTIS GROTEWOHL

Around 400 people in solidarity with the growing rebellions — a majority Black youth — rallied outside a Wheeling, W.Va., police station. Other rallies were held in Huntington, Charleston and Parkersburg.

LOS ANGELES



Los Angeles demonstrators, May 30.

SAN ANTONIO



WW PHOTO: B.S.L.

Chanting ‘Black Lives Matter,’ ‘No Justice, No Peace’ and demanding an end to police brutality and the many injustices faced by Black and Brown people, over 5,000 people of diverse backgrounds gathered in downtown San Antonio, Texas, on May 30.

PENSACOLA, FLA.



The Graffiti Bridge, Pensacola, Fla., May 30.

PHOTO: STRIVE

STOPS RACISM, KILLER COPS



Tony McDade, killed at age 38

BUFFALO, N.Y.



Over a thousand people in Buffalo, N.Y., May 30. WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

BOSTON



Boston, May 29.

NEW YORK CITY



WW PHOTO: TONY MURPHY



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Left: Over 1,000 antiracist protesters marched May 30 in the Jackson Heights/Elmhurst area of Queens — home to thousands of migrant workers, especially Latinx workers hit hard by the pandemic. Marchers carried signs including 'It's Right to Rebel!' 'Billionaires Are the Real Looters!' 'Bangladesh for Black Lives Matter' and 'Say His Name: George Floyd!' Right: Over 3,000 people rallied in Union Square on May 30 and then marched through downtown Manhattan.

PHILADELPHIA



WW PHOTOS: JOE PIETTE

Demonstrators target statue of hated former Philadelphia top-cop and mayor Frank Rizzo May 30. Protests continued in Philadelphia on June 1.

NEWARK, N.J.



Over 5,000 people rallied and marched in downtown Newark, N.J., from the steps of the Essex County Courthouse to Newark City Hall.

TRIANGLE AREA, N.C.



WW PHOTO: DURHAM WW BUREAU

In North Carolina, a day of protest began in Durham on May 30, when hundreds took the streets in the afternoon, marching from the jail through downtown. In the evening thousands converged on downtown Raleigh, the state capital. Demonstrators surrounded and pushed inside the city courthouse. Riot police attempted to surround the protesters from the outside, but were themselves surrounded.

ATLANTA



PHOTO: STEVE EBERHARDT

Atlanta march on May 29, initiated by young women of color, brought 5,000 people on a route that included the State Capitol and CNN world headquarters. The marchers gathered at the statue of Henry Grady, a white man of the enslaving, lynching "Old South." A moment of historic significance occurred when a Black elder climbed the statue with a sign "Stop Black Lynchings." Immediately he was joined by many youth who used the statue as a platform to lead Black Lives Matter chants. Over two days of rallies, every Atlanta protest was met with hundreds of armed police forces who consistently used tear gas, flash bombs, tanks and armored vehicles to repress the righteous outrage of the youth.

WW photographer targeted by police

By Workers World Philadelphia bureau

On June 1, while taking photos at a Justice for George Floyd march in Philadelphia, Joe Piette, whose photographs appear frequently in the pages of Workers World was intentionally targeted by police.

This is one of many reports of journalists, including photographers and camera crews covering the George Floyd protests, being purposely targeted and injured by police, often with rubber bullets.

Piette told Workers World: "As cops were shooting tear gas and rubber bullets at nonviolent protesters, a cop shot a rubber bullet at me, destroying my camera

and injuring my hand.

"As a retired U.S. Postal Service letter carrier, I've donated my photo skills to many progressive community organizations free of charge over the last decade. My photos of the June 1 protest, plus thousands of other photos of community events, can be viewed at tinyurl.com/yd9jqps8/.

"I can't afford to buy another camera so I asked all the people who have viewed and liked my work over the years to help me buy a replacement. My gofundme goal was reached in just hours. What I don't need for the camera will be donated to the Philadelphia Bail Fund." (tinyurl.com/yd9jqps8/)

Solidarity with all LGBTQ2+ workers!

By Ezra Echo

This is a slightly edited version of a talk given during the “What Road to Socialism?” webinar held by Workers World Party on May 16.

The LGBTQ2+ working class looks like my gay, bisexual, and trans comrades who usually would be gearing up for our collective celebration of Pride Month and the 51st anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion. The LGBTQ2+ working class looks like all the people involved in those rebellions against police brutality: the butch lesbians,

gay men and trans women of color.

The LGBTQ2+ working class looks like my fellow gay and nonbinary barista coworkers here in Buffalo who are making more money on unemployment than they ever have while working.

The LGBTQ2+ working class looks like the LGBTQ2+ AAPI (Asian American and Pacific Islander) folks here in the U.S., who are facing even more harassment during this time. The Stop AAPI Hate Reporting Center received over 1,700 reports of incidents of discrimination and harassment since it was established on March 19, up through May 13.

The LGBTQ2+ working class looks like all the students who have been forced out of their safe spaces at school and back to homes with sometimes unsupportive or downright hostile family members.

The LGBTQ2+ working class looks like all the imprisoned lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people who deserve to be released, especially in the midst of this viral pandemic and are dying as a result of it.

The LGBTQ2+ working class looks like all the homeless LGBTQ2+ youth who can’t possibly shelter in place because they don’t have homes in the first place. A study done by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

states LGBTQ2+ youth have a 120 percent higher risk of becoming homeless than their cisgender/ heterosexual counterparts.

It’s impossible to list in three minutes all the people who are part of the LGBTQ2+ working class, but our struggle was born out of the oppression of the working class, as all special oppressions are. We cannot and should not be separated from that struggle. We need to have solidarity now more than ever with all our LGBTQ2+ comrades.

Echo (they/them) is a new member of WWP in Buffalo, N.Y., a nonbinary lesbian, an artist and a writer.

Organizing health care for patients, not profit

By Taegan

This is a slightly edited version of a talk given during the “What Road To Socialism?” webinar held by Workers World Party on May 16.

I appreciate being given the chance to speak on such a critical topic as health care in the so-called United States. Many comrades have already spoken of the current conditions within the health care sector, so I’ll save us from rehashing what we all know: Capitalists are using the pandemic as an opportunity to monopolize and undermine what few rights we have and bleed workers dry.

For the most part, current efforts to organize health care workers around the capitalist response to COVID-19 have been limited to trade unionism, with the bulk of

attention and organizational efforts being placed on doctors and nurses.

Within the party, we support these organizational efforts, while recognizing that they are not enough. The formation of a health care workers’ caucus that includes people not typically regarded as health care workers — hospital laundry workers, massage therapists, patient technicians, workers in assisted living facilities and more — represents only a launching point for us.

