

A 21st-century lynching

Justice for Ahmaud Arbery!

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

May 11 — In the early afternoon of Feb. 23, shots rang out on the tree-lined streets of Satilla Shores, a predominantly white neighborhood bordering the port city of Brunswick on Georgia's Atlantic coast, some 40 miles north of Jacksonville, Fla.

Afterward, a 25-year-old Black man, Ahmaud Arbery, lay dead on the pavement.

His killers, the father and son duo of Gregory and Travis McMichael, claimed they had identified Arbery as a "burglary suspect" as he jogged by their homes. They took off after him in a pick-up truck to make a "citizen's arrest."

Armed with a .357 magnum revolver and a shotgun, with the son driving and the father standing in the pick-up bed, they passed Arbery and then stopped to confront the runner in shorts and a T-shirt. Arbery tried to evade them, but Travis stepped out of the truck and approached him in front of the vehicle, shotgun in hand. Confronted by two armed white men, Arbery tried to defend himself and get away.

These events are now known — more than two months after Arbery's murder — because a video recorded by



Black community protest in Brunswick, Ga., May 9, on racist murder of Ahmaud Arbery by two white supremacists.

accomplice William "Roddie" Bryan, who helped trap Arbery with his vehicle, was finally released to the public on May 5. Later it was revealed that the video had been in police and prosecutors' hands early in the investigation.

International outcry for justice

Within hours of public viewing, online petitions demanding "Justice for Ahmaud" were signed by tens of thousands of people. In the midst of the COVID-19

shelter-in-place order, a press conference was held by Black community organizations, including Brunswick pastors and the local NAACP chapter. These called for the McMichaels' arrest and the resignation of Brunswick District Attorney Jackie Johnson and others who had failed to arrest the two.

The hashtag #IRunWithMaud, initiated by Arbery's high school football coach and a cousin, encouraged those in solidarity with Ahmaud and the Arbery family to run or walk on May 8 for 2.23 miles to mark the young athlete's 26th birthday that day and the date of his murder, Feb. 23.

The response was overwhelming, not just in the U.S., but around the world, as well-known professional athletes and outraged people, young and old, took pictures and videos of themselves with the hashtag. National Football League stars, including Malcolm Jenkins, Cam Jordan, Shaun Alexander, Mark Ingram, Julian Edelman and Tom Brady, expressed support for Arbery by signing a letter from the NFL Players Coalition to U.S. Attorney General William Barr, demanding a federal investigation. National Basketball Association players, LeBron James and Steph Curry among others,

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Pandemic hastens capitalism's end stage— The rest is up to us!

By Larry Holmes

Last week workers celebrated International Workers' Day 2020. There has been no other time in our lives when the message of May Day — global workers' solidarity in the struggle against capitalism — has been more urgent. We have entered a decisive period.

The scope of the world class struggle heading toward us will require more than solidarity from the working-class movement. It will require a level of coordination among organizations and movements around the world in the struggle against capitalism that didn't even exist in the early years of the Third International under the

leadership of V.I. Lenin. Conditions and technology have made what was not possible, possible. But first, those of us in the United States, the center of world imperialism, have our work cut out for us.

The world capitalist economy, led by the U.S., is tumbling very quickly into a depression. It is likely to be more severe than any previous depression in the history of capitalism, because what is occurring now is the implosion of a system at its end stage. As staggering as the COVID-19 pandemic is on its own, in truth it has catalyzed a colossal world capitalist crisis that has been in the making

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Anti-racist victory in PA

San Quentin car caravan

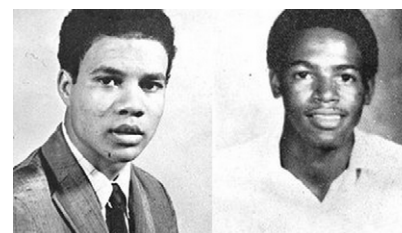
NO to cages for migrants!

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Phillip Gibbs, James Earl Green murdered by racist cops on May 15, 1970, in Jackson, Miss.

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‘Shelters = Death, Hotels = Haven’

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

After the COVID-19 deaths of dozens of seniors at Philadelphia nursing homes and at least one homeless person in a city shelter, community activists converged on a city official’s home on May 6 to deliver a message: The city must provide safe, non congregate shelter for residents who are at high risk of contracting and dying from COVID-19!

Activists placed a white coffin covered with a red cloth on the sidewalk in front of Philadelphia Managing Director Brian Abernathy’s home in the city’s Mount Airy section. Placards carried by protesters and placed next to the coffin proclaimed: “Shelters = Death, Hotels = Haven.”

ACT-UP speaker Jamaal Henderson explained that Philadelphia has resources at its disposal but is systematically refusing to use them to help people who are unsheltered or living in congregate shelters, returning from incarceration or stuck in nursing homes. Philadelphia’s slow action has already resulted in clusters of illness that put residents at risk, burden our health care system and contribute to the spread of COVID-19.

This pandemic is disproportionately killing poor, Black and Brown people. The disease is now exacerbating the

conditions of poverty, racism and lack of health care, spreading mostly in situations that poor Philadelphians find unable to escape. The protest put a spotlight on Philadelphia’s slow, uncoordinated and undersized response to the dire needs caused by both the pandemic and the high level of poverty in this city.

On March 23, Mayor Jim Kenney issued a stay-at-home order in Philadelphia. Two weeks later on April 6, the city opened a hotel to quarantine people who were homeless and tested positive or had symptoms and were awaiting test results. Now three weeks later, the designated quarantine hotel is still partly empty,



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Cops stop activists from delivering demands to a city official’s home.

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COVID-19 has exposed everything wrong with capitalism:

- No national planning for universal free, quality health care.
- No provisions to support families from cradle to grave.
- No guaranteed high standard of living for all people.
- Institutionalized racism, sexism, LGBTQ2+ bigotry.
- Class system rigged in favor of profits for the 1%.
- Billions for the Pentagon, cutbacks for people’s welfare, including food and housing.

Workers World provides the theoretical and organizational ammunition needed to crush this inhumane system and create one that supports the working class and all oppressed people — revolutionary socialism. If the need for that becomes clearer every day during this devastating pandemic — where everyone is being called

upon to show solidarity and form a united front — then please consider putting your money where it will really help achieve that goal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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COVID-19 strike wave enters third month

By Martha Grevatt

Workers at 50 locations across Florida struck McDonald's, Starbucks and other fast food restaurants on May 6. What united them was the failure of these multibillion-dollar enterprises to correct hazardous working conditions that put workers at risk of contracting COVID-19. Some of these McDonald's workers are also part of a state-wide class action lawsuit over widespread sexual harassment.

Starbucks and McDonald's both made billions in profits last year by paying low wages; yet they refuse to spend the funds needed to keep workers safe. A Starbucks worker in Orlando described a company video showing how to make a mask from a coffee filter. At a McDonald's in the same, tourism-dependent city, workers were told to not wear masks at all, as they would frighten customers. (Orlando Sentinel, May 6)

These workers, who risked being disciplined or even fired for striking, are not isolated. All over the country, multibillion-dollar companies are subjecting employees to unsafe conditions, prompting roughly 200 walkouts, sick-outs, sit-ins and job site demonstrations in the past two months. In addition to the strikes, online campaigns—such as the petition signed by over 1,500 autoworkers demanding all workers be tested before their plants reopen—are protesting bosses' profits-before-people stance.

This incredible wave of resistance has drawn in diverse sectors of the working class, including the public sector, retail, manufacturing, meatpacking, health care, construction, mass transit, trucking and education.

Since the coordinated May Day walkout of Amazon, Target, WalMart and Whole Foods workers, highlights include an at-home sick-out May 6-8 by New York



Striking New Orleans sanitation workers.

University graduate student-workers; a strike in a Naches, Wash., fruit packing warehouse May 7; and truckers in a number of cities staging slowdowns May 2. Issues include falling incomes as well as unsafe working conditions.

On May 5, trash collectors known as “hoppers” went on strike in New Orleans to demand protective gear, safe conditions, higher pay and hazard pay for working during the pandemic. They currently work for a private temporary agency PeopleReady, and only make \$10.25 an hour.

PeopleReady fired the strikers on May 6 and replaced them with prisoners on work release, employed by Metro Services, who earn 13 percent of the hoppers' wages. The prisoners face being locked up full-time again and exposed to a higher risk of contracting COVID-19 if they complain about conditions.

The strike continues, with the added demand to rehire the fired hoppers.

Death toll rises, so does consciousness

The death toll among “essential” workers — a large number of them workers of color — continues to rise.

The capitalists and their friends in the White House and in statehouses are unmoved. Governors are pushing, some more quickly than others, to “reopen the economy.” Workers who are recalled from layoff but do not go back to work — because they fear for their health — can lose unemployment benefits. That's if they were lucky enough to get through the red tape at overburdened state systems and start collecting benefits in the first place.

President Trump, who opted against invoking the Defense Production Act to force manufacturing companies to produce masks and ventilators, is instead using the act to force meatpacking and poultry processing workers back into deadly plants.

Workers are fighting back, as exemplified by the strike over safety at the House of Raeford poultry plant in West Columbia, S.C., where the company has already fired 12 workers for striking.

The president is also using the pandemic crisis to engage in union busting via his appointees to the National Labor Relations Board. The board has delayed union representation elections sought by nurses in North Carolina and Colorado, citing virus safety concerns. The delays were requested by the country's largest hospital corporation, HCA Healthcare, in Asheville, N.C., and by Denver Health in Denver, Colo., giving them more time to propagandize and intimidate workers into rejecting the union.

Nevertheless, union organizing is gaining momentum because of the life-threatening conditions workers are being subjected to in a range of occupations.

The pandemic crisis has wrecked any illusions that the capitalist system can be reformed.

The ruling class, which always puts profits before people and the environment, is the enemy of all workers. Now, not only union consciousness but revolutionary consciousness is on the upswing. □

Justice for Ahmaud Arbery!

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have also demanded justice for Arbery.

Hundreds rallied May 8 outside the Glynn County Courthouse in Brunswick. Though glad that the McMichaels had been arrested the previous evening by members of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, the crowd was furious that local officials had done nothing for over 10 weeks to take action against yet another murder in Georgia's centuries-long history of white supremacist lynchings.

In a May 9 Los Angeles Times article about the rally, John Perry, senior pastor of Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church and NAACP chapter president, said one reason for the delay was because the McMichaels had ties with local law enforcement officers and prosecutors — connections that allowed them to evade the law: “At the least, [law enforcement] gave them the benefit of the doubt; at the worst, they tried to help them to cover up an incident that was clearly murder. There is this whole relationship of privilege that we've got to address in our legal

system and our law enforcement system.”

The father, Gregory McMichaels, had been a Glynn County police officer for seven years and then an investigator for the Brunswick District Attorney's office for over 20 years, retiring in May 2019.

State's collaboration in cover-up

Long-running, controversial DA Jackie Johnson instructed police to not arrest the McMichaels, according to Glynn County Commissioners. After a few days, she finally recused herself because of her work relationship with Gregory McMichaels. Johnson has been under scrutiny for other cases where the DA's office appears to have collaborated with the Police Department to cover up officer misconduct.

On Feb. 27, Johnson officially turned the case over to Waycross DA George Barnhill Sr. But three days before getting jurisdiction, Barnhill had already advised Brunswick detectives that the shooting was a “justifiable” homicide as a case of “self-defense” because Arbery was a “burglary suspect” and the pair were

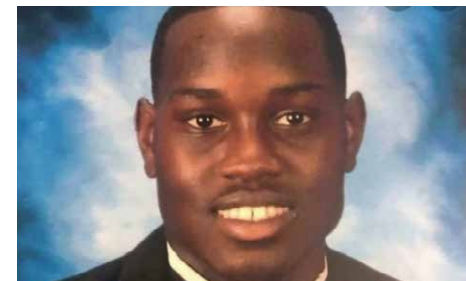
attempting a “legal citizen's arrest.”

In another instance that exposes how tight relations are among members of law enforcement agencies, Barnhill's son works in DA Johnson's office. The senior Barnhill finally stepped down after several weeks of inaction, and a third district attorney was assigned the case.

Tom Durden, DA of Hinesville, Ga., took over on April 14. After the video release on May 5, he announced he would convene a grand jury to hear the evidence. But, he added, because courts were shut down due to the pandemic, this would not happen until at least June 12.

