

Elections sharpen anti-racist struggle

Only fightback will stop racism, police terror

By Monica Moorehead

Nov. 2 — CNN reports that a record 95 million-plus voters have already cast their ballot in the presidential race as of today. This number already represents at least 70% of the 139 million total votes cast during the 2016 election, all but guaranteeing there will be a record-setting number of votes by Nov. 3 and the highest percentage of eligible voters in more than a century.

Voters are sometimes traveling many miles and standing or sitting in long lines for hours, braving wind and rain, wearing masks and social distancing at polling places, hoping that their vote will be counted in a timely manner.

There is no doubt that an unprecedented number of those votes were cast by African-Americans, particularly in Georgia, North Carolina and other Southern states, and in urban areas, where Black people reside in large, disproportionate numbers. There are political and historical reasons why voting is taken so seriously by Black people.

The main social base for the Democratic

Party has been African Americans, particularly since the Black masses in the South legally won — through mass struggle — the right to vote under the 1965 federally mandated Voting Rights Act. But there has been an ongoing threat to the exercise of this basic democratic right.

Not since the passage of the Great Compromise of 1877 — which violently stripped formerly enslaved Black people of any kind of democratic rights achieved under the radical period of Reconstruction after the Civil War — has voter suppression been so blatantly encouraged and instituted as it is now, with the vocal blessing of the Trump administration.

Those who have felony records have either lost their right to vote forever or have to go through many legal maneuvers to win it back. With Trump’s pro-cop, anti-migrant, racist appeal to his base of armed, neofascist, rightwing militia working hand-in-hand with the police, Black people and others deemed to be supporters of the Joe Biden/Kamala Harris ticket have been physically threatened or actually

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Voter rights activists march to Alamance County Courthouse, Graham, N.C., Oct 31.



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Smith speaking during a march for police abolition in Philadelphia, June 28, 2016.

Free Ant Smith — Drop the bogus charges now!

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

Since George Floyd’s death last May sparked demonstrations against police brutality across the U.S., federal prosecutors have filed over 300 felony cases against demonstrators. While a few cases charge members of right-wing groups, most are lodged against anti-racist activists like Anthony “Ant” Smith, who was arrested by federal agents in Philadelphia on Oct. 28.

Smith and two other men were charged with “arson of property belonging to an agency [the Philadelphia Police Department] receiving federal funding, arson affecting interstate commerce, obstruction of law enforcement during civil disorder, and aiding and abetting.”

U.S. Attorney William McSwain announced the indictments at an Oct. 29 press conference. McSwain, a Trump appointee, has made a campaign of filing federal charges against individuals,

after Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner had either filed lesser charges or dismissed their cases. Krasner has accused McSwain of “grandstanding” to benefit his own political future.

The indictments against Smith, Carlos Matchette and Khalif Miller are sparse on details, other than claiming they were involved in burning a Philadelphia police vehicle during a May 30 demonstration. A Philadelphia woman, Lore-Elisabeth Blumenthal, was previously charged with two counts of felony arson on June 19.

Many in the city’s progressive movement quickly denounced both the bogus charges and their timing. They came in the midst of daily protests against the police murder of Walter Wallace Jr. and less than a week before a highly contested presidential election.

Smith’s lawyer Paul Hetznecker blasted the charges: “Utilizing the awesome power of the federal government to target activists and select them for federal prosecution — during one of the most important social

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# COVID-19 Pandemic reveals inequalities in U.S. economy

By G. Dunkel

The Trump administration has admitted it has no plan to get COVID-19 under control. White House chief of staff Mark Meadows told CNN Oct. 25 that “We are not going to control the pandemic. We are going to control the fact that we get vaccines, therapeutics and other mitigation areas.”

This a very risky strategy, given that the vaccines and therapeutics don’t yet exist. What Meadows is really saying is more workers will be risking their lives as they are forced back to work to make ends meet, and the government will do nothing to help them. The workers facing the greatest challenge are those who started with the lowest wages and those who face systemic oppression. That’s what the statistics reveal.

Workers in the U.S. have faced unemployment rates as high as 14.9% in 2020. In September it was 8.9% for all workers — and those rates omit under-employed and discouraged workers.

If you look at unemployment rates for workers of color, as reported by the Current Population Survey, the inequalities jump out: 7.2% for white workers, Latinx workers 11.2%, Black workers 13.2% — almost double the rate for white workers. For all women, the unemployment rate is higher than for men.

A large percentage of Black and Latinx women are concentrated in service and retail jobs and have been hit especially hard. Under the pressures of e-commerce and the pandemic, nearly a million retail workers have lost their jobs, which were low-paying to begin with. Even when restaurants and stores are open, customers stay

away out of fear of becoming infected. This creates additional hardship for workers dependent on tips or sales commission.

The lowest-paid workers — with little to no emergency savings — now face the highest unemployment. The number of jobs for workers who were making less than \$14 an hour has dropped by 20% since January. The number of jobs paying between \$14 and \$20 an hour has fallen by almost as much — 16%, while the number of jobs for workers making \$32 or more per hour has increased by 2%. (Current Population Survey)

**Bosses get richer, workers get sick**

While workers are suffering under the lash of unemployment and being forced to take dangerous, low-paid jobs to survive, the rich are getting richer. Google’s third quarter revenue amounted to \$46.02 billion, up from \$37.99 billion in the preceding quarter. Amazon reported revenue for its third fiscal quarter of 2020 up 37% from 2019, to \$96.1 billion.

One area of retail still operating at full capacity is grocery stores, including the Amazon-owned Whole Foods. While their owners are raking in billions in profits, grocery workers still face deadly risks every day — even though the bosses cut off their “hazard bonus” pay.

According to the Washington Post (Aug. 12), “At least 130 U.S. grocery workers have died, and more than 8,200 have tested positive for the novel coronavirus since late March.” Hazard pay or no hazard pay, given the current high unemployment rates, workers are willing to take the jobs.

The big bosses — who know how desperate workers are to put food on the table for their families and keep a roof over their heads — pile on the work, cut hours and force workers to deal with customers without masks who won’t heed social distancing. Some workers are so disgusted at their treatment that they quit mid-shift. But others are so desperate that they come to work sick.

**U.S. statistics compared with China’s**

The Commerce Department reported that the U.S. output of goods and services, Gross Domestic Product, fell off the cliff in the second quarter (April, May, June). It declined by 9.5%, about \$450 billion. This was the biggest percentage decline since 1875. This followed a first quarter decline.

Even after the U.S. GDP grew by 7% in the third quarter, aided by the March stimulus package, the U.S. economy has declined by 3.5% since the beginning of January.

Compare this to China’s growth rate of 1.9% according to the World Bank. China, which has had 4,746 deaths from 91,921 COVID-19 cases according to World Health Organization, has managed to control the pandemic.

China has exhibited an orderly, scientific and highly organized response on a national scale. China’s government still plans to end poverty before 2021 despite the pandemic. It plans to arrive at a moderately prosperous society for all by 2030 and reach a developed, socialist economy by 2050.

What is clear is that U.S. workers need a new approach to control this pandemic and its economic impact. China might provide a good example of what is needed. □

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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, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

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

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

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

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

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

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Vol. 62, No. 45 • Nov. 5, 2020  
Closing date: Nov. 4, 2020  
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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published monthly by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$36; institutions: \$50. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

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

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



## Boston

# School workers shut down bosses' 'reopening'

By Steve Gillis  
Financial Secretary, USW Local 8751

Teachers, bus drivers, monitor attendants, nurses and community forces converged on the Boston School Department (BPS) on Oct. 21, intent on occupying School Committee chambers to demand an end to in-person school due to unsafe conditions in the surging pandemic. Boston police forces blocked the doors and dispersed the assembled workers, but then Boston Mayor Marty Walsh issued a hurried statement conceding to the workers' demands.

Three weeks earlier, on Oct. 1, the city's rulers had jumped on the Trump/DeVos/Wall Street train, ordering school bus drivers and monitors to report to pick up children they deemed High In-Person Priority (HIPP). According to Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker and the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, as well as Mayor Marty Walsh, Boston School Superintendent Brenda Cassellius and the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, the delivery of disabled, English-language learners and houseless children was critical to saving the downwardly spiraling economy.

"HIPP must go" joined the lexicon of ruling class COVID-19 school lingo — along with words like "hybrid," "cohort," "positivity rate," and "CDC guidelines" in an ever-shifting rationale to rush back to the classroom.

On Oct. 14, city attorneys and public health officials argued adamantly in Superior Court that signed agreements with the Boston Teachers Union mandating in-person suspension — due to the rising 4-percent COVID-19 positivity rate threshold — didn't really mean that.

However, dozens of teachers, students, parents, drivers, monitors, mechanics and food workers were falling ill inside crumbling buildings where promised PPE, filtered ventilation and other vital resources never materialized. But the judge took only 10 minutes to throw out the union's filing for emergency injunctive relief.

Seven days later, with local hospitals again running short of ICU beds, officials could no longer fudge the math of surging pandemic casualties or withstand the heat of school workers' demands.

United Steelworkers Local 8751 President André François, testifying for over 900 school bus drivers at a City

Council hearing on Oct. 27, put it succinctly: "Transdev [bus company] and BPS's health and safety plan was a Big Lie. Whether it was budget cuts or they just don't care, they lied to the parents that there would be a monitor on every bus for safety. They lied that there would be proper disinfecting, testing, contact tracing for positive cases.

"In the spring, our union lost four members at work to the virus by Transdev and BPS's negligence. There will not be one more death under the union's watch!" (bostonschoolbusunion.org)

**Local 8751 wins full pay and benefits, no layoffs!**

The school bus drivers, a majority Haitian, Cabo Verdean, Black and immigrant workforce, were in the most precarious frontline position. They had experienced deaths and many illnesses from COVID-19 in the spring after employer Transdev and city officials initially refused drivers' demands for pandemic safety precautions. They have children, grandchildren and other relatives in need of school services themselves.

Local 8751 members caught the sharp edge of the budget cutting axe when Boston Public Schools shortened the HIPP hybrid student route times and forced drivers into bus yards logistically unprepared to implement the necessary COVID-19 protocols.

Against Transdev's union-busting instincts, Local 8751 was able to leverage drivers' essential role with the Mayor who, reluctantly, piece by piece, day-by-day before the Oct. 1 "reopening," had to recognize their critical frontline labor.

To avoid a job action and bad press, he ordered the company to provide a Full Pay and Benefits agreement for September, new wage and benefit accommodations for some elders with high-risk medical conditions, paid COVID-19 sick and quarantine leave, 50 extra standby positions, and a modicum of paid COVID-19 preparation time. When limited transportation started, no driver was laid off, and every workers' family retained some of the best union health insurance and other benefits in the industry.