There is a dire need to create a health care system that cares more about patient health than profits. This not only needs a socialist economic revolution, but a cultural one. The U.S. medical system was born of white supremacist and eugenics ideology, the ideology and



culture of capitalism and settler-colonialism.

In order to join our Cuban comrades on the path toward a communist economic and health care system, we must begin the process of divorcing medical care from its capitalist base. Medical professionals must immerse themselves in their communities and organize health clinics that are controlled by the people — and completely reject capitalist nonprofit methods.

I’ll refrain from going into specifics, but this must also include taking actions that subvert the capitalist system for the benefit of our patients. Our medical theories also need to be rooted in dialectical materialism. If the living, environmental and cultural conditions that our patients experience are negatively impacting their

health, then it is our duty to fight to change them, just as we would a bacterial infection.

We also need to struggle with our co-workers who hold backward positions and combat all instances of racism, sexism, xenophobia, transphobia and other forms of bigotry in medicine.

If we organize the people and take the necessary steps to eliminate capitalist ideology and culture, then the natural empathy and desire to help others — which so many of us health care workers have — will overcome this murderous system of capitalist health care.

Taegan (she/her) is a transwoman, Emergency Medical Technician and member of the Central Texas branch of WWP. She is a veteran of the U.S. Navy who hopes to live in service to workers and the oppressed against the empire.

Women & gender-nonconforming people: Nothing to lose but our chains

By Phebe Eckfeldt

This is a slightly edited version of a talk given during the “What Road to Socialism?” webinar held by Workers World Party on May 16.

In his book “High Tech, Low Pay,” Sam Marcy, the late Workers World Party chairperson, talks about how technology has diminished the number of skilled workers compared to unskilled workers, changing the social composition of labor.

So there are more women, Black, Latinx and LGBTQ2+ people in the workforce. There are fewer privileged workers, and their influence is lessened. The political leadership has shifted to the working-class elements — those who know intimately what racism, sexism, ableism, misogyny, bigotry and xenophobia are. They are more left, more conscious and more militant.

An estimated 47 percent of the workforce is women. Sam Marcy calls that the “feminization of labor.”

Women and gender-nonconforming people are literally fighting for our lives!

Consciousness about class, race, capitalism and imperialism is rising; it is starting to take leaps and bounds — and finally leaping into action.

Women begin to realize they have nothing to lose but their chains. In the past couple of years, we have witnessed women rising up and taking bold action, demanding justice, dignity, respect and a living wage. They are prisoners, sex workers, teachers, hotel workers, nurses, immigrants, Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian, and Dalit. And they are reproductive justice fighters, mothers taking over abandoned housing and many others.

Every day women are fighting against

sexual abuse, harassment and violence. Domestic violence is on the rise. Women are viewed as private property. Some women fight every minute of every day just to stay alive because they have debilitating post traumatic stress disorder from living under capitalism.

But let us gain courage and strength by going back a few years to the dawn of humanity when there was a matriarchy, meaning the “absence of male supremacy,” the absence of patriarchy. If we look back at all of human history as 365 days, one year’s time, the matriarchy existed for 360 days! Please don’t forget this.

V. I. Lenin, leader of the Russian Revolution, said: “It has been observed in the experience of all liberation movements that the success of a revolution depends on the extent to which women [and gender nonconforming people] take part in it.”

Through our work in the Party, we can bring women together. We can listen, deep-organize, educate and empower each other. We can establish Women’s Assemblies. We can revitalize the Women’s Fightback Network.

The coronavirus has highlighted what we know: Socialism is the medicine we need! The Internationale, the song that is the universal anthem of the working class and oppressed the world over, proclaims: “The earth shall rise on new foundations. We have been naught. We shall be all!”

Eckfeldt (she/her) has been a member of the WWP Boston branch for over 40 years. She is a mother of three, a nurse, a retired member of the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers, and a founder of the Women’s Fightback Network in Boston.

Workers’ assemblies

by Makasi Motema

This is a slightly edited version of a talk given during the “What Road to Socialism?” webinar held by Workers World Party on May 16.

The U.S. claims to be a democracy, but this claim is totally divorced from the reality of class struggle. The wealthy ruling class, which owns most of our economy through the stock market and banking system, also has complete ownership of our electoral process. The politicians we elect are the servants of capitalists, who will never do anything to harm the interests of their masters.

This is not a democracy; it is a dictatorship of the rich. True democracy would reflect the popular will of the masses, the bulk of whom belong to the working class. Socialist revolutions aim to take control of the means of production — the levers which control our economy — and establish rule by the working class. That’s why workers’ assemblies are so important, because they can become an engine of workers’ democracy and workers’ control over the economy.

The history of socialist revolutions is the history of political base-building. Before the October Revolution of 1917, workers organized into political bodies to control their political and economic lives. This went beyond unionizing. Workers’ councils, even without the sanction of the government, decided the most important political questions of the time. They were the government of a state unto themselves, a workers’ state that fought for the interests of their class.

Just as in 1917, the problems we face today can only be solved by a united

working class. We need workers’ assemblies to take control of our economy. We need health care and housing to fall under the control of workers’ assemblies. If a business decides its workers are essential, then it’s essential that workers’ assemblies control that business. This is what we mean when we say, “All power to the workers’ assemblies.”

Comrades in Workers World Party’s Durham branch have already taken the lead in building workers’ assemblies. There, workers are banding together and vowing to organize the South. And that movement is spreading.

The movement is spreading because workers understand that if we don’t organize, we won’t win. Workers understand that if we turn away from building a mass base, we are conceding victory to the ruling class. And workers understand that, in this moment in history, we can’t accept defeat. We have to demand victory.

We have to do this now. Nonunion workers must be unionized, and unionized workers must be radicalized. Tenants, apartment blocks and entire neighborhoods must be brought together to fight landlords, developers and police oppression. Socialists must seed ourselves throughout the working class to provide political agitation, education and organization.

This is our moral duty — to unite the working class, to build a workers’ democracy, to use all our energy to defy the capitalist ruling class.

Motema (he/him) is a contributing editor of Workers World Newspaper and a member of Workers World Party’s New York City branch.

Larry Kramer, 1935-2020: An appreciation

By Shelley Ettinger

I joined ACT-UP/NY soon after it formed, in the spring of 1987. Thirty-three years later, I still have vivid memories of the weekly meetings, which crackled with the electric energy of hundreds of angry people jammed into the first-floor meeting room in the LGBTQ Center in Manhattan.