But, as pressure from the Arbery family and the public mounted, Durden finally had to request the help of the GBI. On May 7, within 36 hours of examining the evidence already in hand, including the video, the GBI arrested Gregory and Travis McMichaels — some 78 days after Ahmaud Arbery was shot and killed.

On May 11, due to the international outcry, Georgia's attorney general appointed a fourth DA, Joyette Holmes, as special prosecutor in the Arbery case. Holmes,



Ahmaud Arbery.

who is African American, is the district attorney of Cobb County, Ga.

Continuing battle for justice

Arbery's family expressed relief at the arrests, but voiced fear that the legal system will acquit the killers despite the evidence — as has happened in the cases of so many other young Black men, like Trayvon Martin and Tamir Rice.

The Black community of Brunswick — which is the majority of the city's population — has suffered the inequalities of poverty, racism and disenfranchisement for generations. They know well that the battle for justice is not over.

Only continued pressure and organizing offer the possibility of a measure of justice under the legacy of institutional racism and white supremacy. □

'Shelters = Death, Hotels = Haven'

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underused despite the large number of community residents needing a safe place to self-isolate.

When an activist tried to bring the envelope containing their demands to Abernathy's front door, cops prevented the delivery. Speakers explained that they were at his home because the official has refused to meet with them in his office. They vowed to return in larger numbers next time.

The ad hoc coalition's demands include: Federal Emergency Management Agency public assistance funding for non congregate shelter as required; and an immediate inventory of all publicly owned properties, including public university

dorms, the Pennsylvania Convention Center, museums, libraries, public housing, city-owned vacant properties, and more, to determine which can be used as non congregate housing and which can be used as quarantine or recovery beds for people who have tested positive.

In addition the call is for immediately moving all residents of congregate homeless shelters into hotel rooms or dormitories; and for reaching out to all unsheltered Philadelphians and providing hotel or dormitory rooms to all residents returning from jails/prisons.

Dozens die in nursing homes

Other demands addressed the rising death count in nursing homes, calling for

immediate provision of accessible hotel rooms or dormitory rooms to residents who are living in nursing homes but could live independently with accessible housing. They also addressed the need to develop a harm-reduction plan to move people with mental illness and/or drug use into non congregate settings with adequate support from well-equipped outreach teams.

Protesters addressed the housing crisis in Philadelphia, calling for homeless families to be able to move into vacant city-owned and Philadelphia Housing Authority-owned properties. They called on the city to prioritize rental assistance by immediately ending the “pilot” phase of shallow rental assistance and begin planning to provide rental assistance to

all Philadelphians in need.

Other demands involving housing called for shifting as many housing resources as possible toward rental assistance and providing housing to people with little or no income in preparation for the ongoing housing and eviction crisis. City officials were urged to resist austerity budgeting and plan now to provide housing for all homeless and at-risk households for at least the next 24 months.

Participating organizations include ACT UP Philadelphia, Black and Brown Workers Collective, Coalition to Abolish Death by Incarceration (CADBI), Philadelphia Socialists, Philadelphia Tenants' Union, Put People First! PA and the Philadelphia Human Rights Coalition. □



‘No state execution by COVID-19!’

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

May 9—It was no coincidence or geographical convenience that prisoners’ rights advocates organized a car caravan today to San Quentin State Prison in Marin County, Calif. San Quentin, a mere 11 miles from San Francisco, is the state prison where death row prisoners are incarcerated. It is also where Black revolutionary George Jackson and others led a rebellion against racist, inhumane prison conditions, and where Jackson was assassinated by guards in August 1971 for organizing against the prison-industrial complex.

Fast forward to May 4, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic raging throughout the U.S. prison and jail system, when the California State Supreme Court ruled against dismissing larger numbers of prisoners from behind bars. The lawsuit, brought by the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, had demanded immediate statewide action to protect those incarcerated in prisons and county jails.

The Labor Action Committee to Free

Mumia Abu-Jamal, part of the international effort to free Abu-Jamal, the U.S. political prisoner incarcerated for 39 years in Pennsylvania, called for the car caravan and rally to demand “No State Execution by COVID-19.”

In a statement, the committee called upon California Gov. Gavin Newsom to “release elderly, sick or immune-compromised prisoners and all those who are close to parole.” According to the Marshall Project, a nonprofit journalism group covering criminal justice issues, on May 6 there were over 20,000 reported cases of COVID-19 infection in U.S. federal and state prisons, with 304 reported deaths.

The committee also demanded legal action to free San Quentin prisoner Kevin Cooper, who is on death row and whose legal battle for a new trial is being stalled by the courts. The committee called upon the governor to demonstrate real opposition to the death penalty by supporting Cooper’s right to a new trial.

Responding to the COVID-19 human rights emergency and to the ongoing racist catastrophe of the prison-industrial



Car caravan on May 9 to San Quentin State Prison.

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

complex, more than 80 cars met at the Larkspur Ferry parking lot on May 9 to decorate the cars and attend a short pre-caravan rally. The rally was broadcast on a local radio frequency so people could listen in their cars.

The caravan snaked along the roads and highway surrounding San Quentin Prison to the West Gate, where a small in-person rally was held on a flatbed truck. Speakers

included Angela Davis, Minister King-X of California Prison Focus, Jack Heyman of the Labor Committee (retired leader of International Longshore and Warehouse Union [ILWU] Local 10), and Cephus Johnson, the uncle of Oscar Grant III, killed by Bay Area Rapid Transit police on Jan. 1, 2009. A statement from San Quentin death row by Kevin Cooper was read. □

Black prisoners win victory vs. racist officials

By Ted Kelly

Through strength and perseverance, Eric McGill and Leonttay Pratt have won a meaningful victory against the racist officials at the Lebanon County Correctional Facility in Pennsylvania. Held in solitary confinement for refusing to cut their dreadlocks, McGill and Pratt — both adherents of the Rastafarian faith — have been released back into general population. Pratt has been tortured for his religious belief since December of last year. McGill has been surviving in these conditions for almost 16 months.

Neither man has been convicted of a crime. They are in jail because they cannot afford bail.

LCCF officials deny their punitive detention unit constitutes solitary confinement. Yet prisoners are confined to their cells for over 23 hours a day, able to step outside into the yard only between midnight and 2 a.m., and taking all meals in their small cells where lights are regularly left on all day and night. This is legally regarded as torture by the United Nations.

Until now, it has been the prison’s official policy that Black men are prohibited from wearing their hair in dreads. Thanks to pro se lawsuits — those filed without an attorney — by McGill, Pratt and others, which were supported by the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project, Lebanon County jail now grants a narrow religious exemption to this racist policy.

“I feel like I did the right thing. I made a difference not just for me but for others who didn’t have a voice,” McGill said.

A statement released by PILP celebrated the prisoners’ release from solitary, but made clear how narrow the policy change was: “While this new policy protects the rights of incarcerated people to wear dreadlocks for religious reasons, it does not address the larger issue that Lebanon County still bans dreadlocks when people have them for reasons other than religion. Contrary to Lebanon County’s assertions, dreadlocks do not present inherent security or cleanliness concerns. Indeed, dozens of jail and prison systems across the United States permit incarcerated people to have dreadlocks.



PHOTO: MCGILL FAMILY, PA INSTITUTIONAL LAW PROJECT

Eric McGill.

“The new policy still irrationally targets a primarily Black hairstyle,” stated Matthew A. Feldman, PILP staff attorney. “We will continue to pursue a court order removing this arbitrary, racist distinction between Black hairstyles and other long hair.”

Protesting ‘genocidal policy’

It is not hyperbole to refer to this policy as genocidal. A fundamental aspect

of genocide is the murder of a people or nation by preventing them from expressing their cultural practices, like dress or hairstyles.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 1994 stated plainly that “any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities” constitutes a violation of the genocide convention.

This principle in bourgeois law dates back to at least the 1940s when Raphael Lemkin coined the phrase “genocide.” But regardless of what ideals the legal system claims to uphold, genocide of Black and Indigenous people who refuse to submit has always been the policy of the United States.

The release of these principled men is a victory for the abolitionist movement. But it is not enough. Pratt and McGill

should not be in cages at all. They have not been convicted of a crime. There are other Black men who are still being punished at LCCF for their African hairstyles.

It is estimated that between 80,000 and 100,000 incarcerated workers are currently held in solitary confinement in the United States, out of the more than 2.3 million people confined to concentration camp-like prisons. Tens of thousands of migrants are also being held in detention camps. Millions more workers are on probation, parole, under house arrest and/or have been disenfranchised for prior convictions.

Workers World Party demands the immediate release of all these workers, especially at a time when the COVID-19 virus is sweeping through these concentration camps for the poor.

Tear down the walls! Free them all! □

Political Prisoners Teach-In

Mumia, migrant rights and cages

By Teresa Gutierrez

These slightly edited remarks were made April 24 at the “U.S. Empire vs. Political Prisoners” teach-in webinar sponsored by Mobilization4Mumia and held in honor of the 66th birthday of political prisoner and revolutionary Mumia Abu-Jamal, incarcerated for 39 years by the U.S. state.

First of all, happy birthday to our comrade and leader Mumia Abu-Jamal! I want to talk very briefly about my experience as an im/migrant rights activist and its relationship to the struggle for Mumia.

I was born in Texas, so the issue of immigration is part of our DNA. We often say that we didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us — in my case, because we were here when Texas was stolen from Mexico. When the immigrant rights movement burst on the scene in 2006, that became



my main area of work.

But back in the day, I was extremely impacted by the Black Liberation struggle as a young Chicana in Texas. So the case of Mumia and of other liberation activists has also always been part of my DNA.

In 2006, the immigrant struggle burst into the political scene, and we struggled to defend immigrants day in and day out. May Day was an action that immigrants revived in the United States. There had been many efforts by the Million Workers March and others to revive May Day, actions separate from the mainstream, but immigrants revived Mayday in 2006, which was great. It was an important independent action of workers.

The main emphasis, of course, was against the deportations, for migrant rights and so forth. I was proud to be part of the immigrant sector as that movement very much understood the importance of all immigration rallies bringing in other issues. To bring in the issue of wars abroad,

to bring in the issues of police terror in Black and Brown neighborhoods, and so forth.

I found it so deeply moving to be in immigration coalition meetings where we had to say there’s an important case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was an activist. We would have to explain, as 99 percent of immigrant activists did not know who he was. But once we broke it down, it was like, okay, we get it!

And of course, to Mumia’s credit, he would always write statements on the immigrant struggle and the May Day struggle, so we were able to share that. And of course, he always wrote about U.S. imperialism and Latin America. So it was very easy for us to make that connection.

Connecting the struggles

Fast forward to 2016 when Trump — or as we call him “pendejo” [a foolish person] — ran his racist campaign for presidency built on anti-immigrant,

Continued on page 10

U.S. global prison model: white supremacy on display

WW COMMENTARY



By Mirinda Crissman

The United States has institutionalized white supremacist violence at home and abroad through its use of police and prisons. This does not come as revelation, but as a call to action. Whether we examine photographs coming out of El Salvador's prisons, or surveillance software used by U.S. police and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, we must be resolute in our international aims to tear down these active monuments to white supremacy.

Prisons have divided and dehumanized vast swaths of the population. Prisons disappear people after police round them up and put them there.

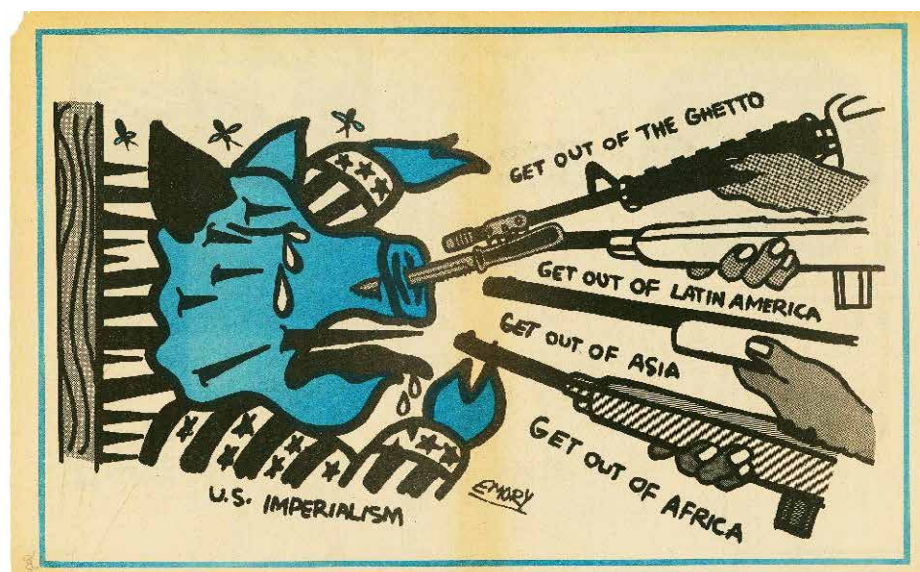
Police in the U.S. have been used to break up liberation movements at home and abroad for centuries. The Los Angeles Police Department and the New York Police Department in particular have sent their officers to train and be trained in places like Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Israel, Thailand and Vietnam.