Unlike teachers and other public sector school workers who work and get paid during remote learning, there is no legal requirement for employment for Boston's privatized school bus operations. In fact, Veolia/Transdev, a billion-dollar,



WW PHOTO: STEVE GILLIS

Local 8751 leaders distributing Steelworker-made, American Roots Wear's two-ply, filtered cloth masks and USW-donated face-shields to replace substandard, company-issued, disposable paper at driver route bid, Sept. 23.

transnational corporation headquartered in Paris, with a \$350-million sweetheart management fee from Boston, prepared to send the drivers to the unemployment line.

Given the unconscionable choice offered by their bosses — risking their lives on the job or risking their families' homes and survival — Local 8751's united leadership and membership said, "Hell no!" to both.

The union immediately issued Emergency COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures and, at midnight on Sept. 30, forced the employer to agree to most of the detailed protocols before work could begin at 5:00 a.m. the next day.

Local 8751 then demanded another Full Pay and Benefits Agreement should the pandemic close in-person school, and joined the teachers' legal and protest campaign, firing a barrage of class action Health and Safety grievances and Unfair Labor Practice charges. Street protests and media blasts were aimed at exposing the dangerous, on-the-ground truths and shutting down the transportation operation for safety's sake.

Even with the BPS shut down, the life-or-death shop floor struggle is still hot. Transdev and Boston Public Schools continue to force drivers to work dozens of routes for private, Catholic, and charter schools — whose Wall Street and ecclesiastic headmasters, operating in direct competition to the public schools to profit off taxpayer funds, defy pandemic science.

Transdev management has hung up on Zoom calls; flown in management from around the country to harass, intimidate, and threaten drivers with discipline in the yards; hired Pinkerton-type lawyers; dragged their feet; shorted everybody's pay; and threatened court action. But at the eleventh hour, they had to sign a third Full Pay and Benefits agreement to last through Jan. 5, 2021.

The parts of the Memorandum of Agreement that management hated the most, backed up by Local 8751's militant history that includes 11 strikes, spotlighted the essential role of the workers, without whom the capitalist scheme collapses: "Whereas, the Union played an invaluable role in all issues related to the start-up of the school bus program, including but not limited to the bid, licensing, and communications to workforce, as well as daily operations of Boston school transportation; and

"Whereas, the Union engaged in tireless efforts to promote the health and safety of the school bus program in the interest not only of the drivers but also of the students, staff, and community, including pushing for and contributing to the policies and practices associated with

COVID-19 Worksite Requirements and occurrences of COVID-positive employees in the school bus operation; and

"Whereas, the Parties are mindful of the necessity of having a ready workforce to accommodate the potential introduction of more in-school learning and the associated transportation needs;

"Now therefore ... the Parties hereby agree:

"Should bus transportation be suspended for all or part of the driving force due to the on-going pandemic, the drivers will be paid wages in the amount that they received in the last full payroll period in which they drove their newly assigned routes."

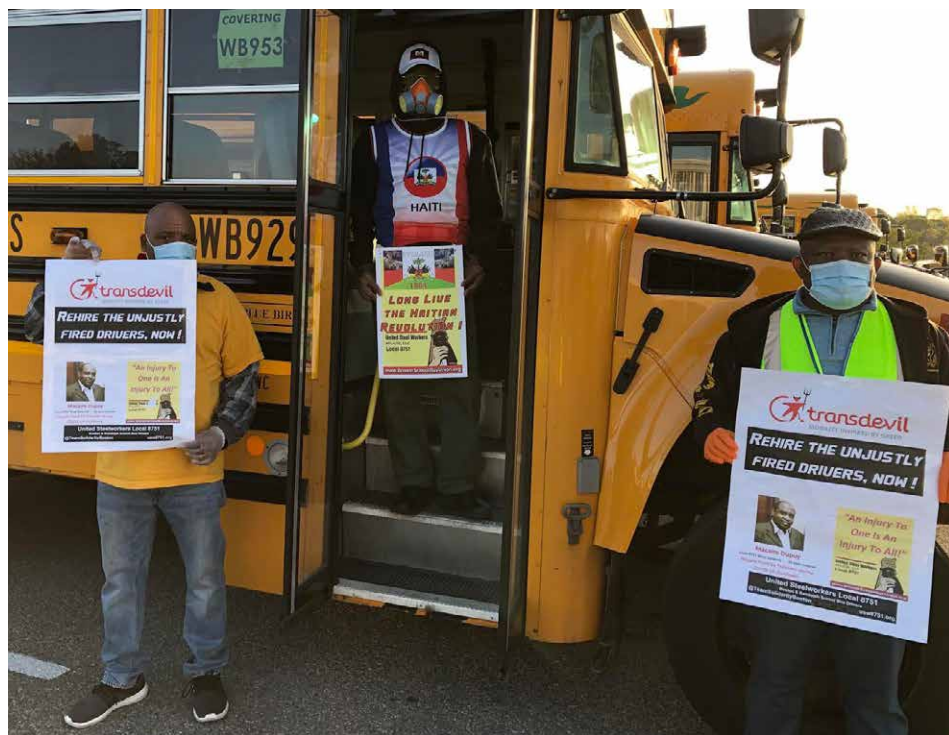
### Dress rehearsal for shutting it down!

In thousands of skirmishes and battles in schools, districts and frontline workplaces nationwide — union and as yet unorganized — workers like Boston's Steelworkers Local 8751 and the Boston Teachers Union are testing their power and preparing. They are dress-rehearsing, under unprecedented and dangerous conditions, to play a leading role in overcoming the deepening economic, pandemic, police brutality, and political crises to come.

On Oct. 28, Local 8751's Executive Board and "Team Solidarity" leadership unanimously voted to join with the Rochester Labor Council, Central Wisconsin Area Labor Federation, the Southern Workers Assembly, the Black Lives Matter movement, Indigenous Peoples Day MA, FTP Boston and all justice-loving people coast-to-coast to utilize all workers' force necessary to stop the Trump regime's planned attack on the Nov. 3 national elections. Already, the Trump government has utilized every dirty trick in the book — from blatant voter suppression tactics to federal troops in the streets against protesters to deadly COVID-19 denial while millions of workers are sickened or unemployed — to steal the election.

The opening lines of the union's resolution read, "From Port au Prince to Washington, D.C., Local 8751 demands that the voices of the working class be heard and respected loud and clear. Should the racist Trump administration and its brutal police, paramilitary and Wall Street forces attempt to deny the results of the election and the peoples' demands for COVID-19 relief, health care, housing, food, an end to police brutality, and peace, we say, 'No Work! No School! No Shopping!'

"Local 8751 endorses the Freedom Fighters Coalition's 'Day After Election Protest' on November 4th at 6:00 p.m. in Roxbury's Nubian Square. We pledge to join our siblings in the streets to proclaim, 'If we don't get it, Shut. It. Down!'" □



WW PHOTO: STEVE GILLIS

Local 8751 leaders at bus yard earlier this year on Haitian Flag Day (May 14) job action. Left to right: Frantz Cadet, Grievance Committee; Fred Floreal, Trustee; and André François, President.



# International calls for release of Palestinian prisoner on hunger strike for human rights



By Ted Kelly

The International Association of Democratic Lawyers, in a resolution released late last month, called for the immediate release of Maher al-Akhras, a Palestinian man imprisoned by Israeli occupation forces. Detained without charges under the notorious “administrative detention” policy, al-Akhras has been staging a hunger strike for almost 100 days.

Formed in 1946, two years before the creation of the so-called state of Israel, the IADL is a coalition of lawyers who consult with UNESCO with the stated mission of upholding international law and human rights. Released Oct. 25, the resolution identifies Israel as an “occupying power” that does not have the right to defend itself from Palestinians. (tinyurl.com/y5892gma) It calls for the release of all Palestinian prisoners as well as eight other demands:

- 1) the immediate release of Maher al-Akhras and other Palestinians jailed without charge or trial under Israeli administrative detention;
- 2) the release of all other Palestinian prisoners jailed by Israel. The Israeli military courts, “security” prisoner regulations and administrative detention system are attempts to impose a legal fig leaf on illegal occupation and colonialism;
- 3) an end to the practice of



PHOTO: OREN ZIV/ACTIVESTILLS  
Hunger striker Maher al-Akhras

administrative detention, imprisonment without charge or trial;

- 4) the end of the E.U-Israel Association Agreement and other free trade agreements with the Israeli state that serve to support and legitimize torture, occupation and colonization;

- 5) the end of U.S. aid to Israel, which encompasses \$3.8 billion in direct military aid to perpetuate the ongoing occupation of Palestinian and Arab land, including the occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights;

- 6) Urges the U.N. Secretary General and all U.N. committees and agencies to take all available procedures and steps to bring to an end Israeli apartheid, war crimes and crimes against humanity in occupied Palestine, including the exclusion of the Israeli state from participation in the U.N. General Assembly as well as other committees and bodies;

- 7) demands that the Israeli Ministry

of Public Security, including the Israeli police and the “Border Police” in occupied Jerusalem, be excluded from research programs and joint initiatives funded by the European Union; and

- 8) stands in solidarity with the Palestinian people and their struggle for national liberation, self-determination, equality and return.

As WW reported Oct. 26, in putting his life on the line for the Palestinian struggle against colonial oppression, al-Akhras has shown immense courage, dedication and selflessness. His case further highlights both the resolve of Palestinians to be free in their own homeland and the extreme cruelty of Zionist occupiers who continue to rob Palestinians of their land and their freedom. His sacrifice is a beacon of hope for all those fighting for a free Palestine.

Free Maher al-Akhras! Free Khalida Jarrar! Free Georges Abdullah! Free Them All! □

## ‘The State of Texas vs. Melissa’

### FILM REVIEW

By Gloria Rubac

“What I miss from the world is my children, them sitting around the kitchen table, me feeding them my food and them loving it and wanting more. I miss holding my children, smelling their hair.”

This is Melissa Lucio speaking about herself and her case. The case, that has kept her on Texas’ death row awaiting execution for the last 13 years, is portrayed in a new documentary, “The State of Texas vs. Melissa.”

This film is infuriating! Sad! Horrifying! It keeps me awake at night! But it is well-made, powerful and so enlightening, not only about who Melissa is but why and how she wound up on death row. It should be seen by anyone questioning the need for prisons, the death penalty, the cops, Texas Rangers, or prosecutors.

We learn that Lucio was a poor, undereducated, abused woman living in Harlingen, Texas, on the border with

Mexico, when her two-year-old daughter fell down the outside stairs at the family’s second story apartment. The child’s death was a terrible accident, but how the loving mother of 14 children wound up on death row was no accident.