Many, probably most, had not been political activists before the AIDS crisis erupted. Now, as they orated, debated, strategized in that rundown old building on West 13th Street, they were creating a new movement, one that would make history and save lives. The task was enormous: to force the government, the ruling class, the medical establishment, the pharmaceutical industry to take real action to combat AIDS.

Tens of thousands were dying. Most were gay men and people of color. By 1987 the AIDS epidemic had been raging in these communities for years. The poorest, those with least access to medical care, were falling fastest. People were attending funerals, scratching names out of address books, trying to go on, to stay alive, with no hope of support or aid from any official source.

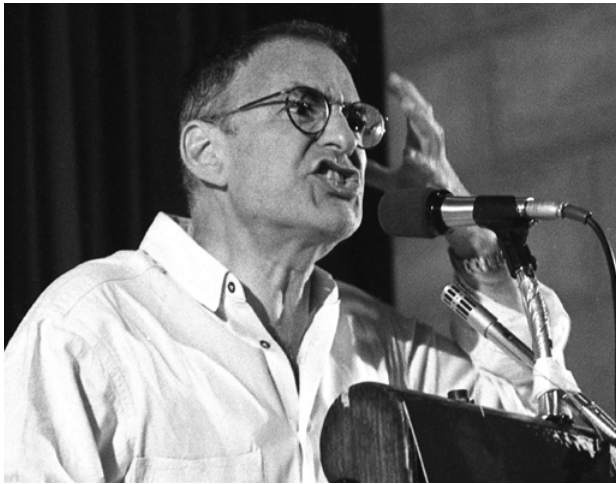
There were no effective treatments. There was no nationally coordinated public health effort to educate people about methods to prevent the spread of HIV. The president, Ronald Reagan, had never once spoken the word AIDS in public.

Meanwhile, anti-gay and racist violence was on the rise as reactionary forces whipped up fear and scapegoating campaigns.

This was the juncture when Larry Kramer stepped up and started the movement that would change everything.

Movements are made up of many people. Mass struggle is just that, a mass undertaking, and no one individual can accomplish everything. Still, leadership is decisive. And Larry Kramer was the leader we needed at the height of the AIDS crisis.

A few years earlier, as AIDS emerged as a deadly threat, Larry had been one of the founders of Gay Men's Health Crisis. GMHC developed into a community service



Larry Kramer

organization — vital, but not, Larry saw, sufficient. Something else was needed: a fight. A real, bare-knuckles, no-holds-barred fight had to be waged.

And so Larry Kramer, along with a few others, founded the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power.

It quickly developed and grew. Taking lessons from the Civil Rights Movement, the anti-war movement and of course the LGBTQ2+ movement, the young organizers who soon assumed leadership fashioned ACT UP into a street-fighting powerhouse.

ACT UP/NY's first big action took place March 24, 1987. Hundreds poured onto lower Broadway in the early morning hours, targeting big business as the culprit for AIDS-based discrimination and the failure to develop and fund affordable AIDS treatment drugs.

The call to action proclaimed: "No More Business As Usual!" The goal: to shut down Wall Street.

We did just that. I was one of over 100 people arrested at the Wall Street action that morning. While cops dragged us off, hundreds more stayed, chanting the newly minted and now famous ACT UP slogan: "Act up! Fight back! Fight AIDS!"

In the months and years following, the AIDS activist movement would carry out many militant actions. They barricaded and sat in at pharmaceutical company headquarters. They crashed medical conferences and corporate board meetings. They disrupted reactionary religious events. They demanded attention, and action, and eventually they won real change.

Rage at oppression

So who was Larry Kramer? He was first and foremost a gay man. His bitter, painful experience of gay oppression drove everything he did. His rage, his furious, passionate rage at heterosexism, homophobia, LGBTQ2+ oppression was endless and profound, and it helped give rise to a great social movement.

He was an artist, a brilliant novelist and playwright, though, as Tony Kushner noted in a May 29 New York Times article, Kramer "sacrificed for the sake of his unceasing activism some of what he might have accomplished artistically."

Larry was a Jewish child of the Depression. Later in life he was comfortable financially. He was never a revolutionary. But he always considered himself an outsider, an "other" in this society that he excoriated in his work, literary and political. He was a radical, and a true militant.

In ACT UP meetings I knew Larry only as an angry speaker, up in the front of that first-floor room at the center. I usually sat near the back, which his fiery energy easily reached. Friends tell of a different Larry up close and personal, a sweet, kind, loving soul.

I got to witness that sweet side a few years before he died. After not seeing Larry in person for decades, I ran into him at a deli one afternoon in the Village. I knew he'd weathered several major illnesses; he seemed bent and frail. I said hi and introduced myself as someone who'd been in ACT UP in the early years. He perked up, straightening his spine, giving me the widest, warmest smile, and reached in for a hug. For some reason we both got a little teary-eyed. We chatted a bit, then said goodbye. □

Workers unite to fight racism, cops, pandemic

By Sue Davis

There has been a groundswell of worker solidarity with protests against the racist police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25.

First, reports came in from Minneapolis that some bus drivers had refused to cooperate with cops in using public buses to transport people arrested during protests there. Bus driver Adam Bruch told Payday Report: "As a transit worker and union member, I refuse to transport my class and radical youth [to jail]. An injury to one is an injury to all. The police murdered George Floyd and the protest ... is completely justified and should continue until their demands are met." (May 30)

Soon the Minneapolis Transit Service canceled service completely. "Many [drivers are] unwilling to do anything for the police and put themselves in harm's way for the police that created this mess to begin with," added Burch.

Bus drivers in New York City, represented by Transport Workers Union Local 100 in the Amalgamated Transit Union, also did not cooperate with the police. A video of a bus driver refusing to transport people arrested during protests in front of Brooklyn's Barclays Center went viral Friday night, May 29.

J.P. Patafio, vice president of Local 100, was quoted in VICE as saying: "We didn't do it during ... Occupy Wall Street. ... I told the Manhattan Transit Authority our workers won't be used to drive cops around. That's in solidarity with Minneapolis bus drivers. Our members do not work for the NYPD. We transport working families of NYC." (May 29)

International President of the Amalgamated Transit Union John Costa issued a statement condemning Floyd's

death: "Our members — bus drivers — have the right to refuse work they consider dangerous or unsafe during the pandemic; so do Minneapolis bus drivers — our members — have the right to refuse the dangerous duty of transporting police to protests and arrested demonstrators away from these communities where many of these drivers live. This is a misuse of public transit.