In the U.S., police began as slave patrols to capture escaped enslaved African people. A notorious policeman explained that “control, not correction, is the key. Our job is to apply emergency treatment to society’s surface wounds. We deal with effect, not causes.” (“Badges Without Borders” by Stuart Schrader) The capitalist state attempted but failed to permanently quash the revolutionary spirit of movements like the United Farm Workers and the Black Panther Party.

El Salvador: U.S exports repressive model

The U.S. model of physical social control, perfect for maintaining white supremacy and U.S. empire, was exported to other countries. This connection is on full display in shocking photographs of prisoners piled on top of one another in El Salvador during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The U.S. has had a hand in shaping El Salvador’s policing and subsequently its prison system since the early 2000s. The imperialist violence in the decades preceding this punitive export helped lay



Black Panther Party's 1960s political artwork.

IMAGE: EMORY DOUGLAS

the groundwork for its prison project. Currently, El Salvador has the second highest incarceration rate in the world. For every 100,000 people, 590 are locked up. The world’s top cop, warmonger and jailer — the U.S. — has 655 out of 100,000 incarcerated. (U.S. News & World Report, May 13, 2019)

“In 1989 School of the Americas (SOA) graduate-led massacre at the University of Central America in El Salvador shook the earth,” according to SOA Watch. “The SOA, renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) in 2001, is a U.S. military training school based in Fort Benning, Georgia. The school made headlines in 1996 when the Pentagon released training manuals used at the school that advocated torture, extortion and execution. Despite this admission and hundreds of documented human rights abuses connected to soldiers trained at the school, no independent investigation into the facility has ever taken place.” (2017)

In 2002, U.S. officials chose Costa Rica to host the next branch of the International Law Enforcement Academy. A broad coalition of Costa Rican labor and human rights groups pushed for

transparency and accountability clauses to be included in the deal. Instead of agreeing to these clauses, the U.S. packed up and headed for El Salvador where the U.S. State Department quietly established an ILEA in San Salvador in 2005.

The academy is part of a network of ILEAs created in 1995 under President Bill Clinton, who envisioned a series of U.S. schools “throughout the world to combat international drug trafficking, criminality, and terrorism through strengthened international cooperation. There are ILEAs in Budapest, Hungary; Bangkok, Thailand; Gaborone, Botswana; and Roswell, N.M.” (NACLA, March 6, 2008)

These police academies have been used by the U.S. all over Central and South America to further imperialist foreign policy by backing governments that allowed them to plunder as they pleased. Regime changes were extremely violent and murderous.

The destabilizing of a region politically is one of the root causes for migration to the U.S. Another cause is acceleration of the climate crisis through destruction of the environment in pursuit of profit. After migrants and refugees make the long and perilous journey, they are met with militarized U.S. law enforcement agents who were trained alongside the same forces that pushed them from their home countries.

White supremacists and policing: a despicable history

Militarized law enforcement bodies in the U.S., like local police or ICE, use surveillance tactics and technologies from companies with direct ties to white supremacists. Damien Patton, CEO of the surveillance start-up Banjo, was involved with both the White Knights and The Dixie Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Patton helped shoot up a synagogue. At his trial he testified, “We believe that the Blacks and the Jews are taking over America, and it’s our job to take America back for the White race.” (Banjo, boingboing.net, April 24) He has since denounced his past actions, but software he helped create and similar products are used by police and ICE for rounding up people to be caged.

White supremacist collaboration with police maintaining order is not new. According to Edwin Black in his book “IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance between Nazi Germany and America’s Most Powerful Corporation”: “In the 1930s and 40s, IBM—through its German holding Dehomag—provided Hitler’s regime with electronic data processing machines and support. The Nazis used the machines to efficiently conduct censuses and identify ethnic populations.”

The Advanced Research Projects Agency Network was a U.S. government-funded project that provided

the origins of today’s internet. It was designed to provide a network for the U.S. Department of Defense’s computers, until it was decommissioned, in 1990, to allow for the creation of a global network. (theConversation.com, Nov. 2, 2016)

Legal professor James Q. Whitman details in his book, “Hitler’s American Model,” how the Nazis in Germany were inspired by Jim Crow segregation and U.S. laws surrounding “race-based immigration, race-based second-class citizenship, and race-based anti-miscegenation laws.” Scholar Zoé Samudzi explains that “Nazism was a colonial production of racialized space from Jewish ghettos to Lebensraum’s always imperial intentions.” Lebensraum was the German concept similar to U.S. Manifest Destiny. (@ztsamudzi on Twitter, March 5, 2019)

The U.S. empire has the most violent history of institutionalizing and codifying white supremacy. This is exemplified in this moment of global pandemic, where the rapidly accelerating and completely preventable deaths of people in prisons are an act of genocide.

Logical endpoints of white supremacist discourse are mass extermination. Prisons are concentration camps for the poor, oppressed nationalities and dissenters.

The global vacuum pump that is the maintenance of imposed colonial, capitalist order is sucking all the oxygen out of us and our planet, literally and figuratively. The first to suffer and pay the steepest price are the people most oppressed by white supremacist ideology — which is designed to divide and conquer.

Abolitionists: part of historic movement

Our collective existence depends on remaking ourselves and the world around us. Abolitionists are part of the historic movement of people fighting for a new world. As one of the many political prisoners of the U.S. empire, Mumia Abu-Jamal, says, “Abolitionists are, simply put, those beings who look out upon their time and say, ‘No.’ They want to abolish state policies that they cannot abide. Slavery. Mass incarceration. The death penalty. Juvenile life. Solitary confinement. Police terrorism.” (Abolitionjournal.org, June 17, 2015)

Abolitionists fight against the devastating and long-lasting effects of fatal state inventions of police and prisons. They raise up the long and colorful histories of prisoners’ resistance to brutal, ongoing conditions — that have mutated from the early days of domination and destruction of land and people. Abolitionists respond to repression with a myriad of tactics and levers for social change.

They fight to redirect stolen resources toward human needs like health care, housing, safe water and food, and transforming the root causes of suffering. The Earth — and all life on it — depend on our collective ability to rapidly shift away from current oppressive structures.

Abolitionists know there is a war at home and a war abroad. They see the way the empire cages and deploys militarized forces against people here, in the same way it militarizes fictional borders and funds police and prisons in other countries. It’s the same struggle, same fight against the further codification of white supremacy. As scholar Naomi Murakawa has said, “U.S. elites built the arsenal of oppression against subversives and revolutionaries by working across national boundaries. Liberation will require the same.” (Quoted in “Badges Without Borders”)

It is incumbent upon us all, beyond our borders and within, to tear down the walls! □

Solidarity with Ohio prisoners

By Martha Grevatt

Over 200 people demonstrated outside the state prison in Marion, Ohio, May 2 to protest the conditions inside and demand prisoners who meet certain criteria be released. The prison drew national attention after 80 percent of the prisoners tested positive for COVID-19.

Conditions are now deplorable, with the prisoners only receiving two meals a day. Those meals do not meet the caloric intake or nutritional needs of an adult male. The excuse given is that staff needs extra time to sanitize. However, the more critical steps of requiring masks and social distancing have not been taken.

The protesters demanded that all the 400 prisoners housed at the Marion Reintegration Center be given clemency by Gov. Mike DeWine. Most of them are deemed “low risk” and are within a year of their release date.

“There is no reason to keep everybody there,” Kevin Ballou, one of the protest organizers and a former Marion prisoner, told Workers World. “It’s like a huge warehouse or a huge garage. People sleep 2 feet away from each other. Several have had to nurse each other back to health. People are bedridden.

“One friend had to help an elder prisoner go to the bathroom and back to his

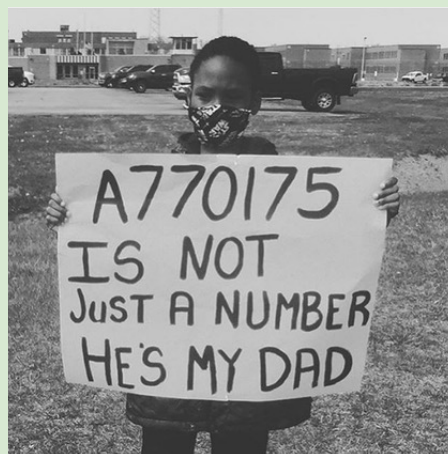


PHOTO: KEVIN BALLOU

Prisoners’ family members demonstrate outside Marion, Ohio, state prison on May 2.

cell. One we called ‘Old Man George’ passed away. He was always playing chess. No one knows what happened to him. The people in charge are not qualified to take care of human beings. This isn’t just a criminal justice issue; it’s a humanitarian issue.”

Speakers at the rally included Ballou and other former Marion prisoners, Cleveland City Councilmember Basheer Jones, and several family members of prisoners. People drove in from all over Ohio to take part in the protest. Some people who drove by were hostile, but many honked in support. □

Pandemic has hastened capitalism's

Continued from page 1

for a long time. After being revived 75 years ago by World War II, U.S capitalism has for the last half century been sliding into its end stage. Globalization and the development of generations of technology, combined with a relentless assault on the living standards of the working class, have failed to stop the system's decline.

Capitalism has never recovered from the 2008 crash of the financial markets. Since then, financial markets have been on life support because central banks have pumped trillions of dollars into them. When U.S stocks nearly collapsed two months ago, the Federal Reserve did something extraordinary. Within a matter of days, it funneled about \$5 trillion into U.S. financial markets — about one-quarter of the U.S. annual gross domestic product. Wall Street is now on what amounts to a financial respirator. Before the pandemic, the global economy had been stagnant in the U.S. and contracting elsewhere. Now, everywhere the economy is contracting at a rate faster than during the Great Depression.

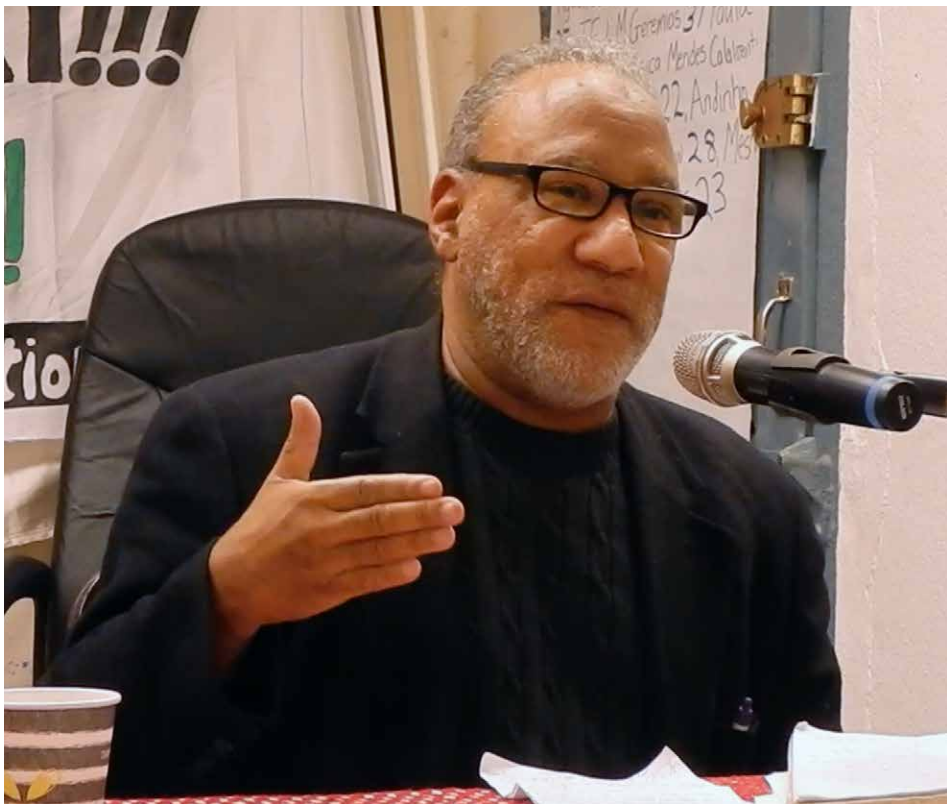
Those of us who have been anxiously awaiting the collapse of capitalism should restrain any inclination to rejoice. The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the capitalist economy have unleashed a living hell on the workers and oppressed everywhere. Workers are dying from the pandemic, and they are losing their jobs at the same time. The rate of suicides is growing — and will continue to grow in direct correlation to the rising rate of joblessness, evictions, hunger, in addition to more sickness and death.