From the notoriously racist Texas Rangers, to the aggressive and demeaning Harlingen police detectives, to the career-climbing court-appointed attorney, to the incompetent medical examiner, to the district attorney who is now in federal prison, to the trial judge — not one single person cared that Melissa was innocent or tried to find out what really happened to her child.

Filmmaker Sabrina Van Tassel is a French-American director and journalist living in France. As an investigative reporter for French TV, she has directed over 40 documentary films since 2004. Speaking on a virtual panel at Texas A & M Law School in October, Van Tassel explained: “I was the first person to

interview Melissa, ever. Her daughter died in 2007. No one ever spoke to her — not newspapers, not TV reporters, not anyone.

Before her trial, Lucio was offered a plea deal of 30 years. She refused the deal because, she told them, she was innocent.

Van Tassel points out, “Once you turn down a plea deal, your chance of losing at trial is 90 percent. The poor, the



Melissa Lucio

Black and Brown people don’t have a lot of options and chances of ending up on death row are likely.”

The film, shown at the Tribeca Film Festival this year and released Oct. 20, is now available to rent or buy.

It was a great victory when attorney Richard Ellis got Lucio’s conviction reversed in July 2019, but Texas immediately appealed. No oral hearing has been held by the 5th Circuit Federal Court of Appeals due to the pandemic. Attorneys for both sides answered submitted questions and are waiting on the ruling.

Write to Melissa Lucio, #999537, Mountain View Unit, 2305 Ransom Rd., Gatesville, TX 76528. For more information visit the Free Melissa Lucio Facebook page.

The horrors of the criminal injustice system are so clearly documented in this film that we should all be shouting from our roof tops: “Abolish the death penalty! Free Melissa Lucio!” □

# Support Pennsylvania prisoners on hunger strike for human rights

By Joe Piette

Incarcerated people in many U.S. states have been held in small prison cells for up to 23 hours a day since March 2020, ostensibly because of the threat of COVID-19. Imprisoned workers have filed many grievances over the increasingly unbearable conditions, which are nothing less than torture with no end in sight. Dissatisfied with prison officials’ responses, four prisoners at State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Albion in Pennsylvania began a hunger strike around Oct. 21.

Anthony Gunn, NZ-0280; Mario Torres, NM-9747; Sean Carter, MW-8923; and Demetrius Grant, FY6063, have all refused to eat until conditions are improved. (Numbers are provided as officials will request them when called.)

Grant and other incarcerated people in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PA DOC) have complained for months about not being allowed out of their cells except for one hour a day. In that 60 minutes, they must decide whether to make phone calls to loved ones, take a shower, exercise in the yard or do other tasks.

Visiting the library to work on their legal cases or pursuing other occupational or educational classes have been eliminated, curtailed or made sporadic. The cafeteria, gym, visiting room and other meeting areas are all shut

down. Meals are being delivered to their blocks or cells, in smaller portions and often cold. The severe restrictions have exacerbated already tense conditions.

Grant said, “These restrictions since March are all about shutting down prisoners’ rights. They are a pretext for permanent lockdown and restricted movement, even after the COVID pandemic is ended.”

### Denied care and treatment for disabilities

Grant’s situation is made worse because he had knee surgery weeks ago. His post-surgical care and required physical therapy have been sporadic and inadequate, as prison medical staffing has been decimated by COVID exposures. Doctors have said Grant should have a wheelchair, but he has not been given one.

In addition, prison officials are not providing him care or treatment for a back problem and seizure disorders, although the PA DOC Central Office, Bureau of Health Care Services, determined in 2014 that these two medical issues are disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

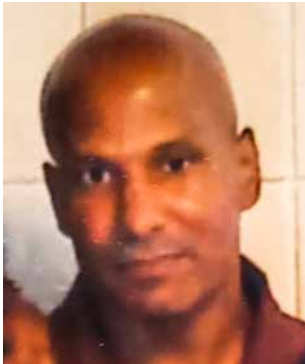
Grant has lost 21 pounds since August. In a previous hunger strike Grant had maintained for several months

starting in April 2019, prison officials force-fed him and damaged his esophagus. They applied force using a court order from a previous prison, which violated PA DOC reg.13.1.1, Section 8.A.7(f). Grant doesn’t want that to happen again and is adamant about his right to testify at a new court hearing before officials use force.

The DOC unlawfully extended his sentence in 2010 by ten years. By law, only through court procedures can a judge extend a prisoner’s sentence. The PA DOC does not have that power. “My sentence was 22 1/2 to 45 years; however, the PA DOC recalculated it to 32 1/2 to 65 years. I have 28 years in and should have been home years ago.”

Grant and the other prisoners are asking concerned family, friends and activists to contact: John Wetzel, (717) 728-4109, and Superintendent Michael Clark (Albion), (814) 756-5778.

The prisoners demand that all incarcerated people be given their human rights to an end to the severe 23-hour lockdowns, adequate nutrition, and proper mental health and medical care/treatment. Grant is also demanding to have his sentence recalculated to reflect the sentence imposed by the trial court. □



Demetrius Grant



Oklahoma

Indigenous nations win Supreme Court ruling

By Gloria Rubac

A surprisingly progressive Supreme Court decision found that over one-third of Oklahoma still falls into “Indian Country” under federal law for the Mvskoke Creek Tribe and other Oklahoma tribes.

The court ruled July 9 in *McGirt v. Oklahoma* that under treaties dating back two centuries, much of eastern Oklahoma is Indian Country. That means tribal law and federal law apply there in criminal cases involving Native citizens, not Oklahoma state law. Treaties are recognized in the U.S. Constitution as “the law of the land.”

Until the Supreme Court ruling, most felonies in eastern Oklahoma, including cases involving tribal citizens, had been prosecuted in state courts by district attorneys. The court’s decision hinged on the question of whether the Mvskoke/Creek reservation continued to exist after Oklahoma became a state in 1907.

This ruling applies to the five nations in eastern Oklahoma — the Mvskoke or Creek, the Cherokee, the Choctaw, the Chickasaw and the Seminole nations. These Five Tribes were forced from their ancestral homelands in the southeast on the Trail of Tears in the 1830s by the U.S. government. Today, half a million tribal citizens live in dozens of Oklahoma counties covering more land than the state of South Carolina.

Two hundred years ago, all of Oklahoma, except the panhandle, was Indian Territory. This territory included the existing homelands of several Indigenous nations, including the Apache, Arapaho, Comanche, Kiowa, Osage and Wichita.

The New York Times wrote July 9: “The 5-to-4 decision, potentially one of the most consequential legal victories for Native Americans in decades, could have far-reaching implications for the people who live across what the court affirmed was Indian Country. The lands include much of Tulsa, Oklahoma’s second-biggest city.”

Justice Neil M. Gorsuch, who had previously sided with Native tribes in other cases, joined the court’s more liberal justices in this ruling. He wrote in the majority’s opinion that “Congress had granted the Creek a reservation, and that the United

States needed to abide by its promises. “Today we are asked whether the land these treaties promised remains an Indian reservation for purposes of federal criminal law,” Gorsuch wrote. “Because Congress has not said otherwise, we hold the government to its word.”

Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. warned in a dissenting opinion that the court’s decision would wreak havoc and confusion on Oklahoma’s criminal justice system. And in alarmist language, Sen. Ted Cruz of neighboring Texas tweeted that the Supreme Court “just gave away half of Oklahoma, literally. Manhattan is next.”

Wreaking havoc and genocide in Indigenous nations has resulted in racist decisions from education to housing to use of Indian land — this is what the U.S. government and individual states have done to Native peoples since the first colonies were settled by England.

Madonna Thunder Hawk, an organizer with the Lakota People’s Law Project, said the court’s decision and a recent federal ruling that ordered the shutdown of the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota had been cause for celebration. Just not too much. “It’s a war for us,” she said. “There are some victories, but the war continues.” (New York Times, July 6)

‘We’re still here’

The Commission for the Protection of Cherokee Nation Sovereignty issued a press release with several points of concern following *McGirt*. One is that the Principal Chief engage with members of Congress, who may be contemplating legislation, and oppose any legislation that would disestablish tribal reservations.

The Cherokee Nation, with more than 380,000 citizens, is the federally recognized

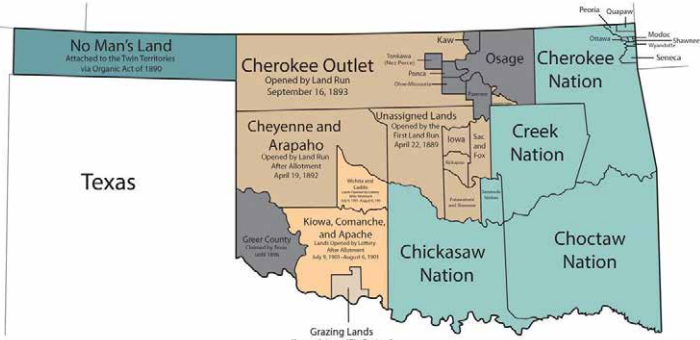
government of the Cherokee people. Tahlequah, Oklahoma, is the capital of the Cherokee Nation. With 11,000 employees and a variety of tribal enterprises ranging from aerospace and defense contracts to entertainment venues, the Cherokee Nation is one of the largest employers



Indigenous delegates from 34 tribes in front of the Creek Council House, Indian Territory in 1880.

in northeastern Oklahoma, according to Indian Country Today.

Mary Kathryn Nagle (Cherokee) spoke on a ICT radio broadcast to explain why the current effort to disestablish tribal nations is going to fail. As a Cherokee citizen and an attorney, Nagle and Sarah Deer (Mvskoke) filed an amicus brief on behalf of the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center, the American Civil Liberties Union and other organizations to analyze the gendered implications of the decision. She spoke on air to challenge concerns that a conservative think tank, the Oklahoma Council on Public Affairs, has brought to the entire



Indian Territory tribal boundaries in 1889. Oklahoma is and always has been Native land!

Oklahoma congressional delegation. ([tinyurl.com/y5oofhvk](https://tinyurl.com/y5oofhvk))

“You can’t sign a treaty with a tribal nation, have it signed by the president, ratified by the U.S. Senate saying this is your reservation, and then take it away because in 2020 the state of Oklahoma thinks it’s an inconvenient reality for them,” Nagle said.

“Non-Native private profiteering interests have been trying to remove, disestablish, exterminate tribal nations. Corporate interests have been trying to remove us since the United States came into existence. Now they’ve all failed. We’re still here. And this effort is going to fail as well. ... Oil and gas see the Supreme Court’s decision in *McGirt* as a huge threat. They want to characterize it as a public safety threat, when actually it is not. And so you’ll notice if you read that letter, they say, well, there are all these problems created by the Supreme Court’s decision in *McGirt*. The Supreme Court’s decision in *McGirt* doesn’t create a single problem.