"If any good is to come of this, we in the labor movement and the nation must unite to stop the systemic cycle of injustice, racism and hatred that plagues our country." (May 28)

Statements condemning the murder of George Floyd and calling for justice were also issued by Richard Trumpka, president of the AFL-CIO; Mary Kaye Henry, president of the Service Employees (SEIU); and many national and local unions, including National Nurses United.

Calls to expel law enforcement 'unions' from labor movement

Some unions immediately responded to the racist outrage of Floyd's murder by calling for all so-called law enforcement unions — city and county police, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, and Department of Corrections officers — to be disaffiliated from the AFL-CIO, its state federations and all other unions.

"There can be no worker solidarity between survivors and perpetrators of police violence," stated United Auto Workers Local 2322, representing student workers at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. For other union statements supporting disaffiliation, see #JusticeForGeorgeFloyd on Facebook.

Jobs With Justice Executive Director Erica Smiley spoke out on May 29:

"While Jobs With Justice supports all workers who wish to form a union and have a voice on the job, the death of George Floyd at the hands of police is yet another example of a local police union that spends more time nurturing a culture of white supremacy and violence than democratizing the workplace. Police officers should not be above the law, and should not be able to negotiate conditions that put them above the law."

A May 29 article in The New Republic, titled "No More Cop Unions," states that if the AFL-CIO "wants to prove that it's seriously committed to racial justice and true worker solidarity, the AFL-CIO must permanently disaffiliate from the International Union of Police Associations and sever its ties with any and all other police associations."

Booker Hodges, a former Minnesota police officer who wrote a 2018 blog post on Police One, pointed out that over the years many union members have protested against police officers, criticized police unions for defending members' abuse of power and called for no binding arbitration for police officers.

"If and when reforms are introduced in the wake of an abuse of police powers. ... the bottom line here is all too plain: The police do not want reform; they want the freedom to operate with impunity," asserted author Kim Kelly in the TNR article.

Citing the labor song "Which Side Are You On?" Kelly concluded: "As we once more ... ask ourselves that question, the only acceptable response is crystal-clear: that we're on the side of the workers, not their abusers and oppressors."

Struggle against COVID-19 continues

Meanwhile, workers' struggle against the coronavirus continues. The ATU

issued a statement May 27 that over 100 TWU members have died of COVID-19, while more than 50 ATU members have died. While "states reopen, more people are boarding our buses and trains. Transit agencies and governments need to work with our Union to listen to what we learned since this outbreak began. Critical changes need to be made now to protect transit workers and riders, so more lives won't be lost."

ATU drivers in Connecticut held a rally May 20 in Bridgeport demanding improved safety, especially more masks and gloves. "We have people who are scared to go to work because they're afraid of dying," Veronica Chavers of ATU Local 443 in Stamford told WTNH. At least one Connecticut bus driver has already died.

The Washington Post ran a detailed article May 31 revealing that more than 100 workers in the \$800 billion grocery industry have died from the pandemic. Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 400 is demanding their members have access to all benefits and protections of other essential workers, such as access to testing, treatment and personal protective equipment.

The unofficial tally of worker actions and strikes in Payday Report has grown to 230 since March 1, including a group of coffee baristas in Philadelphia and the fast food workers who went on strike in Oakland, Calif., after they were asked to wear dog diapers as masks.

Primary sources are Payday Report, May 28-30, which led to other sources. Information from social media via Labor Against Racist Terror contributed to this article.

Defend resisters! Defend the uprising!

Continued from page 1

Floyd’s killers arrested. He was not even charged with first-degree murder, while the three cops who assisted the killer are still walking free.

An intensive ruling-class propaganda campaign is underway to shift attention and responsibility away from the state, as the main instigator of violence against the people, and instead blame protesters.

State authorities, like the U.S. president, are defaming the rebellious protesters with racist code words and trying to split the movement by demonizing the “radical left” — anarchists and anti-fascists (antifa), whom Trump has declared a “terrorist group.” Big-business commentators are trying to split protesters into good “peaceful” people and bad “violent” people, white youth versus Black youth, and “law-abiding” protesters versus those who were only harming property.

And there is the key word. The ruling

class will let millions die, as long as their property—and the state system that props it up—is left untouched. When cops kill, they are virtually untouchable because the “duty” of police is first and foremost to beat down working and oppressed people and to keep any protest from touching the profits or property of the capitalist class.

No future under capitalism

The protesters are overwhelmingly young people who are working or unemployed, who are of oppressed nationalities and genders. Caught in the historic COVID-19 pandemic, they are losing jobs in the unprecedented economic crisis or risking their lives to keep “essential” unprotected, low-paying jobs. Maybe they or their family or neighbors can’t pay rent and are being evicted from their homes or are sick, maybe dying, because health care is just for people with money. They face a bleak future, if they survive the present.

And in the middle of this storm of

oppression, the cops keep occupying, demonizing and killing them, their loved ones, their co-workers, members of their communities. These youth are eyewitness to some of these deaths, or they see them on videotape over and over, becoming consumed with the nightmare that what happened to George Floyd or Breonna Taylor could happen to them.

This young generation is the new nothing-to-lose-but-their-chains generation, and they are leading the battle against the murderous state.

They — and we — need active, strategic solidarity to win.

Already there have been inspiring examples: Union bus drivers across the U.S. — the majority workers of color — refused to transport arrested protesters. A young white woman in New York City knocked a bicycle cop to the ground after he punched a young Black woman protester. The Minneapolis school board severed ties with the city’s police force—a break in the

school-to-prison pipeline. Countless people everywhere are contributing to bail funds for those arrested in the protests.

As the state ramps up brutal attacks on demonstrators with tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets and armed troops, our solidarity must be sustained.

More solidarity would be if state National Guard members everywhere refused to occupy their friends and neighbors with military force. For white demonstrators, more solidarity would be to go to protests and accept the leadership of Black organizers. More solidarity would be joining with oppressed Black, Brown and Indigenous people to defund and dismantle the police, to challenge an unjust legal system and fight to free all those imprisoned.

A new generation is leading — against racism and for justice, against dead-end existence under capitalism and toward a better world. They are not “rioters” — they are resisters. Act in solidarity with them and their uprising — now! □

Against police violence and capitalism To rebel is justified

By Monica Moorehead

Workers World salutes all the brave protesters in Minneapolis, currently ground zero against police terror. We also salute those activists in Los Angeles, Memphis and other cities who are organizing protests and braving the pandemic to be in the streets or in car caravans to show solidarity with the demand: Justice for George Floyd and all victims of police violence.