The real number of workers who have just lost their jobs in the U.S. is not 30 million, but closer to 50 million, when all the workers who do not qualify for unemployment benefits are added in — like many migrant workers, gig workers and the large number of laid-off workers who could not access their state unemployment websites because they were either too busy or had crashed. That means that almost one-third of the U.S. workforce has just become jobless.

The capitalists' need to force workers — those who still have a job — back to work could make it impossible to contain the pandemic because opening the economy is what is helping the stock market recover.

When the pandemic is no longer the main problem, most of the jobs that have been lost will not come back. One of the things that fuels a capitalist depression is that the system depends on workers to purchase goods and services. Depression-level unemployment means that workers will not be able to buy the things that capitalist overproduction must dump on the market to sell.

Naturally, it will be Black and Brown workers — those who struggle to survive under normal conditions — who will suffer the most. We should prepare ourselves for the unimaginable devastation that the pandemic and economic crisis are going to wreak on the peoples of the



Larry Holmes.

WW PHOTO: LIZA GREEN

global South. But workers who live in the major imperialist countries, those who used to think of themselves as doing well, especially before the 2008 recession, will also be hit very hard by this storm.

Everyone, except the rich, will demand the end of capitalism

This is the moment of reckoning. To any rational mind, it is utterly incomprehensible that in the richest country in the world, which has the benefit of the highest level of scientific and technological development in history — and virtually inexhaustible resources — is somehow incapable of protecting society from a deadly pandemic. It's not just Trump's incompetence. Presidents and politicians from both the Democratic and Republican parties faithfully supported the measures that eviscerated the quality of health care available to the workers and the poor.

It is for this reason that there were not enough hospital beds, protective equipment, respirators and health care workers to respond to the pandemic. The measures that rendered hospitals completely unprepared to protect the people were the consequence of an austerity campaign that capitalists embarked on in the hopes that it would rescue their floundering system. Whether or not capitalists are evil is beside the point.

The fundamental problem is that capitalists cannot do what's best for society because it's not in their interest to do so. Their interests are in accumulating all the wealth they can, maximizing profits, exploiting labor and maintaining their power over society. If the interests of the people were primary, workers would be able to stay at home safely without any fear of losing their jobs, if that is what is necessary to stop a pandemic.

It is not the economy that needs to be shut down — it's capitalism. Capitalism cannot protect us from pandemics, or

from climate change, or from all the dangers that we face. Because of this world-changing crisis, more people are going to realize that capitalism is incompatible with the immediate needs of society — and that its continuation is an existential threat to all life on the planet. Until we end capitalism, we will all be at the mercy of a small — and shrinking — class of super-rich parasites.

From now on, system change must be the goal of the working class

We have reached the point where it is no longer helpful to merely expose capitalism, or not to have a goal beyond reforming it. It cannot be reformed. It has to go. Even if capitalism falls apart and is unable to recover for a long period of time, and if it is not ended, given enough time, capitalism will reconstitute itself.

In reality, the most powerful imperialist ruling class in history is now very weak and demoralized and has little political credibility. Moreover, its response to the COVID-19 pandemic is going to weaken it even further.

Supporting the struggle for the immediate needs of the workers is absolutely essential. There is no chance for a struggle for power without a struggle for the basic needs of the masses of people.

The fight for socialism must not be seen as separate from the struggle for everyone's right to a job or income, universal health care, an increase in the minimum wage, stopping evictions — and most importantly, the right and need for the working class to organize itself like never before.

Marx and Engels offered a revolutionary perspective regarding this in the "Communist Manifesto": "Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lie not in the immediate results, but in the ever expanding union of workers."

How to effectively combine the struggle to end capitalism and establish socialism with the day-to-day struggles of the workers will become the central challenge for all revolutionary forces. Rising to this

challenge will require drawing lessons from history and determining how past lessons are applicable to today's conditions. This will not be easy. It will be a process involving mistakes and setbacks, as well as victories.

But we have no other choice than to embark on the road that leads ultimately to revolution. Capitalism will not just go away. It must be ended. We cannot predict with certainty the precise moment when a real revolutionary situation will be at hand in the U.S. That will depend on many things, including the readiness of the working class, the only class big and powerful enough to end capitalism. But we can say that today's events are opening roads to the revolution that did not exist just a short time ago.

Dialectical materialism and revolution

Many of the discussions online regarding the best road to socialism in the wake of the new popularity of socialism, which has spurred the growth of the Democratic Socialists of America and the Bernie Sanders campaign, tend to have one important flaw. The discussions generally seem to assume that because conditions unfavorable to the radicalization of the working class have endured for a long time, they are static and forever unchangeable. As such, the conclusions are that the period of Leninism and revolution are long gone and that the working class in the U.S. will never see any route to change other than capitalist elections, as they are tied to the traditions, institutions and influence of the U.S. bourgeoisie.

The problem with this thinking is that it leaves out an essential element without which all change — especially revolution — would be unthinkable. That element is dialectical materialism. Material conditions, which are constantly changing, ultimately compel social change, regardless of how long that change takes or whether or not we see it coming. The working class can be politically dormant for many decades, and then drastic changes in material conditions can propel workers to a new level of political consciousness, even revolutionary consciousness, within a relatively short period of time.

At this very moment, material conditions are in the process of creating the political conditions for revolutionary change. We must not minimize what is at stake here! If the forces which believe that reform and only reform is possible are the only forces influencing the working class, it will be impossible for the working class to break free of the ruling class and its political parties. That, in turn, will undermine the independence and revolutionary potential of the working class and will help capitalism survive a near-death experience.

The last time the possibility of revolution was a real threat to the U.S. ruling class was at the height of the working class's rebellious strength in the 1930s. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt wisely pressured the U.S. bourgeoisie to acquiesce to New Deal concessions to the working class because he was worried about the prospects of a replay of the Russian Revolution at home. Those were important concessions. But they also helped U.S. imperialism survive the Great Depression, enabling it to become the undisputed leader of the capitalist world through the second world war.

Marxists have been accused of prematurely predicting the end of capitalism since the first edition of the "Communist Manifesto" was published in 1848 in



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end stage — The rest is up to us!



London. Suffice it to say, no prediction is valid until it is affirmed by events. However, eventually crying wolf will not be just another false alarm. We must take the possibilities seriously. For one thing, the U.S. ruling class does not look as invincible as it used to.

If one looks behind the curtain of the all powerful Oz, one finds a ruling class that has never been more unsure of itself. Most members of the ruling class love Trump because he's been willing to do everything possible to make them richer, not later, but right now.

Still, the mere fact that an embarrassingly unstable and incompetent demagogue and charlatan is the leader of U.S. imperialism speaks volumes about the state of the U.S. ruling class. In reality, the most powerful imperialist ruling class in history is now very weak and demoralized and has little political credibility. Moreover, its response to the COVID-19 pandemic is going to weaken it even further. At the moment of the greatest world crisis ever, the choice for the next president is between Trump and Joe Biden, a profoundly unconvincing politician, who, like Trump, is also a sexual assailant.

Of course, U.S. imperialism is still very dangerous, maybe even more dangerous now because it is fighting for its life. U.S. imperialism still has the largest economy among the imperialist countries, the most nuclear weapons, and the largest, most technologically lethal military. With an economic depression dragging down his reelection prospects, Trump might try something radical and violent to divert the crisis elsewhere.

What will the ruling class do? What will the working class do?

No one can say for certain how the economic and political crises that are gaining momentum will unfold. The ruling class has been forced, at least for the moment, to put aside the austerity playbook which has governed its decisions for several decades. The government has acted more drastically and much faster than in any previous crisis and has pumped trillions of dollars into the economy. It's true that most of those funds have gone to the big corporations.

Most of the people who need the little relief money that is supposed to go to workers have either not received it yet or are not eligible for it. Still, the government has never even pretended to provide emergency relief funds on this scale before. And they've never done anything like this in such a short time without a big mass struggle forcing them to do it.

That the capitalists have done this is a sign of how drastic and unusual this crisis is. Some of the big capitalists are complaining that the government is undermining capitalism and is adding trillions of dollars to the debt that will break their system. What will the ruling class do when the stunning scope of joblessness becomes undeniable and irreversible? If the forces in the ruling class can manage to reach agreement among themselves to continue providing historically massive amounts of emergency support to the economy indefinitely, perhaps

they will be able to forestall a social rebellion, as they try to find some way out of the crisis. That scenario seems unlikely.

It is more likely that the capitalists and their politicians will not agree to keep spending. The capitalist economy could slide into a free fall. The political apparatus of the system at the national level and at every level below that could become paralyzed and start to fall apart. The police, upon whom the system relies as its first line of defense against the workers, may become demoralized and ineffective. Members of the military could split on a class basis.

Imagine under these circumstances if the working-class movement was growing and emboldened, highly organized and prepared for a struggle for power. This scenario sounds too good to be true. What actually unfolds will be much more complex and protracted than this. However, we will never make a revolution unless we are able to imagine the possibility of one.

A new fascist danger?

Nothing illustrates the dangers for the working-class movement more than the threats of war and fascism. The imperialist powers utilized both of these weapons to divert the capitalist crisis of the 1930s. A catastrophic economic collapse, a weakened ruling class and a large section of the petty bourgeoisie losing their businesses are the classical conditions that could push a section of the ruling class to turn to fascism in order to save their system. Trump has helped pave the way for such a contingency.

We have to take this danger extremely seriously. However, it's not inevitable that a fascist movement will become strong enough to take over the government and the state apparatus. The decisive factor will not be any particular election or whether Democratic Party leaders hold more elected offices than the Republicans. The main goal of billionaires funding a fascist movement at a time of dire crisis is to crush the working-class movement. However, ultimately it will not only be the size and level of organization of the working-class movement, but the sense of its own strength and power, as well as its revolutionary orientation, that will determine which force crushes the other.

Mass organization of the working class: an absolute political necessity

In spite of everything that the working class is being subjected to, it is rising up and fighting back. When conditions are once again safe for the workers to take to the streets en masse — and we cannot know when that will be — the mass anger and mass rebellion are likely to be something that we've never seen before. Even under extremely difficult conditions, workers at jobs where they don't have the benefit of belonging to a labor union, like Amazon, Whole Foods, Instacart, Target and elsewhere, organized walkouts and strikes on May Day to demand safe working conditions and paid sick leave.

From health care workers to migrant farmworkers, to grocery store workers and prisoners, workers everywhere are fighting for the very right to stay alive. Progressive and revolutionary forces need to support these workers. That support must be shown in more than words. It must be shown in concrete acts of solidarity. The millions

of jobless workers are going to forge into a movement. We must help these workers with their organizational needs — and in every other way that's helpful and possible.

Many labor unions are losing members. That means they will be losing resources, which is going to make surviving more difficult. On the other hand, the biggest and most militant period of worker organizing may be opening up now. And it will be rank-and-file organizing from the bottom up and not from the top down. The mass organization of the working class will include all workers, including incarcerated workers, migrant workers,

It is not the economy that needs to be shut down — it's capitalism. Capitalism cannot protect us from pandemics, or from climate change, or from all the dangers that we face. Because of this world-changing crisis, more people are going to realize that capitalism is incompatible with the immediate needs of society — and that its continuation is an existential threat to all life on the planet. Until we end capitalism, we will all be at the mercy of a small — and shrinking — class of super-rich parasites.

the undocumented, the unemployed, gig workers, sex workers, street vendors, independent contractors, and every other worker the system wants to marginalize. This includes plant workers, office workers, low-wage workers and city, state and federal workers.

The organization of the working class is more than a strategy. It is an absolute political necessity — without which we cannot maximize class solidarity and prevail in the widening class struggle. The labor unions that are ready to be helpful in this task will make the biggest difference. But if such labor unions are not involved, we cannot allow that to hold worker organizing back.