“In fact, a giant problem made clear is that Oklahoma was unlawfully exercising jurisdiction it never had, for over a hundred years ... That Oklahoma didn’t have that authority, and yet they were exercising it. A lot of folks like these oil and gas folks have been referring to these public safety jurisdictional gaps. That’s also a red herring. There are no jurisdictional gaps.

“The simple fact of the matter is Oklahoma maintains the majority of its jurisdiction. It still has jurisdiction over crimes committed by non-Indians. The only crimes that it does not have jurisdiction over are crimes committed by Indians, against Indians, on tribal lands, on the reservation.”

In a year when racist names and logos of sports teams have been changed, when the Supreme Court ruled against the Dakota Access Pipeline, when racist statues have been taken down or defaced, the *McGirt* ruling in July is one more step of progress for peoples who have been fighting the colonial invaders since Columbus was discovered in 1492. □

Prison, COVID, and disabilities

By Judy Greenspan

From a talk given at the Oct. 22 Workers World Webinar on “Voter Suppression & COVID & their Impact on Disabled People.”

Betsey [Piette] and I are both members of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party. Every week, we publish 1-2 pages of articles about the struggles of incarcerated workers — our siblings who are in prisons, jails and detention centers. Our party is fully committed to fight for the total abolition of this inhumane and criminal injustice system.

In many states, people who have felony convictions are not permitted to vote. In fact, many former prisoners first won and then lost their right to vote due to a recent court decision in Florida. And a very large percentage of incarcerated people are disabled.

Voter suppression for people who have done time in prison is nothing new. Prisons do little or nothing to make incarceration accessible to people with disabilities, and we know that there is little or no real medical care available to people inside.

COVID has impacted our incarcerated populations significantly, because social distancing and adequate PPE are not available to people inside. Prisoners are routinely and punitively transferred between prisons. A recent outbreak of COVID-19 at San Quentin

Prison was caused by such a transfer of incarcerated people. The prison system did little or nothing to control the virus and guarantee the safety of the people behind the walls. In fact, within weeks this past summer, over 2,200 prisoners became infected with COVID, and 28 died.

The California Appellate Court just ruled that the California Department of Corrections has to release or move 50% of the 3,000 incarcerated people from the prison. Activists on both sides of the walls and families of the incarcerated are demanding immediate release rather than another unnecessary and dangerous transfer.

The Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party has a set of justice demands for prisoners that often runs on its Tear Down the Walls page. This issue impacts all people held in prisons, but particularly disabled, elderly and immunocompromised people. We demand the immediate release of this large group of the most vulnerable of our incarcerated siblings, regardless of their conviction.

The violence of the prison system far outweighs the so-called crimes that people inside are doing time for. With COVID and negligent medical care, all prison time is now a death sentence. It’s time to free them all! Abolish the prisons, and use the money to fund schools, housing, jobs, health care and other services to benefit people not big businesses. □

Hands off Jalil Muntaqim!

Finally, after 49 years in prison, Black revolutionary Jalil Muntaqim was released on parole Oct. 7. On Oct 18 he turned 69.

However, on Oct. 30 a new warrant was issued for his arrest. His crime? Attempting to register to vote. Under New York State law, parolees cannot vote until they are discharged from parole. The Rochester, N.Y. Republican Party is clamoring to send Muntaqim back to prison in the midst of a pandemic



Jalil Muntaqim and his mother, Billie Bottoms Brown, at their first visit outside of a prison since August 28, 1971.

when he has already had COVID.

The Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party says: Hands off Jalil Muntaqim! Free them all for public health! Tear down the walls!

What can you do? Sign the petition to support Jalil Muntaqim at [www.tinyurl.com/HandsOffJalil](https://www.tinyurl.com/HandsOffJalil).



# Caught on video

## ‘Thin Blue Line’ terrorizes Black mother and child

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

Not held accountable for brutalizing Black Philadelphia residents earlier this year during protests over the murder of George Floyd, police in Philadelphia appear to be more emboldened, and essentially out of control.

Less than 10 hours after two police officers were caught on video shooting and killing a 27-year-old Black man, Walter Wallace, Jr., who was in need of mental health intervention, 15 officers surrounded an SUV driven by Rickia Young and proceeded to brutalize and terrorize Young, her nephew and her two-year-old son.

Wallace had been killed in front of his mother and neighbors who were pleading with police not to shoot, late in the afternoon of Oct. 26. Young’s car was surrounded by cops wielding batons they used to smash the car’s windows shortly before 2 a.m. on Oct. 27. Both incidents took place within a mile of each other in West Philadelphia’s 18th police district.

A viral video of the police attack on Young, a Black 28-year-old home health aide, surfaced the next day. (tinyurl.com/yvly22e) Her SUV is seen attempting to make a three-point-turn to leave the vicinity of 52nd and Chestnut streets, near a police confrontation with demonstrators protesting Wallace’s murder. After first signaling the driver to make the turn, around 15 officers then surround the vehicle. Several use their batons to smash the car’s windows.

Police then drag Young and her 16-year-old nephew from the car and proceed to beat them on the street. An officer is seen reaching in to remove a toddler from the car’s back seat.

As abhorrent as this police conduct captured by the video is, what happened after the incident is even more disturbing.

### FOP uses child for pro-police propaganda

A social media post from the National Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) appeared on Facebook and Twitter on the morning of Oct. 28 showing a young, white, female officer holding a Black child (Young’s) with the false caption: “This child was lost during the violent riots in Philadelphia, wandering around barefoot in an area that was experiencing complete lawlessness. The only thing this Philadelphia police officer cared about in that moment was protecting this child.”

The FOP went on to say: “We are not your enemy. We are the Thin Blue Line. And WE ARE the only thing standing between Order and Anarchy.” The post has since been deleted.

Philadelphia civil rights attorneys Kevin Mincey and Riley H. Ross III, who are representing Young, later held a press conference where they denounced this propaganda and provided details about the police attack.

Cops: ‘He’s gonna go to a better place’  
According to the lawyers, Young drove from her home near Temple University in North Philadelphia to pick up her nephew in West Philadelphia after seeing news coverage of the police riot against protesters. She took her son along to get him to sleep in the car. When she unknowingly turned onto a street where police were confronting demonstrators, she complied with their orders to turn around just before police surrounded her vehicle.

After badly beating Young, police separated her from her son and held her for several hours before releasing her without



Picture of Rickia Young taken by her attorneys shows injuries sustained from police beating on Oct. 27.

charges. Attorney Mincey told the media that when Young asked where police were taking her child, they refused to say, telling her, “He’s gonna go to a better place, we’re gonna report it to the Department of Human Services.” (Philly.com, Oct. 30)

While handcuffed, Young was given medical treatment at Jefferson University Hospital with police standing by. She had a bloody nose, a swollen trachea, blood in her urine, and swelling and pain on her left side. (Philly.com, Oct. 30)

During transport in a police van Young was able to use another woman’s cell-phone to ask her mother to pick up her son. According to Mincey, police directed the toddler’s grandmother to a Center City location four miles from the arrest site, where she found the toddler sitting in his car seat in a police cruiser with two officers. “The child had a lump on his head and glass from the SUV’s broken window was still in his car seat,” Mincey said.

Police have not told Young where her car is. Mincey said that Young’s purse,

wallet, and her son’s hearing aid were left in the car. The attorneys intend to file a civil rights case against the police department on behalf of Young and her son.

Young stands a good chance of winning her lawsuit. Should the Wallace family file, they too are likely to win. On average Philadelphia pays out \$10 million a year for lawsuits stemming from police brutality. But in Philadelphia it is the taxpayers who pay for civil suits stemming from police abuse — police officers are protected from having to take direct responsibility.

### FOP’s open reign to terrorize

Frank Rizzo, the notoriously racist and brutal former police commissioner (1968-71) and mayor (1972-80), gave the FOP free rein to unleash terror against the city’s Black and Brown communities, with little fear of reprisal. Not one mayor since Rizzo has dared to challenge this mob in blue.

In response to broad criticism of Philadelphia police actions against demonstrators early last summer, on Oct. 29 the City Council passed a ban on police use of “less lethal” munitions — tear gas, pepper spray and rubber bullets — against demonstrations and other activity protected by the First Amendment. Yet the resolution makes no mention of guns and batons — liberally used by cops in Philadelphia this week.

With the city’s political establishment reluctant to take on the “Thin Blue Line,” it is unlikely they will make any fundamental changes. This is why the movement is demanding: “Abolish the police!” □

## Free Ant Smith — drop the bogus charges now!

Continued from page 1

justice movements in our history — sends a dangerous message.” (Philly.com, Oct. 29)

### ‘Very suspicious of the timing’

Human Rights Coalition PA hosted a press conference on Oct. 30 with over 150 people attending. Several speakers there echoed these remarks. They noted that the authorities may have targeted Smith shortly after two recent articles in the Philly Magazine. And the Philadelphia Inquirer has applauded his work in the local anti-police brutality movement.

Smith is a leader with Philly Racial, Economic and Legal (REAL) Justice and is involved with the recently formed Black Radical Philly Collective. He was instrumental in a successful two-year campaign to take down the statue of Frank Rizzo, Philly’s notoriously racist former mayor and police chief.

Robert Saleem Holbrook, Executive Director of the Abolitionist Law Center, said, “We represent Anthony Smith [as the lead plaintiff] on a lawsuit stemming from the protests on 52nd St. during the summer. We find these charges not only unfounded, but we are very suspicious of the timing. No police officers, and who assaulted an entire community in West Philadelphia during the summer, were charged or held accountable for that police riot when Philadelphians came out in the street in support of George Floyd. We find it disturbing that police officers who killed Walter Wallace Jr. are not held accountable, but Anthony is being held right now at a Lehigh County Jail in Allentown, Pa.



Jasmine Peake-Miles, Smith’s mother Tashia Ervin and his cousin Devon Gooden speak at Oct. 30 press conference in Philadelphia.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

“Those of us who know Ant know that these charges are unfounded. Anthony is a member of the community, who shows up for the community whenever the community is in need. He has tremendous family support, and he has tremendous community support.”

Holbrook continued, “These charges are political posturing related to a contested election coming up next week. We expect these charges to be dismissed. We are demanding that Ant be released immediately. We look forward to Ant being completely vindicated and these charges dismissed. He is certainly not guilty.”

Deandra Price with Philly REAL Justice and Black Alliance for Peace said, “Our comrade Ant Smith was kidnapped by federal agents on Wednesday morning. We are here to talk about him as a person and not the character they try to paint him as, but the character we know he is.”