The corporate media call the May 27 protest in Minneapolis a “riot.” In a speech on March 14, 1968, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. defined that term, saying, “A riot is the language of the unheard.” Following his assassination less than a month later, Black people rose up in hundreds of cities in righteous protest. They were heard.

So was the Black population of Minneapolis. During the May 27 action, community members broke the windows and slashed the tires of a long line of police cars while arrogant cops drove them. The community, united in action, raised one powerful voice to say: “We are all George Floyd” — meaning that any one of them could wind up a victim of a police lynching at any place or time.

The protests responded to the May 25 videotaped lynching of a Black man,

George Floyd. Everyone who watched the video saw a white racist cop, Derek Chauvin, choke Floyd to death with his knee as he was begging for his mother and his life while three other cops, Thomas Lane, Tou Thao and J. Alexander Kueng, did nothing to stop this atrocity.

The long unheard Black community in Minneapolis only needed a spark—Floyd’s execution—to arouse its collective anger built up during years of humiliating police occupation, harassment, beatings and arrests—and rise up. Even the statistics justify their anger: Of those who police shot in Minneapolis from late 2009 to May 2019, some 60 percent were from the Black community—though they make up only 20 percent of the total population. (New York Times, May 28)

Righteous protesters broke the windows of the Third Precinct headquarters where the four fired cops were once based. They picked up tear gas canisters the cops targeted at them and threw them back at the police. They burned or expropriated goods from AutoZone, Target and other businesses.

A class view of violence

Once the protests moved from “peaceful” on May 26 to direct action on May 27,

the corporate media rushed to defend the capitalists’ sacred private property and labeled some protesters “violent.” Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey and other officials called for “calm.”

This posturing repeats the standard attempt by capitalist politicians who seek to drive a wedge between the masses on the issue of nonviolence.

They focused on the same argument in Watts, Los Angeles in 1965; in Newark, N.J., and Detroit in 1967; in the hundreds of uprisings following King’s assassination in 1968; the Miami rebellion of 1980; the Los Angeles rebellion in 1992; and Ferguson, Mo., in 2014.

In his 1992 pamphlet, “A Marxist Defense of the LA Rebellion,” Workers World Party chairperson Sam Marcy wrote: “In times when the bourgeoisie is up against the wall, when the masses have risen suddenly and unexpectedly, the bourgeoisie gets most lyrical in abjuring violence. It conjures up all sorts of lies and deceits about the unruliness of a few among the masses as against the orderly law-abiding many.

“Marxism here again cuts through it all. The Marxist view of violence flows from an altogether different concept. It first of all distinguishes between the violence of the oppressors as against the responsive violence of the masses. Just to be able to formulate it that way is a giant step forward, away from disgusting bourgeois praise for nonviolence. It never occurs to any of them to show that the masses have never made any real leap forward with the theory of nonviolence. Timidity never made it in history.

“Indeed, Marxists do prefer nonviolent methods if the objectives the masses seek—freedom from oppression and exploitation—can be obtained that way. But Marxism explains the historical evolution of the class struggle as well as the struggle of oppressed nations as against oppressors.”

There are two factors that these multi-generational events have in common: First, they were ignited by police terror, especially killings of Black people; and second, they were major rebellions, carried out by the oppressed and their allies against their oppression due to decades-long inhumane conditions caused by capitalism.

Rebellions scare the hell out of the



PHOTO: THEGRIQ.COM

Protester in Minneapolis in response to cop murder of George Floyd.

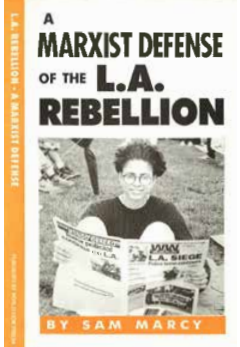
billionaire ruling class that wants to keep hidden its super-exploitation of the workers and oppressed. But when rebellions do break out, the ruling class will unleash its state apparatus—the police, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the National Guard and even the Army in an attempt to terrorize neo-colonized peoples in the Black, Brown and Indigenous communities.

When the masses rebel, they are not only rebelling against the state, but they are rebelling against an oppressive system that denies them the basic necessities of life—jobs, housing, health care, education and the right to live free from all forms of oppression, etc.—in order to fulfill the inherent profit drive of capitalism.

As Marcy emphasizes, any spontaneous or unorganized violence from the oppressed is self-defense against the organized armed force of the state. There is no equal sign between the two; they represent two distinct, antagonistic social classes.

From diverse ideological perspectives, what both King and Marcy stated connect to today’s events in south Minneapolis

However any oppressed community sees fit to fight back against legal and extralegal terrorism—be it the police or neofascists—alongside mainly antiracist white youth, is justified. It should be supported and defended against the slanderous attacks and lies propagated by right-wing and even so-called liberal media and politicians, whose primary objective is to apologize for a rotten system living on borrowed time. □



Read Marcy’s pamphlet at workers.org/books/

Support the Marxist voice for LGBTQ2+ rights

Ever since the Stonewall Rebellion erupted June 28, 1969, Workers World has covered the global struggle to end homophobia and all forms of discrimination, persecution and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and gender-nonconforming communities.

WW has consistently backed up our activist coverage with analysis. In the early 1970s, we ran a series of articles that quickly led to publication of the book “Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist Analysis.” It has since been translated into Spanish.

Then in the 1990s, WW Managing Editor and globally recognized transgender leader Leslie Feinberg wrote a series of 25 articles later published in pamphlet form as “Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba.” They were followed by the series “Lavender & Red” about socialism and the LGBTQ2+ struggle. In 2012 Feinberg wrote in defense of African American transgender woman

CeCe McDonald, who was charged with manslaughter after defending herself from a racist, bigoted attack.

WW helps to build mass struggles, like what’s going on now in the streets from coast to coast. This righteous outpouring of rage and protest over the racist cop murder of George Floyd comes as the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacts Black, Brown and Indigenous peoples.

Please help us get out the word. For a donation of at least \$75 a year — or \$100, or \$300 or much more if you’re able — members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give to friends. Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up online to donate each month.

We’re grateful for your help in building Workers World — sign up today! □

Brazil’s Trump Bolsonaro ‘biggest threat’ to COVID response

By Martha Grevatt

On May 9, The Lancet medical journal, in assessing the COVID crisis in Brazil, wrote that “perhaps the biggest threat to Brazil’s COVID-19 response is its president, Jair Bolsonaro.” When questioned by journalists about the country’s high rate of infection, Bolsonaro had answered — this is a direct quote — “So what? What do you want me to do?”

This is a politician who takes great pride in being compared to U.S. President Donald Trump.