It will be up to workers, with all the help and solidarity we can provide, to form workers' assemblies or workers' councils at every level, from the workplace to the city and region. The advantage of

workers' assemblies is that they are open to all workers and unemployed people regardless of circumstances. They should be open to students and youth, retirees and anyone else who can help. If they are open, it will make the workers' movement potentially enormous, inclusive and not held back by ties to the Democratic Party or any narrow, limiting ideas and conceptions that are unfortunately all too common among the organized labor movement's current leadership.

Also, while workplace, industry and geography remain central to organizing workers, changes and new conditions make the necessity of organizing workers beyond their workplace, and despite other circumstances, both possible and necessary. As many struggles develop into bigger struggles — and then political struggles and later into struggles for power — minimizing everything that creates barriers and boundaries in the organization of the working class will be a strategic necessity.

Let's get ready for what lies ahead!

For those activists who are demoralized by the end of the Bernie Sanders campaign and are burned out after devoting so much energy to difficult struggles that did not turn out well — those who believed that a better world is possible, but have lately questioned that belief, or who are traumatized and feeling powerless by what has happened in recent months or even before — take heed.

The difference between the world of a few months ago and the world today is incalculable. Everything has changed. All that many of us feel now is suffering, fear and uncertainty. But out of such birth pangs, revolutions are born.

Whether capitalism can be ended sooner rather than later does not depend on the will of revolutionaries alone. Other conditions beyond our control must also be present. However, our will and readiness could become decisive. If we are not willing and ready, are we then willing to push the task of ending capitalism onto another generation and allow the system to continue to torture and endanger the planet and all life on it?

Let's all work to restore ourselves and restore each other so that we might be able to make history. The workers and oppressed peoples of this planet need dedicated revolutionaries who are willing to sacrifice everything in order to pave the way for a new world free of all oppression. They do not need revolutionaries to substitute themselves for the masses. They need everyone to give to the struggle whatever they can give, and they need those who are able to make the struggle their life's work do so.

Holmes is First Secretary of Workers World Party.

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, LGBTQ+ 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

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Long live spirit of Kent State, Jackson State!

By Otis Grotewohl

May 4 and May 15, 2020, mark the 50th anniversaries of the murders of students at Kent State and Jackson State in the United States. Many people are familiar with the National Guard shooting of students and protesters at Ohio’s Kent State University in 1970, which left four dead and nine injured, but they are less aware of the shootings at Jackson State University in Jackson, Miss., just 11 days later. At Jackson State, two youths were murdered and 12 wounded.

To this day, the reasons few people know about what happened at Jackson State are racism and national oppression. All the students who were either killed or injured at Kent State were white; all the students who were shot at Jackson State were Black. As the late historian Howard Zinn pointed out about the Jackson State shootings on “Democracy Now!” in 2009: “It’s a common thing for [U.S.] history to ignore the things that happen to Black people.”

How the National Guard was used to kill college students

On April 30, 1970, U.S. President Richard Nixon publicly announced plans to slaughter the peoples of Cambodia through a bombing campaign. The very next day — which was coincidentally May Day — antiwar and anti-imperialist activists from all over the world responded in anger. Students at Kent State were among those who took action.

Hundreds of KSU students and professors who were opposed to the ongoing war against the Vietnamese revolution held an hour-long rally on campus, where they announced an even bigger protest on Monday, May 4.

On the evening of May 1, many people partied downtown and the bars were busy. At one point a bonfire was set on a downtown street. When the police showed up, several people threw beer bottles at the cruisers. Kent Mayor LeRoy Satrom contacted Ohio Gov. Jim Rhodes, asking for assistance. The mayor declared a “state of emergency,” ordering the bars to be closed for the rest of the evening, which caused more resistance. Confrontations between the crowd and the police ensued.

The next day, May 2, city and state officials contacted the Ohio National Guard, falsely arguing that all the people who were partying the night before were part of the antiwar movement. City and state officials also made up anti-communist lies about “outside agitators” coming into town to “start trouble.”

That evening, the National Guard — which had been deployed days earlier against a Teamsters strike in nearby Akron — was given the order to invade Kent State and another demonstration was organized. Demonstrators chanted, “Out of the dorms, into the streets.” At some point the Reserve Officer Training Corps building was set ablaze. No one was ever arrested for burning down the ROTC building, and it is not clear whether it was set on fire by a courageous protester or an agent-provocateur. The National Guard arrived around 10 p.m.

On May 3, the National Guard began to militarily occupy the campus and a curfew was set for those living on campus. Soldiers with guns were on the ground and helicopters were in the sky. Students made it clear to the National Guard that they were not welcome. It was on that day that Gov. Rhodes famously called the protesters, “Worse than the Brownshirts, and the Communist element, and also the night riders and the vigilantes. They’re the worst type of people that we harbor in ‘America.’” (Cleveland.com, May 2)



PHOTO: CREDIT: SPENCER GRANT COLLECTION/BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Solidarity with Kent State protesters after National Guard shootings, at the Massachusetts State House opposite Boston Common.

People once again gathered at noon on May 4 at what is known as the “Victory Bell.” There were an estimated 2,000 demonstrators — three times the number that had previously convened, despite every attempt by the school administration to stop the demonstration. A confrontation between protesters and the Guard ensued outside Taylor Hall. The “tin soldiers” opened fire, stealing the lives of 19-year-old Allison Krause, 20-year-old Jeffrey Miller, 20-year-old Sandra Scheuer and 19-year-old William Schroeder, while shooting and wounding 9 others.

Allison Krause and Jeffrey Miller were the only two slain who had participated in the demonstration. Krause was a supporter of the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam and Miller was active with the KSU branch of Students for a Democratic Society. Sandra Scheuer and William Schroeder were simply walking to class.

The murders at KSU led to student strikes and protests on college campuses across the country.

Police gunned down African-American students at Jackson State

Eleven days after the murders at Kent State, police opened fire on students at Jackson State College (now Jackson State University) in Jackson, Miss. JSC was an Historically Black College and University. In the spring of 1970, students there were also protesting U.S attacks on Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and the brutal bigotry they experienced in Jackson — a town named after U.S. President Andrew Jackson, an enforcer of slavery as well as genocide against Indigenous nations.

In the 1960s, Mississippi was a hotbed of terrorist Ku Klux Klan activity, openly connected to the police and state politicians. In 1964, three Civil Rights workers — James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner — were brutally murdered by the Klan and members of the Neshoba County Sheriff’s Department in Philadelphia, Miss., 70 miles northeast of Jackson.

On May 14, a false rumor spread throughout Jackson that Civil Rights activist and Fayette Mayor Charles Evers and his wife, Nannie Laurie, had been murdered. The rumor was believable because in 1963, Charles’ younger brother, Medgar, was assassinated by Klan member Byron De La Beckwith in Jackson. Both Charles and Medgar Evers were highly respected leaders of the Mississippi NAACP.

That evening, JSC students carried out a justified rebellion on Lynch Street against what they believed to be another

racist murder in Mississippi. Lynch Street was symbolic as it was named after Reconstruction-era State Rep. John Roy Lynch. Some 75 Jackson Police units, along with the Mississippi State Highway Patrol, were dispatched to suppress the rebellion.

Police stormed the campus to disband another gathering of angry protesters at a five-story women’s dormitory, Alexander Hall. Just after midnight on May 15, the police indiscriminately opened fire on the dormitory, killing Phillip Lafayette Gibbs, 21, and James Earl Green, 17, and injuring 12 others.

Phillip Lafayette Gibbs was a junior at JSC, a husband and the father of an 18-month-old child. James Earl Green, a senior at nearby Jim Hill High School, was on his way home after a shift at a local grocery store. As Green’s sister, Gloria Green McCray, once said about her brother’s murder, “He was just an innocent bystander, but they (the police) were given orders to murder anything Black that moved.” (Democracy Now!, May 10, 2010)

Workers World reported on Jackson State murders when others did not!

The four murders at Kent State have always gotten more attention than the two at Jackson State — even among white “progressive” circles — despite being equally horrendous. In the May 21, 1970, issue, Workers World newspaper called out the hypocrisy of the “liberal” wing of the U.S. ruling class and the middle-class layers of the antiwar movement:

“The war against Black America and the war against Indochina are both genocidal wars against colonized people. But while there is a ‘loyal opposition’ within the imperialist establishment to the war in Indochina, there is no such opposition to the war at home. Where were McGovern, Kennedy, et al., when the bullets cut into the backs of Blacks in Jackson and Augusta? Certainly, these murders are as vicious as the murders at Kent State. But these ‘liberals’ didn’t call a press conference to denounce the murders. They didn’t run to be photographed with grief stricken Black families or ask Black people to come to Washington. ... They want to limit their ‘loyal opposition’ to the war in Indochina — a tactic they hope will get them votes.

“For similar motives, these ‘doves’ used the murders at Kent State for their own political ends. ... And so they shed crocodile tears and called for an end to the violence — but they didn’t call for an end to the violence of the cops, the storm troopers of the ruling class.

“Why? Because there is no loyal opposition to war against Black America — it

folded up after the Civil Rights Movement, when the ruling class decided they were not going to give Black people equality, because the class interests of the imperialists were too intimately tied up with racism and the subjugation of Black people.”

Youth Against War and Fascism — the youth wing of Workers World Party in 1970 — participated in the student strikes following the Kent State shootings, as well as in actions following the Jackson State murders. YAWF proudly carried banners that read, “Avenge the Kent State Four” and “Racist Ruling Class Wanted for Murder at Jackson State.”

U.S. state-sanctioned murderers let off the hook

No one was ever charged, let alone apprehended, for the killings at Kent and Jackson State. In 1971, the state of Ohio held a grand jury regarding the Kent State shootings and issued a report exonerating the National Guard. State officials in Mississippi gave it even less consideration and did not take any type of action against the murderous police.

Just a few days before the Kent State shootings, Nixon called campus antiwar protesters “bums” (New York Times, May 2, 1970) and refused to apologize afterwards. Local newspapers in both Kent and Jackson featured articles and editorials that vilified the demonstrators, blaming them for their own deaths.

To this day, many people in Kent and Jackson are still demanding justice, which is long overdue. Bullet holes that can still be found on a metal sculpture outside Taylor Hall at Kent State and on Alexander Hall at Jackson State are painful reminders of the state-sanctioned murders.

Since the shootings, there have been many more struggles on both campuses. On May 5, Alan Canfora, one of the nine wounded survivors from the Kent State shootings, reminisced on the events with Workers World on Facebook, stating, “Our 1970 anti-war insurrection was so powerful in Kent—only bullets could silence our passionate voices of youth.”

In 1977, revolutionaries and activists held a militant demonstration at Kent State to defy the construction of the Gym Annex building. The protest assembled across from Taylor Hall where some events took place. Demonstrators occupied the location for 60 days, which became known as “Tent City.” Many socialist organizations, including the Cleveland branch of Workers World Party, participated in Tent City. Several protesters were arrested, including Sandra Scheuer’s parents, Martin and Sarah Scheuer.

From 2001 until 2008, the author of this article participated in several activities against the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq at Kent State. On May 4, 2003, a permitted antiwar march was planned, but the administration arbitrarily took the permit away. Organizers decided to defy the administration. As the march started to move off campus, we were met with Kent State and Kent City police in riot gear. There were also helicopters in the sky, just as there were in 1970. Thirteen people were arrested that day and some were severely brutalized.

Since the horrendous shootings 50 years ago, a slogan that has always stood the test of time is: “Long Live the Spirit of Kent and Jackson State!”

Grotewohl is a Kent State University graduate who participated in many anti-racist and antiwar activities from 2001 through 2008. He also worked as a KSU campus tour guide, showing people the sites of the 1970 shootings.

China reacts with Zero tolerance for racist incidents

By Joshua Hanks

Reports surfaced in April of cases of discrimination against African workers in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong as pictures appeared on the internet of a sign refusing service to Africans at a McDonald’s restaurant and allegations that Africans were being evicted from hotels.

Poor communication from local authorities and sensationalized media reports had led to much confusion on the ground after authorities announced that all foreign visitors arriving in the country would need to undergo a 14-day quarantine period. Western media, eager to cast China in a negative light and create animosity between China and other countries, seized on the reports.

The Guardian, an ostensibly progressive British media outlet, ran a headline on April 27: “China fails to stop racism against Africans over Covid-19.” In the Western media’s account, no distinction is made between the discriminatory actions of a few local officials and businesses and China as a whole. The entire country, including the government, is painted as racist.