Minister of Confrontation for the MOVE organization Pam Africa asked those in the crowd to pledge to get more people out to join the fight for freedom for Ant. “Ant has always been on the front lines fighting for all of us. This government says you are innocent until proven guilty — so why is Ant in jail. Why are the cops who we saw kill Walter Wallace Jr. not in jail?”

Smith’s mother Tashia Ervin and his cousin Devon Gooden spoke on Ant’s character. Gooden stated, “He is nonviolent — not the type who sets cars on fire. He speaks with his words, with his pen, and he makes his points known without violence. He is a Frederick Douglass. He is a Martin Luther King. He is the type of person who stands up for people who are unable to stand up for themselves.”

Gabriel Bryant with the Black Radical Philly Collective said, “Ant Smith will be coming home. Let’s try a few facts. Facts

is: he is innocent. Facts is: he is one of this generation’s greatest orators in the history of the city of Philadelphia. He is one of the most passionate human beings I’ve ever met in my short time on the planet.”

Bryant discussed Smith’s close relationship with his students in the social studies class he teaches at Youth Build. “When I’ve visited the school on many occasions, I could see the way he would resonate and connect with those students and his fellow staff and faculty. The way everyone loved him — that showed a sense of strength. Then I see him giving free food to the communities every Friday. We will bring him home.”

Jasmine Peake-Miles, who has known Smith since they were both freshmen college students, said, “His love for his community, his family and friends is insurmountable. If he’s not home doing lesson plans, he’s out helping the community. ... He fought for you. We must fight for him!”

Deandra Price concluded by reading from the Philly REAL Justice press release: “Ant Smith is a beloved social studies teacher at a north Philly charter school. He showed a passion for making sure that everyone around him is protected at all times. He was a 2018 recipient of [the] Mayors Award for Distinguished Service. There is a laundry list of accolades that Anthony has.”

She concluded, “They really messed with the wrong one. They really did. I don’t think they realized who they were messing with, when they decided he was the one they would kidnap. Ant will be free!”

A bail hearing for Smith is scheduled for Nov. 5. □



## Outcry continues

# 'Justice for Walter Wallace Jr!'

By Betsey Piette

Outrage over the police killing of Walter Wallace Jr., 27, a Black husband, father and son, erupted throughout his West Philadelphia neighborhood on Oct. 26. As news of the incident spread, protests flooded the community's streets that night and the next day.

The police shot Wallace multiple times on the block where he lived and in front of his mother and neighbors, who frantically urged police not to fire.

At a press conference outside the family's home Oct. 27, Walter's mother, Kathy Brant described the events leading up to the shooting. The family had called 911 earlier in the day to request medical intervention, because her son was experiencing a mental health crisis. Police responded twice prior to the fatal shooting.

"One of the times, they stood outside and laughed at us. I took my son and walked away. The last time we called, we specifically asked for an ambulance, not police. No ambulance came, but the police who killed my son arrived instead."

Other neighbors stated that Wallace was on the porch with his mother when police returned the final time. As he stepped off the porch, police immediately drew their guns. His mother ran after him, trying to shield him, telling police he was her son. But as soon as Wallace entered the street and was still at least ten feet away, police fired over 13 bullets. It is not clear how many hit Wallace, who was dead upon arrival at a nearby hospital. There are conflicting reports on whether or not Wallace had a knife.

Workers World spoke with renowned Black activist leader Pam Africa, a

neighbor of the Wallace family. "Police were out earlier in the afternoon when his mother reported a domestic incident. They were at the house but left. Then police returned a few hours later. They knew he had mental health issues. Why didn't they send counselors?" Africa, chairperson of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, is a lifelong fighter against police repression with the MOVE organization based in Philadelphia.

### Being disabled and Black are not crimes

Wallace's father, Walter Wallace Sr., told reporters that his son "struggled with mental health issues and was on medication. Why did they have to gun him down?" At the press conference, Wallace described the agonizing impact of his son's violent murder: "When you see an execution, you can't sleep at night. I keep having flashbacks to the multiple shots."

Wallace Sr. also asked for respect for the family. "I'm not going to deny my son's mental health situation — but we all have PTSD, especially with COVID."

Wallace was married with eight children. His spouse Dominique Wallace was scheduled to have induced labor for their ninth child on Oct. 28. One of his older sons addressed the media saying, "My father always played with us.

Then a white racist cop shot my daddy, and I'm still mad."

Shaka Johnson, a lawyer for the family, cautioned against using Wallace's mental health issues disparagingly. "My client was a mental health patient and was under a doctor's care. Police were called out earlier in the day, so they knew this. On the last call, the family specified that they wanted an ambulance for medical

intervention and not the police. The ambulance never made it, but police did.

"The issue is how officers at the police academy are given badges and taught how to be an assassin. Essentially, they have no other tool for intervention — only a gun. The police department should have a problem with that."

Johnson contrasted how police reacted to Wallace with how police in Charleston, S.C., treated white supremacist Dylann Roof after he murdered nine Black people in church. The cops bought him a hamburger and gave him a vest for protection.

### Three nights of demonstrations

Demonstrators gathered at Malcolm X Park in West Philadelphia on Oct. 26 and marched to the 18th Police District, a few blocks away. The crowd eventually grew to several hundred and confronted the police into the early hours of the morning. One police car was overturned and burned. One officer was struck by a pickup truck, and several others were reportedly struck by bricks and other projectiles.

Around 90 arrests were made, with some protesters taken to the 1st Police District, several miles away in South Philadelphia. Videos from the conflict show residents throughout the predominantly Black neighborhood along 52nd St. repeatedly questioning police about their excessive use of force.

Demonstrations throughout West Philadelphia on Oct. 27 brought out around 1,000 protesters, who marched through the neighborhood for a second night. Speakers at an opening rally at Malcolm X Park denounced the state-sanctioned violence against Black and Brown people and called for the community to keep up the fight.

Some of the participants marched toward the police precinct but were



Walter Wallace Jr. on porch of family's West Philadelphia home.

stopped by a line of around 50 cops. At one point a truck with a jumbotron on the back, displaying a slideshow of pictures of Wallace, drove up to the police line.

As the protest returned to the 52nd Street business corridor, scores of police started running toward the demonstrators, causing a stampede. Police chased people with batons and used their bikes as weapons, dividing the group and forcing them into more isolated situations. Several people were injured and arrested. At the time of this writing, it is still unknown where some arrestees are being held. There were 212 people arrested over three nights of protest as of Oct. 28.

At the end of May, the neighborhood where the current protests are taking place had been heavily tear-gassed and pepper sprayed during demonstrations against the murder of George Floyd. While community outrage over that event resulted in promises from police and city officials to hold police accountable, it is now obvious that nothing has changed.

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf ordered the state's National Guard troops to Philadelphia Oct. 27, and a 9:00 p.m. curfew went into effect on Oct. 28.

Black activist Kamau Mshale, who lives in the area, spoke at the Oct. 27 rally and asked, "Why haven't they dropped the number of police and increased the number of social workers and mental health professionals? They don't want anything to be different. They just want people to shut up." □

## Philadelphia

# 'As nurses, we demand justice!'

By Workers World Philadelphia bureau

Workers World Party Philadelphia joined National Nurses United and the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals (PASNAP) in holding a vigil on Oct. 29 for health care workers who have died as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Current and retired nurses spoke about the dangers that the for-profit health care system poses to workers, and read the names of over 200 nurses and health care workers who have died from the coronavirus.

Marie Kelly, a new member of Workers World Party's Philadelphia branch, has been a pediatric and home health nurse for decades. During the vigil, she tied the struggle

of health care workers to the fight against white supremacy and police violence:

"Six percent of adults between March and May who were hospitalized for COVID were health care workers. A third of those were nurses or nursing assistants. 27% spent time in ICU and 4% of them died during their hospitalization.



Marie Kelly speaks at health care worker vigil, Oct. 29. WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

A point that National Nurses United stresses is the racial disparity of people who have been felled by the pandemic.

"This pandemic hits hardest on people of color. We know this as nurses, because we know the history of health care throughout the centuries. This is nothing new to us. It just speaks to the other injustices we find in this systemically racist system.

"I would be remiss if standing here in Philadelphia this week I did not call out the forceful oppression in response to the protests against the murder of Walter Wallace Jr. by the police. This mentally ill man was gunned down in his neighborhood in front of his mother by the police of this city. And the people in power respond by putting this city under siege by local and state police, and the National Guard. We are under an armed camp.

"As a nurse, I have seen — as all nurses have seen as caregivers and as healers — we have seen, in the delivery rooms, the first time a son is held by his mother. At the bedside, we have seen that mother as an old woman, dying, holding her son's hand for the last time. We grieve for Walter Wallace Jr. as health care workers. As nurses.

"We demand justice for Walter Wallace Jr. We demand justice for his family that they might get some peace from this catastrophe that has happened to their family.

"We as nurses and as union members also believe in free speech and the right to assemble. As nurses we should speak out against the abduction by federal forces of Anthony Smith, a well-known activist with REAL Justice in this city. He has been abducted and detained on false charges that are politically motivated to silence him. And we will speak for him. And we will demand his release.

"Justice for Walter Wallace Jr.! Free Ant Smith!" □



# Tamir Rice denied justice—again

By Martha Grevatt  
Cleveland

On June 25, Tamir Elijah Rice should have turned 18. He would have been old enough to vote for the first time.

But Nov. 22 will be the sixth anniversary of Tamir’s murder by Cleveland police. On that day, the 12-year-old was playing with a pellet gun outside Cudell recreation center. Two city police officers pulled up on Tamir, and within seconds Timothy Loehmann shot him dead. Tamir’s older sister was handcuffed and forced to the ground, after she questioned the cops’ actions.

Neither Loehmann nor his accomplice, officer Frank Garmback, were ever charged for this heinous crime. Loehmann was fired in 2017—not for killing Tamir, but for withholding information on his job application that he had previously been fired in a nearby suburb. The Cleveland Police Patrolmen’s Association, wrongly characterized as a “union,” has argued for Loehmann’s reinstatement; Garmback remains on the force.

In 2015, a Cuyahoga County grand jury, acting at the behest of County Prosecutor Timothy McGinty, declined to bring charges against the officers. Until last week the Rice family had some hope that the federal Department of Justice might conduct a grand jury investigation. But the Oct. 29 New York Times reported that, according to a whistleblower at the Justice Department, the investigation



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Samaria Rice, mother of Tamir, speaks to news media at “We Vote for Tamir” event outside Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, Cleveland, Nov. 1.

requested in 2017 was quietly quashed in August 2019.

Over a year later, the Department has neither officially closed the case, nor has it notified Rice’s family of its decision not to convene a grand jury. The statute of limitations for filing serious charges will expire this year. The capitalist state has once again displayed its blatant contempt, especially under the Trump administration, for victims of

racist police brutality.