Now Bolsonaro’s Trump-like response to the pandemic has contributed to Brazil having the second-highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the world—the highest being the U.S. As of June 1, almost 515,000 Brazilians are known to be infected and over 29,000 have died.

Bolsonaro has also parroted Trump’s denial of climate science. He has deliberately allowed climate-related fires to destroy wide swaths of the Amazon rainforest, displacing Indigenous communities and threatening the “lungs” of the planet.

None of this has endeared Bolsonaro to the Brazilian masses. On May 25, when he stepped outside his home in Brasilia to

buy a hot dog from a vendor—without a face mask and deliberately flouting social distancing guidelines—residents banged pots and pans and hurled insults at him: “killer,” “assassin,” “fascist” and “garbage.”

“We are in the midst of a pandemic,” said Antônio Carlos Costa, an activist pastor in Rio de Janeiro. “People are dying in packed hospitals, and you don’t see him shed a single tear.” (Guardian, May 24)

Widespread condemnation of Bolsonaro’s “so what” attitude began before the infection numbers skyrocketed. Several Brazilian scientific and human rights organizations sounded the alarm with an April 7 manifesto titled “Pact for Life and for Brazil.” Organized by renowned Brazilian photojournalist Sebastião Salgado, artists, intellectuals, scientists and celebrities from around the world signed a May 3 open letter warning of a health catastrophe.

Death toll: legacy of colonialism and imperialism

Beyond Bolsonaro, Brazilians face enormous obstacles to containing the spread of the coronavirus. Poverty is widespread, with 13 million people living in crowded ghettos known as favelas, where social distancing is nearly impossible. In 2018,

19 percent of the population—almost 40 million people—were officially poor.

Things like adequate food, health care and clean drinking water — needed to resist and recover from infection — are out of reach for many. This situation worsened after the illegal coup which removed President Dilma Rousseff in 2016. Hospital overcrowding has reached disastrous levels since the first cases of COVID-19 were identified.

Conditions are especially difficult for Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities — for whom Bolsonaro shares Trump’s racism. Brazil’s 100 million people of African ancestry, many of whom live in favelas, have higher than average poverty rates. And among Brazil’s 900,000 Indigenous people, the COVID-19 death rate is twice the national average. (CNN, May 24)

On May 31, favela residents held a Black Lives Matter demonstration in Rio de Janeiro, chanting “I can’t breathe” in solidarity with George Floyd. They read out the names of residents murdered by Rio’s police—some 1,546 last year alone. They clashed with Bolsonaro supporters carrying what were described as neo-Nazi flags.

Brazil’s poverty and discrimination



Mothers on May 31 carry photos of their sons and others killed by Brazilian police.

are not homegrown problems. They are the product of centuries of colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism — first imposed by the Portuguese colonialists and then by U.S. capitalists.

Other countries in Latin America are in similar dire straits — and for the same reason. Going back to the 19th century’s Monroe Doctrine, U.S. imperialism has viewed the conquest of Latin America as its “manifest destiny.” Monroe’s legacy is the rising rate of COVID-19 infection in countries like Mexico, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia, as well as Brazil.

By contrast Cuba, which has been a liberated socialist country since 1959, is sending doctors all over the world to help defeat the pandemic. □

Striking New Orleans sanitation workers fired, replaced by prison slave labor

By Joshua Hanks

Sanitation workers in New Orleans are fed up with low pay, long hours and hazardous conditions. Their problems are magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic which has officially killed nearly 1,000 people in the city’s metropolitan area.

Close to 20 city sanitation workers who work for Metro Disposal, a private company, held a protest on May 5, demanding hazard pay due to the increased risks they face during a pandemic. The workers are paid only \$10.25 an hour and want a pay increase to \$15 an hour. They are demanding better personal protective equipment as well, which they say has not been regularly provided by management.

One of the workers explained, “They give us masks that are ruined after a couple days and nothing for the rest of the week. We get work gloves but no latex gloves. If we are cut, we can get infected.”

Over the past several decades, New Orleans, like many cities in the U.S., has experienced the privatization of a large number of public services. They have

been sold off to private firms that operate for a profit and often cut corners to increase their profits’ bottom line.

While the city was still under a mandatory evacuation order following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, all New Orleans public schools were hastily privatized, making the city the first in the country to have an entirely privatized education system. This privatization trend continued to consume other city services as well, including sanitation.

Prevention the best medicine

Sanitation workers are an integral part of the public health workforce. Their role could be viewed as just as crucial, or even more crucial, for public health than the role of medical workers. Sanitation workers prevent diseases at their source. And as the coronavirus pandemic has clearly shown, prevention is the best medicine.

In socialist Cuba, where the public medical system faces shortages of certain medicines, devices and supplies due to the U.S. blockade of the island, preventive medicine plays a much bigger role.

The Cubans recognize how crucial is the work done by sanitation workers.

Cuba’s health care system has highly positive results. It delivers high life expectancy and low mortality rates compared to its neighbors—and even compared to developed capitalist countries like the U.S. Yet the Cubans do this while having far less money and resources at their disposal.

After the May 5 protest, Metro Disposal fired several workers. Some of the remaining workers formed the City Waste Union; yet so far management has refused to voluntarily recognize it. Instead, the company ordered the striking workers to vacate the premises. Management then brought in prison laborers from nearby Livingston Parish in an attempt to break the strike. According to Louisiana law, incarcerated laborers can be paid only 13 percent of the normal pay of \$10.25 an hour.

Lock5 LLC, the private supplier of prison labor, can keep up to 64 percent of the already meager wages. This means that prison laborers essentially endure a modern form of slavery. Louisiana has one of the highest incarceration rates in the world. A

large number of inmates provide labor in agriculture, manufacturing and services like sanitation. They also work in the state capital, filing papers and cleaning the facilities for the governor and lawmakers.

In response to a massive outpouring of frustration from the community over the firings and use of prison labor, the parent company released a statement saying: “Metro Services Group has long been an advocate of helping persons who had been incarcerated return to society in a meaningful and productive way. Metro makes no apologies for this policy as a core element of our commitment to being good corporate citizens.”

This public relations statement attempts to cover up the company’s exploitation of prison laborers and ignores its refusal to recognize the sanitation workers’ union — but it doesn’t fool anyone. This shows how critically important it is for labor and community organizations to show solidarity with sanitation workers and incarcerated workers and demand fair wages and treatment for them all. □

En una grave crisis económica, lecciones de los más oprimidos

Continúa de la página 12

Luchar por sus vidas no es una metáfora, sino una verdad literal, ya que los trabajadores “esenciales” de bajos salarios que todavía están en el trabajo se enfrentan cara a cara con sus jefes en un intento de obtener equipos de protección personal que salven vidas y otras garantías de salud.