Not so for countries like Australia, for example, where Aboriginal people make up just 2 percent of the general population, yet 28 percent of the adult prison population. Or the U.S., where Black, Brown and Indigenous people are brutalized and murdered by police at much higher rates than whites, where the incarceration rate of Black men remains higher than any other demographic, and where Black, Brown and Indigenous families have substantially less income than white families, the result of years of generational poverty and racism.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has seen plummeting crime rates in the U.S., the number of police shootings remains stubbornly unchanged. Fascist, white supremacist groups and individuals operate in the U.S. with impunity, working in prisons, police departments, and local, state and federal government agencies.

Stephen Miller, a top White House advisor, and Steve Bannon, a former advisor to President Trump, have both expressed white nationalist views on repeated occasions. Miller, reportedly the main proponent and architect of Trump’s racist immigration policies, has sought to convince the president to suspend

all immigration and close the Southern border.

Where are the headlines exposing the entrenched racism at all levels of the U.S. government?

But it’s different when big business media report on China, even though far-right individuals would never make it into positions of power there and neofascist movements would face swift and thorough repercussions from the state.

China apologizes, arrests the culprit

China’s government apologized for the cases of discrimination reported in Guangdong. China’s Ambassador to the African Union Liu Yuxi met with Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission Kwesi Quartey. A post published on the African Union’s Facebook page on April 15 stated that Ambassador Yuxi “registered the regret and embarrassment that the incidents have caused China” and “recounted the steps the Government of China has taken, and continues to take, to restore calm and to protect the safety, security and dignity of the African population in China.”

Despite what Western media reports may say, the Chinese government has worked hand-in-hand with its African counterparts to reach satisfactory resolutions to the problems endured by Africans in Guangdong. The swift and broad measures they have taken stand in sharp contrast to the situation in the U.S., which has recorded many widespread recent incidents of discrimination, racism and violence against Asians.

Ambassador Yuxi informed Deputy Chairperson Quartey that a Chinese national whose social media post caused the incident had been arrested. Local law enforcement was reprimanded for their handling of the situation, and the Chinese government is paying for two hotels to house those Africans affected. All personal belongings, including passports, have been returned to their rightful owners.

Ambassador Yuxi “expressed overall regret for what had happened and intimated China’s determination to use this

as a lesson to improve relations for their African brothers.”

Ambassador Yuxi wrote in China Today: “China and Africa need to strengthen unity more than ever, and further safeguard the overall situation of friendship and cooperation more than ever.” He added, “I believe that the China-Africa relations, which have been carefully nurtured by the leaders of Africa and China for several generations, and the brotherhood based on solidarity and mutual help, can stand the test of time.”

It is also telling that the offensive sign appeared at a McDonald’s restaurant, a U.S.-owned chain. It had to release an apology and was temporarily closed, with employees receiving training on how to avoid such discriminatory incidents in the future.

China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Zhao Lijian said in a statement: “We reject differential treatment, and we have zero tolerance for discrimination.”

When the U.S. Department of State said the incidents were “a sad reminder of how hollow” China’s relationship with Africa was, Zhao countered at a briefing in Beijing: “The U.S. is immoral and irresponsible to sensationalize the situation and it won’t succeed in sabotaging China-Africa relations.” (Jakarta Post, April 14)

“Guangzhou is an open-minded metropolis,” said Mayor Wen Guohui. “It’s our consistent principle to have zero tolerance for discriminatory comments and behavior.” (Guangzhou, where the racist discrimination occurred, is the capital of Guangdong province.)

Chinese Ambassador to Nigeria Zhou Pingjian met with Nigerian Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama in Nigeria to discuss the incidents. Onyeama noted that Nigerian officials in China had sent him a video showing that Nigerians quarantined in China had all received a gift package from the local authorities as a sign of China-Nigeria friendship. He added that the Chinese government is actively responding to Africa’s legitimate concerns and demands, and relevant issues have been significantly improved.

Zhou “stressed that China-Nigeria relations were unbreakable, noting that the Guangzhou government is fighting against the epidemic, and not Nigerians, Africans, or any foreigners.” (Global Times, April 15)

Guangdong province has since released a package of rules to combat discrimination



PHOTO: CHINESE MISSION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ambassador Liu Yuxi, head of Mission of China to African Union, meets with Deputy Chairperson of A.U. Commission H.E. Kwesi Quartey on April 13.

against foreigners in restaurants, hotels, transportation, markets, hospitals, educational institutions and housing rentals. The measures require all service providers to strictly enforce nondiscrimination measures and resolutely oppose any racist or discriminatory speech or behavior.

Compiled by seven different provincial departments, including Education, Housing and Urban-Rural Development, Transportation, and Culture and Tourism, the measures also include a 24-hour multilingual hotline that foreign residents can call to report cases of discrimination and receive consultation if they encounter any issues.

Despite what Western media reports may say, the Chinese government has worked hand-in-hand with its African counterparts to reach satisfactory resolutions to the problems endured by Africans in Guangdong. The swift and broad measures they have taken stand in sharp contrast to the situation in the U.S., which has recorded many widespread recent incidents of discrimination, racism and violence against Asians.

Members of the Trump administration have avoided taking action against the epidemic of racism here, giving only short, perfunctory statements against discrimination. Nor have they met with officials from China or other Asian nations to address the widespread racism facing people of Asian descent in the U.S.; nor have they released a comprehensive set of rules to combat anti-Asian racism.

In fact, just the opposite is true. Trump himself has repeatedly referred to COVID-19 as the “Wuhan virus” or the “China virus.” China has long been a scapegoat for U.S. failing to handle the pandemic with speed, adequate medical supplies, and overall scientific direction. Indeed the frenzy of anti-China reporting in the corporate media resembles the worst days of the Cold War. □

How Vietnam contained the virus

By Joshua Hanks

As of May 11, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has not recorded any new cases of COVID-19 in 25 straight days, a remarkable achievement for the southeast Asian nation of nearly 100 million people. The number of confirmed cases remains at just 288, with 148 of those originating outside the country from foreign visitors. Some 241 people have recovered, while the remainder are being monitored in six designated hospitals around the country.

No deaths have been recorded. Vietnam’s present success in controlling the spread of COVID-19 results from the early, well-coordinated actions it took when the virus first presented a threat to the health of the population.

After the first two cases were identified

on Jan. 23, Vietnam quickly instituted quarantines, suspended public transportation, canceled in-person classes at schools, closed all nonessential businesses and suspended many international flights. On Feb. 7, Vietnamese scientists successfully cultured and isolated the virus in a lab, joining China, Japan, Singapore and Australia as the only countries in the world to have done so at that time.

The government provided free food, medical care and quarantine facilities for those in need, even setting up “rice ATMs” in several areas where free rice was distributed to anyone who needed it. Neighborhoods with confirmed cases are placed under total quarantine, and the government formed teams of medical workers who go house-to-house checking temperatures and recording any

symptoms residents might have.

Vietnam isn’t able to carry out as much testing as wealthier countries, such as South Korea, but by focusing on preventative measures, thorough contact tracing of cases and mass mobilizations of medical workers, Communist Party members and members of the military, Vietnam has had far fewer cases than South Korea, Japan or Singapore, with no deaths.

The country is already beginning to reopen, while still maintaining strict measures and vigilantly monitoring for new cases. All domestic routes of Vietjet Air are now operating again, and tens of millions of students returned to class on May 4.

The 12th plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam convened in Hanoi on May 11 under the chair of Party General Secretary



PHOTO: COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM

Billboards in Vietnam help raise people’s awareness of COVID-19 prevention.

and President Nguyen Phu Trong. According to vietnamplus.vn, President Trong said that “the meeting takes place in the context of the 45th anniversary of the liberation of the south and national reunification, President Ho Chi Minh’s 130th birthday and the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, which has seen the excellent performance of the entire Party and people.” □

Changing the narrative in Lansing, Mich.

On May 7, a breath of fresh air entered Lansing, Mich., the first since ultrarightist gangs — with the blessing of the Trump administration — held an armed demonstration and invaded the State Capitol April 30. To justify such brazen aggression, the Capitol assaulters hid behind the Second Amendment — the “right to bear arms.”

The gangs—some carrying Confederate flags and swastikas along with their assault weapons—attempted to frighten Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer into forcing workers to go back to their jobs despite the lack of precautions and protections.

The fascist provocation aroused a calm but dramatic response. Six people — four men, two women; five African American, one Latinx — provided an armed escort for Black woman legislator, Sarah

Anthony, when she entered the Capitol on May 7. Their action lifted the spirits of antiracists throughout the United States.

Anthony is the first African American elected to Michigan’s State House of Representatives from the 68th District, which includes part of Lansing. She welcomed the escort. Of the racist demonstrators of April 30, she said, “They were there to threaten us. Not to prove a point or make a statement.” (WILX, May 7)

Michael Lynn, a firefighter who spoke for the Black and Brown Second Amendment Advocates, the group escorting Anthony, said that the aim of his group was to change the narrative. While this struggle is far from over, Lynn’s group has already accomplished this aim.

Before the defense group’s action, Trumpites, racists and the most

right-wing elements of the ruling class used the armed fascists to try to impose a reactionary, antiworking-class program. The fascists pushed elected state governments to accelerate the end of the COVID-19 lockdown, using the threat of arms to impose the bosses’ schedule. Local and state police did nothing to stop them.

This was far from the first time in U.S. history that the capitalist ruling class and its state power unleashed fascist or racist groups to use force to rob the working class and oppressed peoples of their rights. (See May 7 WW editorial: “Fascists do dirty work for bosses” at workers.org.)

By their modest, defensive and yet heroic action, the six people in Lansing — seven including Rep. Anthony — showed the people of the U.S. one powerful way to

counter fascist gangs. It is the other side of racist U.S. history, like Rob Williams’ armed NAACP chapter fighting the Ku Klux Klan in North Carolina, like the Deacons for Defense and Justice, like the Black Panthers standing up to racist police. Like all who were willing to smash racism — in the words of Malcolm X, “by any means necessary.”

This struggle is only beginning. Antiracists around the U.S. of all nationalities should unequivocally support the right of people like the Black, Brown and Indigenous Second Amendment Advocates to defend themselves and their representatives against anyone who threatens them.

And take any action that is needed to thank them — for changing the narrative. □

In Haiti, ICE is spreading COVID-19

By G. Dunkel

Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the agency charged with deporting people from the United States, scheduled five deportations to Haiti on May 11 from the Pine Prairie Detention Center in Louisiana. The agency claims the five individuals have either tested positive for COVID-19 or show signs of having the disease. (Miami Herald, May 8)

Ironically, the U.S. State Department issued an official advisory March 31 to “avoid all international travel due to the global impact of COVID-19.” President Trump boasts that he has done a great deal to protect the “American people” by restricting travel to this country from China and Europe.

While other Caribbean countries have been the targets of COVID-19-positive deportations, Haiti is particularly vulnerable. According to Haiti’s National Institute of Statistics, the country has only 911 doctors for 11 million people.

The World Health Organization reports Haiti has over 900 health institutions. More than half are in the capital,

Port-au-Prince, which is home to about one-third of the nation’s people.

Public health officials in Haiti feel they have to quarantine, at major expense, anybody entering the country, especially if they have been exposed to COVID-19. There are only two small laboratories in Haiti that can test for this disease.

As of May 10, Haiti’s Ministry of Public Health announced there were 151 cases of COVID-19 and 12 deaths in the country.

Almost 6 million people in Haiti live on less than the poverty line of \$2.41 a day —a day! — according to the World Bank. Inflation is running about 20 percent. While the figures haven’t been tabulated yet, remittances from Haitians working abroad — which contribute about 30 percent of Haiti’s gross domestic product — are certain to be falling sharply.

Many Haitians living in North America and Western Europe worked at jobs that have been wiped out in the COVID-19-induced economic crisis. About one-third of all food consumed in Haiti is imported, so a jump in inflation, plus the loss of remittances, is expected to push “food insecurity” into hunger — and the

beginnings of famine.

Much of Haiti’s economic devastation can be traced to the actions of France and the United States to make Haiti pay, time and time again, for the people’s “original sin” — destroying their slave masters root and branch and expelling them from the country. In a just world, Haiti would be entitled to reparations.

Beyond its economic underdevelopment, Haiti has suffered from a number of other disasters. An earthquake in 2010 killed tens of thousands; the structural destruction it wrought has still not been overcome. A cholera epidemic in 2010 brought by United Nations “peacekeepers” lasted for nine years, killed 10,000 people and sickened hundreds of thousands. Hurricanes Mathew, Irma and Maria also did major damage.