“The federal investigation was her [Tamir’s mother Samaria Rice] last hope for justice,” said family attorney Subodh Chandra. “The stench of political interference hovers over this case.” (Washington Post, Oct. 30)

## Activism continues

On Nov. 1, a group gathered outside the Cuyahoga County Board of

Elections—where long lines of early voters had already formed before voting started—to say “We Vote for Tamir.” Black Lives Matter Cleveland, the Tamir Rice Foundation, the Ohio Student Association and Cleveland Votes jointly sponsored the action. A huge banner showed an artist’s rendition of Tamir Rice graduating from high school, which was also displayed on stickers which voters wore into the polls.

Joe Biden was vice president on the day Tamir was murdered. Cleveland had and still has a Democratic mayor; the Democratic Party dominates City Council and Cuyahoga County Council. Democrats have done little to alleviate systemic racism in education, employment or the “criminal justice” system.

Nevertheless, resistance to the Republican Party’s plans for voter suppression is part of the struggle against institutional white supremacy. This same white supremacy enabled the killing of Tamir Rice, Malissa Russell, Timothy Williams, Tanisha Anderson and numerous others in Cleveland alone.

“Whoever wins the elections, we need to make him accountable,” Samaria Rice said in a news release. “Accountability looks like policy change, which includes a ceasefire on Black and brown people. We are being hunted out here; there’s a war being committed against Black and brown people.” (cleveland.com, Oct. 30) □

# Remember those who cops shot during mental health crisis

By Princess Harmony

I’m angry. I’m a mentally ill person tired of seeing people like us die. I’m angry that no matter what we do, police intervene where they are not wanted and not trained and don’t give a damn about us. So many people in the middle of a mental health break have been murdered by police that I can’t list them all. But I hope that people will learn about the thousands I couldn’t write about. And say their names.

**Eleanor Bumpurs**, in 1984, was scheduled for eviction from her public housing unit, where she refused rent payments to protest maintenance problems. The psychiatrist sent by New York City Housing Authority to speak to her judged her psychotic, unable to care for herself and needing hospitalization.

That Oct. 29, faced with eviction and hospitalization, Bumpurs threatened to throw boiling lye at whoever approached. When called for assistance, the New York Police Department Emergency Service Unit, purportedly trained to control emotionally and mentally disturbed individuals, barged into her apartment. They found Bumpurs in her living room holding a 10-inch knife. Instead of seeking to subdue her without violence, officer Stephen Sullivan fired two shots from his 12-gauge shotgun, killing her.

Police killing is part of a pattern of failure that police departments have with the mentally ill, particularly if they are Black and Brown. The numbers themselves should shock: The mentally ill are 16 times more likely to be killed by police than people without mental illness. (Treatment Advocacy Center, December 2015)

Aug. 1, 2016. In Randallstown, Md., police came to **Korryn Gaines’** home

to serve a warrant for a traffic violation. According to the Washington Post, Gaines suffered from lead poisoning and had another unrelated mental illness. Believing that police were there to kidnap her and her son, she pulled out a gun.

More police gathered throughout the day. Paranoid that police were the devil, Gaines barricaded further. Police Officer Royce Ruby Jr., believing she was firing her shotgun toward the police, fired on her and killed her.

If the descriptions of that day are accurate, Gaines might be diagnosed as paranoid and potentially experiencing a psychotic disorder at the time. One key tool for de-escalating a crisis is to avoid challenging psychotic thinking. But police didn’t do that. They just fired wildly, hitting Gaines’s son in the process.

There was even a police unit in Randallstown dedicated to serving the needs of the mentally ill, but were they called in? No. Gaines was failed by a system built to harm more than help.

## Killing people in crisis

A man with bipolar disorder, **Earl “Shaleek” Pinckney** was shot by police in August 2016 in Harrisburg, Pa. Police claimed Pinckney was holding a knife, threatening his mother. Shaleek’s mother, Kim Thomas, emphatically denied that this was the case. (Pennlive.com, Aug. 8, 2016)

Pinckney’s death at the hands of police highlights a complete failure to reach out to the mentally ill as people in crisis. Instead of taking the time to de-escalate the potential violence—potential because his mother only categorized it as a little fight—they amped up the violence and killed him. They lied to his mother, claiming he was only tased, but the truth was that he was shot through the heart. Pinckney left

behind a two-week-old child.

On Oct. 26, people called emergency services in Philadelphia to come for **Walter Wallace Jr.**, a mentally ill man and father experiencing a mental health crisis. According to his mother, police first laughed at him and her. The next time his mother called, she specifically asked for an ambulance. It didn’t come.

When Wallace decided to step off his porch, the police drew their guns, his mother begging them not to shoot him. They fired 13 bullets at him, killing him.

Instead of sending trained people who deal with mentally ill people, Philadelphia’s emergency systems sent cops who have a history of mistreating Black people. They knew he was mentally ill, and they killed him anyway.

**Gary Page** was a white man who had a history of schizophrenia and depression, and he treated these symptoms on his own with alcohol. But something in March 2015 broke him. He drank and became drunk and decided to slit his wrists; he grabbed a starter pistol and literally begged the cops to shoot him.

Instead of responding to this very obvious mental illness incident with care and competent treatment, the police obliged him and shot him in the head and torso.

## Say their names!

These are only a few of the people with mental health issues whom police have killed.

Having and using trained mental health counselors, who have experience working with oppressed people on such calls, is a good start to avoiding these tragedies. Having anyone with mental-illness experience, operating as an emergency unit would be a good start. Ambulance crews with training in mental illness would be a good start. That is not happening.

Police are called the guardians of society. But they really serve the ruling class and protect this class’s property interests. They are not oriented toward defusing a

mental health crisis. We cannot pretend as though police are the solution.

We must continue to honor the memory of Eleanor Bumpurs, Korryn Gaines, Earl “Shaleek” Pinckney, Walter Wallace Jr., Gary Page — and others too numerous to name — by fighting for revolutionary new ways of seeing mental

health crises and mental illness and people who are experiencing them.

The repressive force of the state is unsuitable for defusing a crisis. Really, we need a revolutionary people’s mental health care unit.

Until then, we must speak their names loudly until we drown out the police and forces change.

Keep the pressure on for justice!

Say their names! □

*The repressive force of the state is unsuitable for defusing a crisis. Really, we need a revolutionary people’s mental health care unit.*



# Only fightback will stop racism, police terror

Continued from page 1

attacked for attempting to vote or to promote the vote.

These attacks are being reported around the country. For instance, in Graham, N.C., Black demonstrators, including children as young as three years old, were viciously attacked by police with pepper spray on Oct. 31 when, while marching to polling places, they stopped to protest in front of a Confederate monument. Some were arrested.

### Police violence escalates

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf has sent the National Guard to Philadelphia to impose a curfew in the aftermath of the police murder of a 27-year-old Black man, Walter Wallace Jr., who was shot multiple times in front of his home. His mother had called for an ambulance for her son, who had a history of mental illness, but the police arrived instead and executed him in broad daylight. Wallace is the most recent addition to the tragic list of nearly 1,000 people killed so far by the police in 2020.

Several hours after the Wallace shooting, a young mother, Rickia Young, had her car surrounded by Philadelphia police while attempting to leave an area where a protest was taking place. She and her teenage nephew were then beaten by the police while her 2-year-old son sat in his car seat. Despite many arrests and now the calling in of the National Guard, community and political activists have kept a strong presence in the streets demanding justice for Walter Wallace, just days before the election.

Another disturbing sign of racist state repression in Philadelphia has been the completely unwarranted arrest by the Federal Bureau of Investigation of Ant Smith, a leader of the Philly REAL [Racial, Economic and Legal] Justice coalition. REAL Justice was formed to defend Black Lives Matter by fighting all forms of racist repression. There is a national call on social media and in the streets demanding the freedom of this dynamic Black activist and for all the false charges against him to be dropped.

It is very difficult to separate all these events in Philadelphia from the overall repressive atmosphere in the lead-up to the election.

### An ongoing war against Black people

While white supremacy and police brutality have always been relied on to maintain capitalist rule, the lynching of George Floyd has caused the intensity of police brutality to be even more scrutinized. According to a study by Bellingcat and

Forensic Architecture, at least 950 incidents of police violence against peaceful protests have been recorded over the past five months, including “more than 500 instances of police using less-lethal rounds, pepper spray and teargas; 60 incidents of officers using unlawful assembly to arrest protesters; 19 inci-



Alamance County sheriff deputies pepper spray activists and children during Oct. 31 march defending right to vote in Graham, N.C.

dents of police being permissive to the far right and showing double standards when confronted with white supremacists; five attacks on medics; and 11 instances of kettling.” (Guardian, Oct. 29)

Misogyny, anti-LGBTQ2S+ bigotry, ableism, and other oppressions are also intensified under the white supremacy exhibited by Trump and his ilk.

The current crisis of police and neo-fascist violence, instigated by the White House, once again proves that the fight against the state is a key part of the Black struggle for self-determination. At the height of the Black Liberation struggles here and worldwide during the 1960s, Youth Against War and Fascism, a mass unit of Workers World Party, brought the slogan “Stop the War Against Black America” to the movement. This was to build broad solidarity between the anti-war movement and Black militant groups facing a brutal, state-sanctioned, FBI-led assault that included incarceration, intimidation, infiltration and assassination.

Over 50 years later, the same political message still applies. But now the Black Lives Matter movement is carrying forward the struggle for justice and equality with a broad multinational base. For over eight years, since the racist murder of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in Florida, the BLM movement has been on the front lines in battling police brutality in all its forms, embracing all political currents regardless of nationality, sexuality, genders, gender expressions, generations and abilities.

It has been acknowledged that BLM constitutes the largest mass movement in the history of the U.S., involving millions of people while gaining international supporters. This unprecedented resurgence of activism was mainly spurred on by the nearly nine-minute public execution of George Floyd by the Minneapolis police

they can ruthlessly exploit the workers and oppressed.

In terms of U.S. foreign policy, while there may be various strategies and approaches, both Democrats and Republicans are on the same page when it comes to advancing the imperialist aims of expanding the U.S. empire for profits versus respecting a country’s right to sovereignty and self-determination. History has shown that the Democrats could very well start a war, as could the Republicans.

While it isn’t surprising that police unions have endorsed Trump, Biden has made it crystal clear that he is opposed to any BLM call to defund the police. Harris has faced criticism for being the “top cop” in California as state prosecutor before becoming senator.