Para los trabajadores sin empleo, la “ayuda” económica de los Estados Unidos o los gobiernos estatales es completamente inadecuada, si no se retiene deliberadamente. Hasta el 15 de mayo, según One Fair Wage, el 44 por ciento de las personas que solicitaron el desempleo han sido denegadas o aún esperan ser aprobadas.

Muchos millones de trabajadores son

ahora aquellos que no tienen “nada que perder excepto sus cadenas”, como dice el Manifiesto Comunista.

Estas son las “cadenas” de la esclavitud asalariada.

Lecciones de luchas pasadas

Lo más importante ahora es recordar las lecciones de lucha que nos han dado quienes lucharon durante siglos contra el colonialismo, la esclavitud y el capitalismo de los Estados Unidos.

Lo primero y más importante es la solidaridad, la necesidad de forjar lazos de simpatía, unidad y fuerza, para luchar en las batallas de cada uno como si cada una fuera nuestra.

La lucha contra la supremacía blanca es

el núcleo de esta solidaridad, como siempre lo ha sido, ya que la clase dominante capitalista vuelve a reunir a todas sus fuerzas oficiales y vigilantes de neofascismo para tratar de convertir a los trabajadores blancos en contra de las nacionalidades oprimidas y otras agrupaciones oprimidas.

La otra lección clave que nos dieron los combatientes antes que nosotros es apuntar y soñar para el mundo que queremos, no el trato que ofrecen nuestros opresores. Ahora es el momento de avanzar en las demandas que nos acercan al mundo que soñamos.

Decimos: ¡La comida es un derecho! ¡Un trabajo es un derecho! ¡Un salario y/o un ingreso garantizado más que vivir son derechos! ¡La atención médica es

un derecho! ¡Liberarse del racismo y de todas las formas de opresión son derechos! ¡La libertad del encarcelamiento, ya sea en las cárceles o centros de detención, y de la deportación, es un derecho!

Y en nuestro mundo, estos derechos son para todas las personas, ya sea en la “fuerza laboral” oficial o no.

Todos los días durante esta crisis económica pandémica, los más oprimidos lideran la lucha, y todos los días nos están enseñando nuevamente una antigua lección por el luchador por la libertad negra Frederick Douglass: “Sin lucha, no hay progreso”.

Avancemos para enfrentar ese desafío, donde sea que estemos. Solidaridad para siempre. □

COMENTARIO DE WW/MO

¿Quieres justicia para George Floyd?

¡Encarcelar y condenar a policías asesinos!

Por Monica Moorehead

27 de mayo - Fue un déjà vu. Otro hombre negro capturado en video, primero, siendo torturado y luego asesinado por un oficial de policía blanco.

Fue hace casi seis años cuando, el 17 de julio de 2014, millones de personas vieron con horror cuando Eric Garner, de 43 años, fue estrangulado por un oficial de policía blanco de Staten Island, Nueva York. Se podía escuchar a Garner decir, repetidamente, “no puedo respirar”, antes de morir de un paro cardíaco.

Desde ese trágico día hasta el verano de 2019, el Departamento de Policía de Nueva York tardó cinco años en despedir al policía asesino Daniel Pantaleo, quien, hasta ese momento, había estado en “licencia administrativa” y todavía en la nómina.

Un gran jurado optó por no acusar a Pantaleo por asesinato en primer grado, pero Ramsey Orta, un transeúnte puertorriqueño que grabó el asesinato en video, ha estado encarcelado desde 2016, su castigo por exponer este crimen atroz.

Un avance rápido hasta el 2020, cuando el 25 de mayo, un hombre negro de 46 años en Minneapolis, George Floyd, conocido por sus amigos y compañeros de trabajo como “Big Floyd”, también fue estrangulado por un oficial de policía blanco, quien presionó su rodilla en el cuello de Floyd durante casi ocho minutos mientras otros tres oficiales observaban. Floyd, que fue esposado durante el asalto, era un amigo cercano del ex jugador de la Asociación Nacional de Baloncesto Steven Jackson.

Esta atrocidad fue capturada en un video de 10 minutos por Darnella Frazier. Se podía escuchar a Floyd haciendo eco de las palabras de Garner: “No puedo respirar”. También se le escuchó decir: “Me duele el estómago. Me duele el cuello. Todo duele. Dame un poco de agua o algo.

Por favor. Por favor.” (CNN, 27 de mayo)

Sus súplicas fueron ignoradas hasta que permaneció inmóvil y fue declarado muerto en el Centro Médico del Condado de Hennepin. Floyd había sido acusado de intentar pasar un billete falso de \$20 en una tienda de conveniencia.

El policía que mató a Floyd, Derek Chauvin y los otros tres policías con él fueron despedidos, pero al 27 de mayo ninguno de ellos había sido arrestado ni acusado de asesinato, una demanda que la familia de Floyd y muchos otros han hecho públicamente.

Ataque violento contra los manifestantes

Una vez que el video se volvió viral en las redes sociales, los hashtags #GeorgeFloyd y #GeorgeFloydwasmurdered se convirtieron en las principales tendencias en Twitter. Incluso cuando el alcalde Jacob Frey anunció el despido de los cuatro oficiales, esto no impidió que una multitud multinacional de miles, negros, latinos, indígenas y blancos, tomara las calles de Minneapolis, a pesar de las continuas preocupaciones sobre el distanciamiento social.

La mayoría de los manifestantes usaban máscaras mientras cantaban: “No hay justicia, no hay paz”, “Policías asesinos a la cárcel”, “Abolir a la policía” y “Black Lives Matter”. Los padres incluso trajeron a sus hijos enmascarados a la marcha.

Este desafiante acto demostró cuán enojada y apasionadamente la gente quería protestar por este asesinato, así como los residentes negros, con máscaras, salieron a las calles de New Brunswick, Georgia, a principios de este mes por el asesinato de Ahmaud Arbery en febrero por un supremacista blanco y su hijo.

Una vez que los manifestantes llegaron al Cuartel General del Tercer Recinto, donde se encontraban los cuatro policías,

llevaron a cabo una mini-rebelión, cortando los neumáticos de los coches de la policía y rompiendo las ventanas del recinto. La policía tomó represalias disparando irritantes químicos y balas de goma. Para aliviar el dolor insoportable, la gente corría a las tiendas para que le rociaran la leche en los ojos. A pesar del brutal asalto de la policía, la protesta duró horas, hasta las 9 p.m. cuando la lluvia dispersó a la multitud.