Politically, big protests in 2018 over huge increases in the cost of fuel and transportation severely disrupted the economy. Billions of dollars of aid from a program called PetroCaribe, funded by Venezuela and supplying oil at cut-rate prices, evaporated into the pockets of politicians. In 2019, hundreds of thousands of people



Haitians forced to get water from a spigot for sanitation.

came out to demand that President Jovenel Moïse resign because he had mismanaged the economy and was corrupt.

Unions joined these massive demonstrations to push hard for higher minimum wages.

Protests in 2020 have not been as large or as militant as those in 2018-19, but there’s awareness that Haiti has the right not to receive people the U.S. deports. The foreign minister last month politely asked the U.S. to refrain from deportations in this time of plague. The Family Action Network Movement sent a letter to President Jovenel Moïse April 22 requesting he stop accepting these deportations in order to restrict the spread of COVID-19 in Haiti.

Would he stop accepting them if Trump started wearing a mask? □

The Red Flag in the time of coronavirus

Ángeles Maestro, spokesperson for the organization Red Roja (Red Network) in Spain, sent the following message to the Russian organization Red Spring. It salutes May 9, the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Berlin from the Nazis by the Soviet Red Army and the end of World War II in Europe. Translation by John Catalinotto.

The entry of the Red Army into Berlin, fixed in memory by the dramatic image of the soldier hanging the Red Flag from the Reichstag, marked not only the end of World War II, but provided a powerful portrait of just what made up the decisive forces capable of defeating the Nazi monster that capitalism in crisis had engendered.

The devastating experience of the German invasion, together with the vivid memory of the October Revolution and the subsequent victory over all international reaction, allowed the Soviet people to understand exactly what the dilemma formulated by Rosa Luxemburg, “Socialism or Barbarism,” entails and to what extent the defense of life and the struggle for socialism are one and the same thing. This is how the most heroic feat of all time was born.

Another image intimately linked with the Reichstag seizure, one less known and even obscured, has the same roots. It occurred in the Mauthausen extermination camp [Linz, Austria], in June 1941, that is, a few days after the Nazi attack on the USSR. There seemed to be no room for any future. Despite the obstacles, Spanish communists imprisoned in that camp set up a clandestine organization. At night, stripped naked, taking advantage

of the fact that they were gathered in the patio for a disinfection, in the place programmed to annihilate all hope, they took the first decisions to create the structure that four years later would allow the prisoners themselves to liberate the camp. (workers.org/2019/05/42252/)

It is this unwavering will to fight and hope, together with the assumption of responsibility by each individual in the collective task of preparing for the birth of a new society, a task that places the development of all the capacities of all human beings as a central objective, that made the victory of the USSR possible, as well as so many hidden feats like that of liberating Mauthausen.

Today, in the impoverished hospitals, the sick are crowded together because they lack the resources that have been gobbled up by private capital. Today, millions of people have lost their jobs. Today, the vitality, intelligence and creativity of those who do not have the resources to develop them are being squandered. Today, in these difficult times, the Red Flag on the Reichstag is the most conspicuous affirmation of hope for the future.

The infection is caused by the coronavirus, but the epidemic is capitalism.

Some revolutionary processes have strayed from their initial objectives for different reasons, but they did not die. They remain in the memory and in the heart of their people and of all the oppressed of the world. And most important of all, these are not permanent defeats, but temporary failed attempts on the inevitable road of defeating capitalist barbarism and lighting the path to the true history of humanity. □

Mumia, migrant rights and cages

Continued from page 4

anti-Mexican hatred. It was a vicious dog whistle to the reactionaries, to the right wing, to the white supremacists — and he got elected on that basis. Then the war of terror really escalated against immigrants.

One thing we have to say that the struggle for migrant rights has in common with the struggle of our political prisoners is the tenacity and the inspiration that these sisters and brothers and family give us every single day. There have been deportations, there have been cages, there’s sickness, there’s death.

There are the caravans that we see of children and young people, of our grandparents, of men and women, and of trans people who are walking over 2,000 miles from Central America to come to the border.

We see these very difficult conditions come out of U.S. imperialism’s economic policies and foreign policies. And our hearts break with all of this. But they can throw everything against us, and migrants continue to struggle, continue to organize. They are here, and they are not going to leave. Just last weekend in Los Angeles, there were 200 cars in a caravan demanding stimulus aid for the undocumented and other low-paid workers.

So they may try to cage us, but like Mumia, we will continue to struggle. Happy birthday, Mumia, and thank you so much for everything that you stand for. Thank you so very much. □

Ecuador’s pandemic

Rightist regime fails to confront crisis

Part 1

By Michael Otto
Ibarra, Ecuador

May 9 — During March and April, U.S. and European media spewed out shocking images from Guayaquil, the biggest city in Ecuador and capital of the province of Guayas on the Pacific Coast. No one in the port city of 2.9 million is untouched by the death of a loved one, a friend, a co-worker or a neighbor.

By mid-March, this financial center of Ecuador was collapsing under the weight of an exponential increase in the number of dead and dying citizens. Morgues and funeral parlors were filled to capacity. Hospitals were turning away all who were sick, no matter their illness. Cadavers piling up in hospital corridors were thrown into containers. Bodies were cremated on street corners. Prisoners mutinied and began hunger strikes in several prisons.

What’s behind this crisis is that during the past three years, the neoliberal regime of President Lenín Moreno privatized the public health system and systematically dismantled it. The system follows the U.S. “just in time,” profit-before-people industry model. Privatization has drastically reduced the number of intensive care units, hospital beds per person and the system’s overall capacity to handle a crisis.

Both the movement led by former President Rafael Correa and the Indigenous-based organizations have criticized the Moreno regime for its mishandling of the COVID-19 crisis.

The New York Times falsely reported: “Ecuador took early aggressive measures to stop the coronavirus.” Yet a government update revealed that when the first COVID-19 case was confirmed on Feb. 29, there were already seven sick people in Guayas.

Following the soccer matches the first week of March, when thousands also packed the beaches, infected numbers rose rapidly into the hundreds, according to Primicias.

The virus had entered the country when many from Ecuador’s upper classes, who had been infected in Europe during business or vacation trips, returned to Guayaquil. The government failed to screen and quarantine international travelers at the Quito and Guayaquil airports. Elites then spread the contagious disease in superrich Samborondón, located 15 minutes from the Guayaquil airport, and infected their servants and informal workers.

Already on Jan. 30 WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned the world to prepare for a pandemic. Yet two big weddings were celebrated in wealthy Samborondón the weekend of March 14-15. Scores of Guayaquil’s workers served the wealthy guests and carried the virus home to their poor communities.

Guayaquil’s nightmare stemmed from the



Health care worker transports a dead body outside of a hospital in Guayaquil, Ecuador, on April 3 during COVID-19 pandemic.

government’s unconscionable failure to prepare for a crisis and its criminal lack of political will to create an emergency fund, which would empower the government to act decisively in the midst of the chaos. President Moreno, who many here consider “the worst president in history,” ignored World Health Organization warnings for weeks on end, earlier this year.

(A senior policy analyst at the Center for Economic and Policy Research and former Foreign Minister Guillaume Long published an April 16 article that provides a wealth of background information: [tinyurl.com/y8z3sl6c/](https://tinyurl.com/y8z3sl6c).)

According to data the Civil Registry published May 1, more than 13,500 people died in Guayas, over and above the projected average for the months of March and April. Police discovered five containers loaded with 237 bodies in the parking lot of Los Ceibos Hospital on May 2. Only 106 could be identified.

Bosses push to reopen

Ignoring the dangers to workers and the population, the chambers of commerce are pushing hard to reopen Guayaquil for business.

Minister of Government María Paula Romo approved two major soccer matches attended by thousands of fans the first week of March, negating a Ministry of Public Health ban on large public gatherings.

The government imposed a quarantine on March 18 and closed the two international airports in Guayaquil and Quito, Ecuador’s capital. Then, one day after the lockdown started, right-wing Mayor of Guayaquil Cynthia Viteri ordered city vehicles to park on the runway of Olmedo International Airport to prevent the landing of a plane scheduled to return tourists to Europe. This order violated international law.

According to revised government data, there were then already 1,628 people infected in Ecuador (111 confirmed) and 1,215 people with symptoms of coronavirus in Guayas (81 confirmed). Only the confirmed numbers based on

testing are posted on the Johns Hopkins world chart.

Using the revised update, the New York Times concluded that deaths were 15 times higher than reported. Ecuador’s inability to test and accurately report mortality has promoted confusion and shattered the already low public confidence in the government. (April 23)

In contrast, comprehensive preventive medicine — as practiced in Cuba, for example — is impossible in Latin American countries ruled by pro-market, pro-rich neoliberals. Only the rich can afford quality sick-care coverage in Ecuador. Currently, most people with possible coronavirus symptoms fear going to a public hospital and being contaminated.

In Bolivarian Venezuela, community organizers know each home in every neighborhood and rural district. Every family is registered in a database. This registration facilitates contact in a crisis by teams of health care workers. Ecuador has no such system.

Letter of warning to government

On April 28, concerned about preparations to reopen the economy on May 4, scores of Ecuadorian organizations for health, epidemiology, human rights, scientists and public servants signed a letter of warning that they sent to President Moreno and Minister of Government Romo. (Published in Spanish at dialoguemos.ec, April 29)

The letter states in part: “Conditions for a return to productive activities don’t exist. Due to lack of testing and unreliability of data, the State neither has the ability to confirm all suspicious-probable cases, nor to follow up on them and their contacts. We are unable to handle serious numbers of new cases. Safe working conditions are not guaranteed for health workers. If we cannot ensure safe working conditions for health workers, how do we propose to provide protection for the rest of the workers?”

“Confinement and crisis have exposed the historical social inequities between economic power groups (who have continued to grow richer in this pandemic) and social groups which survive in overcrowding, precarious employment, lacking social and economic services and goods (including the most essential common good, water), and of course without access to the right to health.

“Instead of guaranteeing basic social and economic conditions and rights that make it possible for measures of social isolation to be effective for everyone, state action has resorted to criminalization, repression and abuses by the public forces against the most impoverished groups.”

The big businesses and the chambers of commerce are behind the back-to-work plan that has been rejected by most of the country, forcing the government to back off.

Part 2: Ecuador regime wages ‘war against workers.’

Pandemia ha acelerado etapa final del capitalismo; ¡El resto depende de nosotros!

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del más alto nivel de desarrollo científico y tecnológico de la historia, y recursos virtualmente inagotables, sea de alguna manera incapaz de proteger a la sociedad de una pandemia mortal. No es solo la incompetencia de Trump. Los presidentes y políticos de los partidos democrata y republicano apoyaron fielmente las medidas que destriparon la calidad de la atención médica disponible para los trabajadores y la población.

Es por esta razón que no había suficientes camas de hospital, equipos de protección, respiradores y trabajadores de la salud para responder a la pandemia. Las medidas que hicieron que los hospitales no estuvieran completamente preparados para proteger a la gente fueron la consecuencia de una campaña de austeridad que los capitalistas emprendieron con la esperanza de rescatar su sistema inestable. Si los capitalistas son o no malvados no viene al caso.

El problema fundamental es que los capitalistas no pueden hacer lo mejor para la sociedad porque no es de su interés hacerlo. Sus intereses están en acumular toda la riqueza que puedan, maximizar las ganancias, explotar la mano de obra y mantener su poder sobre la sociedad. Si los intereses de las personas fueran primarios, los trabajadores podrían quedarse en casa de manera segura sin temor a perder sus trabajos, si eso es lo que se necesita para detener una pandemia.

No es la economía la que debe cerrarse, es el capitalismo.

El capitalismo no puede protegernos de pandemias, ni del cambio climático, ni de todos los peligros que enfrentamos. Debido a esta crisis que cambia el mundo, más personas se darán cuenta de que el capitalismo es incompatible con las necesidades inmediatas de la sociedad, y que su continuación es una amenaza existencial para toda la vida en el planeta. Hasta que terminemos con el capitalismo, todos estaremos a merced de una pequeña - y cada vez más pequeña - clase de parásitos súper ricos.