The police have never been more isolated and unpopular, according to opinion polls. This has not kept their brutal tactics from being on full display in preparation for the coming struggles, including rebellions on the horizon as the economic crisis looms heavy over the coming months. This crisis will manifest itself with more massive unemployment, evictions, and hunger on top of the worsening surge of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Democratic Party has shown itself to be ineffectual in pushing the Republicans to back a second stimulus package that could bring temporary economic relief to the hurting masses.

A militarized, occupying police presence will only bring about more capitalist instability as the masses of people become more rebellious with want and need. And whoever occupies the White House for the next four years will not be able to contain the angry masses if they are in a fighting and desperate mood.

The masses, with the aid of political left forces, will have no other choice but to confront the ruling class’s racism and white supremacy and unite to fight and organize for immediate human needs — now more than ever during this pandemic crisis. This is why it is important to stay in the streets once the elections have come and gone — to fight for a socialist future.

*Moorehead was the 1996, 2000 and 2016 presidential candidate of Workers World Party.*

on May 28. Since then, protests against the police have taken place in thousands of cities and in various forms, including spontaneous strikes by professional basketball, baseball, hockey and soccer athletes — despite the COVID-19 restrictions.

### Only class struggle can resolve class contradictions

While it is understandable that millions of people will breathe a sigh of relief if the Biden/Harris team defeats the Trump/Pence administration, Local 8751 leaders distributing Steelworker-made, American Roots Wear’s two-ply, filtered cloth masks and USW-donated face-shields to replace substandard, company-issued, disposable paper at driver route bid, Sept. 23. relations will not fundamentally change. An election cannot rectify class contradictions, even though it serves as a barometer to test the political mood within society. Ultimately, the vote boils down to which representative from one of the two major capitalist parties — Republican and Democrat — will best administer the repressive capitalist state apparatus to keep the billionaire, corporate bosses and bankers in power so

## Labour’s ouster of MP Jeremy Corbyn aims to crush criticism of Israel

By Susan Abulhawa

Member of Parliament, and former leader of the Labour Party (2015-2020), Jeremy Corbyn was ousted from his own party by its new leader, Keir Starmer, who has clearly allied with right-wing and neoliberal forces to destroy the socialist left in Britain and beyond.

While Workers World Party has disagreed with Corbyn on some of his political positions in the past, we recognize that he has been the target of a witch hunt meant to crush anti-establishment and anti-imperialist positions — particularly those that aim to hold Israel accountable for what has been called “incremental genocide” of the Palestinian population, whose homeland is the Holy Land.

Jeremy Corbyn has been a Member of Parliament since 1983, representing Islington North with consistent leftist, anti-imperialist and pro-working-class positions throughout his political career. His meteoric rise to the leadership of the Labour Party in 2015 in a 60% landslide victory against three other candidates

shook up the establishment ruling class in Britain. The Sept. 12 Guardian newspaper described Corbyn as “one of the most left-wing, anti-establishment leaders in [Labour’s] history.”

Corbyn’s emphasis on protecting the working class, opposing the war industry and holding the powerful accountable for their crimes made him a target of right-wing and neoliberal forces that are loath to see empowerment of the masses. In particular, Corbyn became a target after he made a move to end arms sales to Israel, as a minimal measure of solidarity with Palestinians who are fighting an existential struggle for their survival in their homeland.

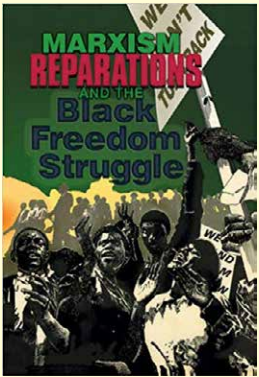
Workers World Party rejects the unfounded allegations of anti-Semitism against Corbyn. We have seen similar tactics used here in the United States against leaders who fight alongside the masses for the right to live dignified lives — including those who stand in solidarity with Palestinians in their struggle for self-determination. □

## Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper.  
Edited by Monica Moorehead.

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# Class, racism and the elections

## Count all the votes!

Wednesday, Nov. 4 — As of this writing it's unclear who won the U.S. presidential election. Ballots are still being counted in several "battleground" states. Trump prematurely and illegitimately declared victory early this morning, and will likely challenge a Biden victory by attempting to suppress votes not yet counted. He has vowed to take this fight to the Supreme Court, where he has just secured a solid right-wing majority.

Many of the ballots last to be counted in these states are from early voters in Black majority urban centers such as Detroit, Philadelphia and Atlanta — those most inclined to vote against Trump. A record 100 million-plus voters are estimated to have voted early.

Rallies are taking place all over the country today around the demand to count all the votes. These actions are pulling out people — particularly people of color — who drove long distances to wait in long lines in all kinds of weather to cast their votes. To some extent this election became a referendum on the most blatant, vile, divisive and uncensored white supremacy and bigotry emanating from the White House. Many will see the inconclusive vote results as a setback.

Trump's early push to stop the vote count continues a pattern of dirty tricks that include robocalls with false information, deliberately sabotaging postal deliveries, putting up fake ballot drop-off boxes, disenfranchisement of former prisoners and migrants, and physical assaults and intimidation, including attacking voting rights marchers in North Carolina.

After a judge ordered the postal service to conduct a sweep of unmailed ballots and prioritize their timely delivery, Trump-appointed Postmaster General Louis DeJoy refused to comply. The Justice Department backed DeJoy.

The bigot-in-chief's fraudulent declaration of victory is but the latest example in a long, ugly history of denying Black, Latinx and Indigenous communities the basic right to vote. The electoral college itself, which skews results with a "winner take all" state-by-state selection process, is rooted in efforts of enslavers to maintain political control over how U.S. presidents are chosen. Real democracy is a myth in this country.

While limited by their politics and ties to the Democratic Party, today's demonstrations are taking

the struggle against racist voter suppression beyond the confines of the voting booth. What's all the more significant are calls emanating from sections of organized labor for a general strike if Trump refuses to step down. Even if this doesn't happen, the importance of this conversation — of workers withholding their labor as a form of mass political protest — must not be underestimated.

### Get ready for a big fight, regardless

Even if the rallies achieve their goal and secure Biden's path to the White House, the epic struggle unfolding since the COVID-19 crisis and the lynching of George Floyd will intensify. Among the huge numbers who voted for Trump are the many racist police, whose associations — misnamed unions — endorsed the president. They are openly allied with white supremacist paramilitaries such as the "Proud Boys."

Since these pro-fascist elements may be buoyed if Trump ekes out a victory and full of venomous hatred if he doesn't, progressives and anti-racists will have to step up their defense of people of color, migrants, homeless, protesters, LGBTQ2S+ people, women, people with disabilities, youth and others.

Black and Latinx workers in the South, where Trump carried most of the states, could be particularly vulnerable to hate crimes. The Old South, with its long history of segregation and the lowest level of unionization, is where new manufacturing in steel, auto and other industries is now concentrated. White workers are targeted with the most hateful rhetoric, intended to pit them against the most oppressed workers.

A significant section of the capitalist class favors and funds Trump's fascist appeal. Donors among the super-rich hail from the financial, real estate, pharmaceutical,

oil and gas, and other industries. Without their support, super-PACs such as America First Action would collapse.

But the popular movement would also have to fight a Biden/Harris administration. In this election campaign, the Democratic Party avoided appealing for support on a progressive basis, even though it observed a new, historic, anti-racist movement developing. Rather, the Democrats ditched Bernie Sanders in favor of Biden, pandered to Trump's socialist-baiting, rejected calls to defund the police and distanced themselves from the "Squad" — Congresswomen of color Ilhan Omar,

Rashida Tlaib, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ayanna Pressley, who just won reelection.

Biden's own history includes passing racist "anti-crime" bills as senator, presiding over record numbers of deportations, and engaging in sexist behavior as vice president. He has done nothing to stop police killings, including the 2014 murder of Tamir Rice that occurred during his tenure. Both as an elected official and as a candidate — with a long list of ruling class backers himself — he has expressed a solid commitment to U.S. imperialism in foreign policy.

Was the choice of Biden a factor in the Democratic Party's poorer-than-expected performance?

The only way forward for working class and oppressed people is to take the struggle beyond the narrow arena of capitalist elections. A range of tactics must and will be employed, from street protests to general strikes. The prospects for

independent mass struggle are the best antidotes to any demoralization or discouragement among those who were hoping for an electoral wipeout of Trump.

All hell could break loose soon. Class struggle, the driving force of past and future history, is our ray of hope. □

**While limited by their politics and ties to the Democratic Party, today's demonstrations are taking the struggle against racist voter suppression beyond the confines of the voting booth. What's all the more significant are calls emanating from sections of organized labor for a general strike if Trump refuses to step down. Even if this doesn't happen, the importance of this conversation — of workers withholding their labor as a form of mass political protest — must not be underestimated.**

## Portuguese Marxists view U.S. elections

By Jornal Mudar de Vida

The following note on the [jornalmudardevida.net](http://jornalmudardevida.net) site introduced a Portuguese translation of a WW editorial about the U.S. national election. It gives some insight into how European revolutionaries saw the U.S. election on the eve of Election Day. Translation: John Catalinotto.



working people in the U.S. and in the world.

First of all, because a Trump defeat would not be the same as a Trump victory. A defeat places an obstacle in the way of the pro-fascist path that won him the presidency four years ago. A victory would mean consecrating that same path.

In addition, despite all the limitations of an electoral campaign, a mobilization to undo Trump's gang opens the way to a political awareness that did not exist in many previous elections and in the minds of many voters.

Even more important and far beyond any propagandistic effort by the candidates, this anti-Trump mobilization results from and is the extension of the strong street actions against racism throughout the country, the rejection of the murderous health policy of the Trump

government, and the misery that the economic crisis leads to for millions of U.S. families.

It is therefore important to consider the potential gains for the class struggle in terms of workers' unity, in order to supplant partisan and ethnic divisions. Such unity in turn would allow for future steps to confront the capitalist-imperialist system itself. Developing and prolonging the mass struggles of recent months emerges as the natural and most secure way to affirm an independent path of political action for U.S. workers.

A defeat of Trump would have consequences not only in the United States. The extreme right wing and openly fascist forces that are raising their heads around the world have had at the very least the moral and political support of the U.S. government and the fascist media that multiply in its shadow. It is to be expected, therefore, that those forces would suffer a

setback — in Jair Bolsonaro's Brazil, Matteo Salvini's Italy, Marine Le Pen's France, the Vox Party's Spain, Brexit's Britain and even André Ventura's Portugal. Even if the decisive thing is, of course, the internal political struggle in each of these countries, the loss of the external incentive given to these forces on Trump's account is not to be underestimated.