¿Por qué abolir la policía?

Cuando el ex mariscal de campo de San Francisco [fútbol estadounidense], Colin Kaepernick, se arrodilló durante la ejecución del himno nacional en la temporada de fútbol 2016-17, se vio obligado a tomar esta acción luego de los asesinatos policiales de Alton Sterling en Baton Rouge, Luisiana, y Philando Castile en un suburbio de Saint Paul, Minnesota, el verano anterior.

Desde que asumió esta postura heroica, Kaepernick ha sido “descartado” por los propietarios y la jerarquía de la Liga Nacional de Fútbol. No ha tomado otra jugada desde el centro desde el final de la temporada 2017.

Kaepernick estaba atrayendo la atención mundial no solo a estos dos asesinatos particulares, también captados en video, sino también a la epidemia desenfrenada de brutalidad policial e injusticia racista, desde el perfil racial hasta el asesinato directo de personas negras y morena desarmadas, sin importar su edad, género o discapacidad.

Es por eso que las acciones de Kaepernick todavía resuenan hoy cuando hay un asesinato policial.

La policía no son solo personas armadas con uniforme. Son una fuerza letal que forma parte del aparato represivo del estado, como las cárceles, los tribunales, los militares, etc., que existen por encima



FOTO: BRAD SIGAL

Manifestantes frente al departamento de policía de Minneapolis antes de ser agredidos por policías, 27 de mayo.

de las leyes de la sociedad para proteger los intereses de la pequeña y super rica camarilla que administra las ganancias de Wall Street.

Estos intereses son diametralmente opuestos a los intereses de miles de millones de trabajadores y personas oprimidas, una clase global que no posee nada pero se ve obligada a luchar diariamente por el derecho a las necesidades humanas básicas para vivir y prosperar: empleos, vivienda, atención médica, alimentos, educación y mucho más.

La clase dominante depende del brazo extralegal del estado para defender sus intereses. Es por eso que la policía toma una posición de no intervención hacia los neofascistas armados que exigen la reapertura de negocios durante la pandemia. Pero están más que dispuestos a atacar a los manifestantes desarmados que exigen justicia para las víctimas de la brutalidad policial, como Rodney King en 1991, Michael Brown en 2014 y George Floyd esta semana. La gente conecta cada vez más estos puntos.

La policía no existe bajo el capitalismo para “proteger y servir” a la gente. La policía existe para proteger y servir a la propiedad privada de la clase dominante reforzando, de manera represiva, la supremacía blanca desde arriba, especialmente la guerra desproporcionada contra las personas de color.

La única justicia real para Eric Garner, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd y otros del mundo es abolir la policía. Eso solo puede ocurrir con, primero, el encarcelamiento de policías asesinos y, en última instancia, la abolición del capitalismo a través de una revolución socialista que de una vez por todas pone a los trabajadores y las personas oprimidas en el poder. □

En una grave crisis económica, lecciones de los más oprimidos

Estados Unidos se encuentra en una crisis económica histórica y aplastante, acelerada por la pandemia de COVID-19. Si bien la Oficina de Estadísticas Laborales informó el 21 de mayo que la tasa oficial de desempleo era del 14,7 por ciento, ese mismo día la revista Fortune, una voz de la clase capitalista, dijo que la tasa de desempleo real de los EE. UU. ahora era del 22,4 por ciento.

Esta es la tasa de desempleo más alta de EE.UU. desde la Gran Depresión de la década de 1930. Hasta el 21 de mayo, 38,6 millones de personas habían solicitado el desempleo, más que la población combinada de 21 estados. Una cuarta parte de los trabajadores en Hawai, Michigan y Nevada están sin trabajo. (bls.gov/bls/news.reles)

Y estas estadísticas no comienzan a tener en cuenta un estimado de 2 millones de trabajadores encarcelados, junto con los trabajadores migrantes

indocumentados.

Los capitalistas usan estos números para evaluar el daño económico a su clase y hacer planes para ahorrar sus ganancias.

Los comunistas miran estos números y saben que somos nosotros y nuestra familia, amigos y compañeros de trabajo esperando en las líneas de automóviles de seis millas de largo por alimentos, tratando de obtener atención médica de emergencia de un médico cuando se perdió el seguro médico con el trabajo, tratando de mantener de ser desalojado porque no hay dinero para pagar el alquiler.

Los comunistas miran las estadísticas y conocen los hechos ocultos: la mayoría de las personas que pierden empleos ya son trabajadores de bajos salarios, porque casi la mitad de los trabajadores de EE.UU. entre 18 y 64 están empleados en trabajos de pobreza de bajos salarios

y pagan salarios anuales medios de solo \$18.000. (tinyurl.com/ya38q5tf)

Los trabajadores de bajos salarios que están oprimidos a nivel nacional (indígenas, negros, latinos, isleños de Asia y el Pacífico) siempre reciben salarios aún más bajos y de nivel de pobreza que los blancos pobres, algunos grupos hasta dos veces menos. (tinyurl.com/yces3tuv)

El racismo vuelve a levantar su fea cabeza en el hecho de que un tercio de todos los musulmanes de EE.UU. viven en la línea de pobreza o por debajo de ella; la mayoría de los musulmanes de EE.UU. son negros, latinos o asiáticos. (tinyurl.com/yblpzncz)

De los 23 millones de trabajadores con salarios bajos, dos tercios son mujeres. Si se mantuvieran las estadísticas para las personas no conformes con el género, un número aún mayor estaría en la categoría de “mujeres de bajos salarios y trabajadoras oprimidas por el género”. Por lo general, a las mujeres se

les paga un 15 por ciento menos que a los trabajadores varones blancos, con una mayor brecha para las mujeres de color. (tinyurl.com/y9xzcivr)

Según el BLS, en 2019 solo el 19,3 por ciento de las personas con discapacidad incluso estaban empleadas.

Los comunistas observan estos hechos y saben quién está sufriendo, y nosotros observamos a nuestra familia, amigos y compañeros de trabajo y también vemos quién se está organizando militantemente.

Porque en todo Estados Unidos los trabajadores de bajos salarios y oprimidos están aumentando, desde trabajadores de saneamiento hasta trabajadores de salones de salud, desde enfermeras hasta trabajadores de plantas empaadoras de carne. Están siende liderados por personas de color, mujeres, personas LGBTQ2+ y personas con discapacidades, todos se alzan para luchar por sus vidas.

Continúa en la página 11

editorial