De ahora en adelante, el cambio del sistema debe ser el objetivo de la clase trabajadora

Hemos llegado al punto en que ya no es útil exponer simplemente al capitalismo, o no tener un objetivo más allá de reformarlo. No puede ser reformado. Tiene que irse. Incluso si el capitalismo se desmorona y no puede recuperarse durante un largo período de tiempo, y si no se termina, con el tiempo suficiente, el capitalismo se reconstituirá a sí mismo. Apoyar la lucha por las necesidades inmediatas de los trabajadores es absolutamente esencial. No hay posibilidad de una lucha por el poder sin una lucha por las necesidades básicas de las masas populares.

La lucha por el socialismo no debe verse como algo separado de la lucha por el derecho de todos a un trabajo o ingresos, atención médica universal, un aumento en el salario mínimo, detener los desalojos, y lo más importante, el derecho y la necesidad de que la clase trabajadora se organice en sí mismo como nunca antes.

Marx y Engels ofrecieron una perspectiva revolucionaria al respecto en el “Manifiesto comunista”: “De vez en cuando los trabajadores salen victoriosos, pero solo por un tiempo. El verdadero fruto de sus batallas no radica en los resultados inmediatos, sino en la unión cada vez mayor de trabajadores”.

Cómo combinar efectivamente la lucha para terminar con el capitalismo y establecer el socialismo con las luchas cotidianas de los trabajadores se convertirá en el desafío central para todas las fuerzas revolucionarias.

Hacer frente a este desafío requerirá extraer lecciones de la historia y determinar cómo las lecciones pasadas son aplicables a las condiciones de hoy. Esto no será fácil. Será un proceso que implicará errores y contratiempos, así como también victorias.

Pero no tenemos otra opción que embarcarnos en el camino que conduce a la revolución. El capitalismo no solo desaparecerá. Debe ser terminado. No podemos predecir con certeza el momento preciso en que una situación revolucionaria real estará a la mano en los Estados Unidos. Eso dependerá de muchas cosas, incluida la preparación de la clase trabajadora, la única clase lo suficientemente grande y poderosa como para acabar con el capitalismo. Pero podemos decir que los eventos de hoy están abriendo caminos a la revolución que no existía hace poco tiempo.

La próxima parte: ¿Qué hará la clase dirigente? ¿que hará la clase obrera?



Refinería de petróleo en Venezuela, construida con ayuda china.

Pandemia ha acelerado etapa final del capitalismo; ¡El resto depende de nosotros!

Por Larry Holmes

La semana pasada, los trabajadores celebraron el Día Internacional de los Trabajadores 2020. No ha habido otro momento en nuestras vidas en que el mensaje del Primero de Mayo — la solidaridad global de los trabajadores en la lucha contra el capitalismo — haya sido más urgente. Hemos entrado en un período decisivo.

El alcance de la lucha de clase mundial que se dirige hacia nosotros requerirá más que solidaridad del movimiento de la clase trabajadora. Requerirá un nivel de coordinación entre organizaciones y movimientos de todo el mundo en la lucha contra el capitalismo que ni siquiera existía en los primeros años de la Tercera Internacional bajo el liderazgo de V.I. Lenin. Las condiciones y la tecnología han hecho posible lo que no era posible. Pero primero, aquellos de nosotros en los Estados Unidos, el centro del imperialismo mundial, tenemos nuestro trabajo listo para nosotros.

La economía capitalista mundial, liderada por Estados Unidos, está cayendo rápidamente en una depresión. Es probable que sea más grave que cualquier depresión anterior en la historia del capitalismo, porque lo que está ocurriendo ahora es la implosión de un sistema en su etapa final. A pesar de lo asombrosa que

es la pandemia de COVID-19 por sí sola, en realidad ha catalizado una colosal crisis capitalista mundial que se ha estado gestando durante mucho tiempo. Después de ser revivido hace 75 años por la Segunda Guerra Mundial, el capitalismo de EE. UU. durante el último medio siglo se ha estado deslizando hacia su etapa final. La globalización y el desarrollo de generaciones de tecnología, combinados con un asalto implacable a los niveles de vida de la clase trabajadora, no han logrado detener el declive del sistema.

El capitalismo nunca se recuperó del colapso de los mercados financieros en 2008. Desde entonces, los mercados financieros han estado con soporte vital porque los bancos centrales les han inyectado billones (millones de millones) de dólares. Cuando las acciones estadounidenses casi colapsaron hace dos meses, la Reserva Federal hizo algo extraordinario. En cuestión de días, canalizó alrededor de \$ 5 billones en los mercados financieros de EE. UU., aproximadamente una cuarta parte del producto interno bruto anual de EE. UU. Wall Street ahora está en lo que equivale a un respirador financiero.

Antes de la pandemia, la economía global se había estancado en los Estados Unidos y se había contraído en otros lugares. Ahora, en todas partes, la economía se está contrayendo a un ritmo más

rápido que durante la Gran Depresión.

Aquellos de nosotros que hemos estado esperando ansiosamente el colapso del capitalismo debemos contener cualquier inclinación a alegrarnos. La pandemia de COVID-19 y su impacto en la economía capitalista han desatado un infierno en los trabajadores y oprimidos en todas partes. Los trabajadores están muriendo por la pandemia y están perdiendo sus trabajos al mismo tiempo. La tasa de suicidios está creciendo, y seguirá creciendo en correlación directa con la creciente tasa de desempleo, desalojos, hambre, además de más enfermedades y muertes.

El número real de trabajadores que acaban de perder sus empleos en los EE. UU. no es de 30 millones, sino más cerca de 50 millones, cuando se suman todos los trabajadores que no califican para beneficios de desempleo, como muchos trabajadores migrantes y grandes cifras de trabajadores despedidos que no pudieron acceder a sus sitios web estatales de desempleo porque tales sitios estaban demasiado ocupados o se habían estrellado. Eso significa que casi un tercio de la fuerza laboral de los Estados Unidos se ha quedado sin trabajo.

La necesidad de los capitalistas de obligar a los trabajadores — aquellos que aún tienen sus trabajos — a regresar a sus puestos de trabajo podría hacer imposible el contener la pandemia porque la

reactivación de la economía es lo que está ayudando a la recuperación del mercado de valores.

Cuando la pandemia ya no sea el problema principal, la mayoría de los trabajos que se han perdido no volverán. Una de las cosas que alimenta una depresión capitalista es que el sistema depende de los trabajadores para comprar bienes y servicios. El desempleo a nivel de depresión significa que los trabajadores no podrán comprar las cosas que la sobreproducción capitalista debe tirar en el mercado para vender.

Naturalmente, serán los trabajadores de color, aquellos que luchan por sobrevivir en condiciones normales, quienes sufrirán más. Debemos prepararnos para la devastación inimaginable que la pandemia y la crisis económica van a causar en los pueblos del Sur global. Pero los trabajadores que viven en los principales países imperialistas, aquellos que solían pensar que estaban bien, especialmente antes de la recesión de 2008, también se verán muy afectados por esta tormenta.

Todos, excepto los ricos, exigirán el fin del capitalismo

Este es el momento del juicio final. Para cualquier mente racional, es completamente incomprensible que en el país más rico del mundo, que tiene el beneficio

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Los fascistas hacen trabajo sucio para los jefes

WORKERS WORLD
MUNDO OBRERO
editorial

La aparición de alimañas neofascistas debajo de sus rocas para exigir negocios de “reapertura”, una demanda querida por los gobernantes capitalistas súper ricos, hace imperativo que la izquierda desarrolle un plan para contrarrestar la amenaza fascista, una amenaza que ha re aparecido constantemente en la historia de los Estados Unidos.

El 30 de abril, cientos de manifestantes de derecha, algunos armados con armas automáticas, irrumpieron en el edificio del Capitolio de Michigan en Lansing. Exigieron que se levantaran las protecciones estatales contra COVID-19 y se re abrieran las empresas. La policía permitió a los neofascistas armados dentro del edificio y entrar a una galería de visitantes con vista a los legisladores estatales en sesión. Algunos legisladores enviaron publicaciones en los medios diciendo que temían por su seguridad; otros se pusieron chalecos antibalas.

Durante el fin de semana del 1 de mayo, una mezcla de milicias supremacistas blancas, fundamentalistas religiosos y grupos financiados por fundaciones de derecha como Coors y Koch realizaron protestas reaccionarias similares en todo Estados Unidos. El 1 de mayo, el presidente Trump tuiteó el apoyo a los fascistas armados de Michigan, llamándolos “personas muy buenas”, elogio que previamente otorgó a

bandas similares que marchaban en 2017 con símbolos nazis y banderas confederadas en Charlottesville, Virginia.

Los banqueros y multimillonarios que respaldan la administración de Trump han estado exigiendo que los trabajadores arriesguen sus vidas y vuelvan a trabajar y que rápidamente reanuden las ganancias en los bolsillos de los patrones. Estos manipulan a los fascistas para promover este programa.

La fecha elegida por los neofascistas no fue casual.

El 1 de Mayo es el Día Internacional de los Trabajadores. En este Primero de Mayo, los trabajadores en los EE. UU. se encontraban en medio de una oleada de acciones laborales casi sin precedentes: desaceleraciones, ausencia por enfermedad, abandonos de labores, protestas improvisadas, huelgas aprobadas por sindicatos y otras protestas organizadas de base. En la pandemia, los trabajadores están exigiendo seguridad laboral y equipos de protección de los jefes, así como pagos por enfermedad, protección laboral contra despidos, seguro de salud y más, incluso “Medicare para todos”.

Los medios de comunicación de las grandes empresas dieron a los neofascistas horas de camaras el 1ro. de Mayo, y apenas dieron tiempo a las acciones históricas de los trabajadores que se estaban llevando a cabo. Los derechistas armados son simplemente una extensión de los capitalistas “lo de siempre”.

Los mismos tipos de pandillas eran las milicias de los colonos, las patrullas de las plantaciones de la esclavocracia del sur,

las tropas de choque de los industriales del norte. Durante siglos, estas fuerzas extralegales han sido Posse Comitatus, Ku Klux Klan y ahora los Proud Boys.

Los propietarios estadounidenses de tierras e industria siempre han llamado y financiado a sus esbirros cuando los pueblos y trabajadores oprimidos se han organizado y han hecho una pausa por la libertad.

La función de estas fuerzas neofascistas fue claramente definida por el cofundador de Workers World Party/ Partido Mundo Obrero, Sam Marcy, en su libro de 1983 “El Klan y el Gobierno: ¿enemigos o aliados?”

“Hay que recordar que el uso de la violencia y la represión masiva es una tendencia congénita del estado capitalista. Incluso en el llamado mejor de los tiempos, el gobierno capitalista no solo tolera organizaciones terroristas como el Klan, sino que una vez que la lucha de clases de los trabajadores y los pueblos oprimidos adquiere el carácter de un verdadero aumento masivo, el gobierno capitalista es más probable que nunca que aliente y promueva aquellos como el Klan y otros medios de represión”.

Los trabajadores se están alzando en los Estados Unidos, luchando por sus vidas durante la pandemia de coronavirus. Y la clase dominante está llamando a sus tropas de choque para tratar de hacerlos retroceder.

Como socialistas, como activistas de izquierda, como trabajadores, nuestro trabajo es doble: primero, debemos apoyar firmemente y organizarnos con otros

trabajadores y personas oprimidas para forjar lazos de solidaridad contra todas las formas de opresión capitalista.

Segundo, debemos resistir la propaganda de la desmoralización y recordar que una y otra vez la resistencia de la gente ha aumentado para hacer retroceder y desanimar a estas fuerzas reaccionarias.

Desde la resistencia indígena que continúa hasta nuestros días hasta los siglos de pueblos esclavizados en rebelión, desde la marcha de 1981 que clausuró a los nazis en Buffalo, Nueva York, hasta la organización de la izquierda unida de 2017 que rompió la marcha de la supremacía blanca en Charlottesville, tenemos historias militantes para inspirarnos, instruarnos y fortalecernos.

Como Marcy escribió sobre la rotunda derrota de los nazis en 1981:

“La intransigencia, que es tan indispensable en cualquier lucha de la clase trabajadora, no fue la única en explicar la victoria de la coalición progresista antifascista en Buffalo. También fue una evaluación cuidadosa de la relación política de las fuerzas en el área y en el país. Fue una organización buena y eficiente, libre de cualquier enfoque dogmático del fenómeno de la violencia fascista, libre de sectarismo. Se basó en la masa de los trabajadores y progresistas, y [en] los intentos de lograr la alianza más amplia posible con todos los elementos dispuestos, listos y capaces de emprender una lucha vigorosa”.

Allí, en un párrafo, hay un plan de acción contra la erupción actual de las fuerzas neofascistas. □