As the text we publish in the U.S. communist weekly Workers World points out, the mass actions that take place around the elections go beyond the elections themselves to the extent that they measure the possibility of building the unity of the working classes for the foreseeable future. They represent, therefore, a boost to class struggle — a condition for there to be consistent opposition to any of the capitalist parties that take office.

For the Workers World editorial, see [workers.org/2020/10/52048/](http://workers.org/2020/10/52048/).

### 100 Years Later Some Lessons of the Great Bolshevik Revolution



By Deirdre Griswold

**Contents:** From Marx's view of social evolution to Lenin's 'Imperialism' ♦ Social gains in the early years of Soviet power ♦ 'Whose state? Our state' — meaning all nationalities ♦ External and internal problems, strengths and setbacks ♦ To the 0.001 percent: You are cheering too soon

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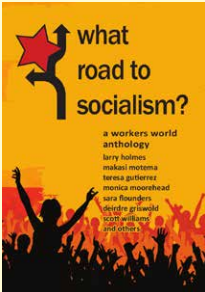
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## Anti-China racism

# Amazon bans book exposing U.S. COVID chaos

By Sara Flounders

A decision by the Amazon company to block a book focused on a scientific and cooperative approach to COVID-19 amounts to corporate information control operating at a new intensity. This censorship occurs while almost every form of U.S. media permits and promotes racist, unscientific and thoroughly confusing information.

The censored book is “Capitalism on a Ventilator: The Impact of COVID-19 in China & the U.S.” This anthology of 55 articles by a broad range of social justice authors discusses the importance of free health care, social distancing, testing, protective equipment, education and social mobilizations during the pandemic.

The book highlights the differences in policy and state organization toward a virus that has so far caused fewer than 5,000 deaths in China, but more than 225,000 deaths in the U.S. The book also shows the glaring lack of social support infrastructure in the U.S. in contrast to U.S. trillions spent on elaborate military, police and prison infrastructure, both at home and worldwide.

“Capitalism on a Ventilator” is unique in challenging the sharp rise in racist attacks on Asian people in the U.S. during the pandemic that flow from government, business and media hostility to China. Its commentaries expose the attacks on China by both Democratic and Republican parties through their endorsing and imposing sanctions, military operations, trade wars, and cancellations of cultural and academic exchanges.

### Censorship by monopoly control

On Sept. 24, World View Forum, a small educational not-for-profit publishing company, received this message from Amazon:

“We’re contacting you regarding the following book(s): Capitalism on a Ventilator: The Impact of COVID-19 in China & the U.S. by Sara Flounders (AUTHOR); Carlos Martinez (AUTHOR); Monica Moorehead (AUTHOR); Kevin Zeese (AUTHOR); Ajamu Baraka (AUTHOR); Deirdre Griswold (AUTHOR); Mumia Abu Jamal (AUTHOR); Vijay Prashad (AUTHOR); Margaret Kimberley (AUTHOR); Lee Siu Hin (AUTHOR). Due to the rapidly changing nature of information around coronavirus, we are referring customers to official sources for advice about the prevention or treatment of the virus. Amazon reserves the right to determine what content we offer according to our content guidelines. Your book does not comply with our guidelines. As a result, we are not offering your book for sale. To have your book reconsidered for publication, please update your book details (i.e., your title, cover image, and/or product description) and resubmit.”

World View Forum immediately tried to reverse Amazon’s decision and provided layers of authentication of information. But there is no appeal or even a complaint process to Amazon decisions. The company’s emails are sent from a no-reply address.

Amazon trumpets that it has the widest range of book titles, ease of placement, best order fulfillment and lack of censorship. As the world’s largest online book seller, Amazon claims that it resists calls to censor or otherwise restrict books, and that for it to pull a book is exceedingly rare.

The company has been more than willing to make a profit by selling white

supremacist propaganda and wild conspiracy theories that the COVID virus is human-made. During the pandemic Amazon has listed products that are dangerous quack cures for the virus.

at top speed during the pandemic, even if this costs many lives. So promoting a book that spouts non-scientific theories that COVID is a hoax and that there is no need for protective equipment, social dis-

pandemic’s impact on the two very different economies — has been impossible to ignore.

The corporate media response is to suppress any mention of the positive impact that China’s free health care, guaranteed income during quarantine, coherent national planning and deep community participation has had on pandemic illness and mortality rates.

Instead, the only explanation given by big business media for the sharp difference is that China is “authoritarian,” “heavy-handed” and “dictatorial,” and that the population is “resentful and repressed.”

The New York Times summarized this hostile approach in an Oct. 31 article: “Authoritarian Strategy: Effective, but Suffocating.” This lengthy “analysis” failed to mention a basic fact: that at this time, China’s COVID-19 deaths are under 5,000, compared to U.S. deaths of over 225,000. And the U.S. has only one-fourth the population of China!

### Other censorship of left communication

Amazon is not the only corporate media monopoly censoring left-leaning news and organizing. Google and other major search engines have reset their algorithms to filter and restrict almost all alternative and socialist news sites. With search traffic rerouted away from these sites, this drastically reduces the number of views by more than 50%. Google claims that this is to combat “fake news.”

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube are stepping up their blocking of antiracist organizing and anti-imperialist solidarity. This is done by their equating posts by violent white supremacist organizations and neo-Nazi militias with antiracist, anti-capitalist organizing.

In the current censorship sweep, YouTube has directly intervened to block a webinar featuring a Palestinian leader, Leila Khaled. Thousands of Twitter and Instagram accounts have been disabled and hash tags eliminated. Shutdowns have impacted It’s Going Down, CrimethInc and the PNW Youth Liberation Front in Portland, Ore.

Plans by the Baltimore Peoples Power Assembly for a Peoples Mandate were shut down on Facebook, along with the accounts of connected organizations and accounts of the administrators of the Facebook sites. This in turn impacted a Cuba Solidarity Conference as well as a SanctionsKill Facebook account that was threatened with shutdown for posting news of the impacted Cuba Conference.

A mobilized pushback forced Facebook to step back from this sweeping attack.

### Fighting Amazon’s ban on scientific truth

The publication of “Capitalism on a Ventilator” was organized by the anti-imperialist International Action Center, in collaboration with the China-U.S. Solidarity Committee. These organizations and the authors have affirmed their determination to get the book published as part of the ongoing political struggle against the virus and for socialism.

The banned book’s table of contents and list of authors, along with four chapters, is available at <https://wp.me/p4Yme1-404>. Readers are urged to break the ban on “Capitalism on a Ventilator” by sharing the link and your short reviews widely on social media. Maintain pressure against Amazon banning books with a left perspective by tweeting the Washington Post @JeffBezos. □

## CAPITALISM on a VENTILATOR

*The Impact of COVID-19  
in China & the U.S.*



**An anthology of social justice activists discussing a global choice: cooperation vs. competition**

**Edited by Sara Flounders & Lee Siu Hin**

A Project of the International Action Center & China U.S. Solidarity Network

But a book that discusses how socialist countries have had great success in controlling the deadly COVID-19 virus through cooperation, free health care and public education — that book has information that capitalist giant Amazon has decided must be censored.

### Amazon allows COVID hoax book

Right-wing media darling Alex Berenson self-published “Unreported Truths about COVID-19 and Lockdowns” with Amazon in June 2020. Berenson is notorious for denouncing masks, quarantine measures and school closings, and for claiming the count of deaths and infections in the U.S. is a hoax and massive overcount. He appears regularly on far right media, including Breitbart, Fox News and The American Conservative.

When Amazon sent Berenson a stop-publication message similar to that sent to left publisher World View Forum, Berenson simply turned to a powerful billionaire friend — Elon Musk, the fourth-richest man in the U.S., who has made more than \$48 billion in profits during the pandemic. Demanding Amazon publish Berenson, Musk publicly threatened and pressured Amazon’s billionaire owner Jeff Bezos through the public venue of the Washington Post — which Bezos also owns.

The result? Amazon immediately backed off from its decision to pull Berenson’s COVID-hoax book.

Why? Because both Bezos and Musk are capitalist powers who have a vested interest in keeping their businesses running

tancing, testing of workers or shut down of businesses is also in their economic interest.

Musk, with his multi-billion-dollar Tesla auto advancing down production lines, has shared tweets like “Coronavirus panic is dumb” and “It’s the lockdown, not the virus, that causes the problems.”

Bezos also has his multi-billion-dollar reason to allow COVID hoax publications: to keep Amazon’s global distribution system of warehouses operating at full capacity during the pandemic. With Walmart first, Amazon is the second-largest employer in the U.S., with 1.5 million workers.

On Oct. 1 Amazon admitted that 19,816 of its workers had tested positive or been “presumed positive” for COVID. But its production lines roll on.

As for Berenson’s right-wing COVID book, the Bezos-owned Washington Post gave full coverage to the Bezos-owned Amazon reversal and highlighted the agreement to print and distribute the book.

### Capitalist hostility to China

Controlling the narrative on responsibility for this global pandemic is a high priority for the entire U.S. ruling class.

On the surface the two U.S. imperialist political parties appear to have sharp differences in response to the pandemic. But they are united in promoting hostility to China.

Nevertheless, the stunning difference in results between the U.S. and China in response to COVID-19 — and the





Empleados de tiendas en la huelga general de 1946, Oakland, Calif.

## Se genera impulso para huelga general si Trump intenta golpe de estado

Por Martha Grevatt

Un movimiento ha estado creciendo desde la resolución del Consejo Laboral de Rochester del 8 de octubre apoyando una huelga general si Trump se niega a dejar el cargo. Esta audaz iniciativa fue seguida por una resolución similar de la Federación Laboral de Wisconsin Central. Ambos grupos llamaron a la AFL-CIO a lanzar la huelga general para frustrar un golpe de estado derechista, racista y anti obrero de Trump.

Ahora el empuje es para que los trabajadores retengan su trabajo en defensa de sus derechos democráticos básicos. La Federación Laboral del Área Oeste de Massachusetts aprobó una resolución el 19 de octubre para una huelga general y otras "acciones no violentas", si "Donald Trump y sus partidarios republicanos intentan obstruir, subvertir, sabotear, anular o

rechazar un recuento justo y completo de votos presidenciales". La organizadora de la Federación, Lydia Wood, explicó: "Consideramos que es la herramienta más poderosa que tiene el movimiento". Hay

30 sindicatos miembros en la federación.

El 21 de octubre, el Consejo Laboral de MLK, que cubre el condado de King alrededor e incluyendo Seattle, resolvió "trabajar con aliados en los movimientos anti-racistas, de justicia ambiental, feministas y de los pueblos pobres, así como con los LGBTQ+, las minorías religiosas y las comunidades de inmigrantes para hacer planes de contingencia en respuesta a las acciones antidemocráticas del presidente Trump y sus aliados".

El consejo resolvió además que "el sindicato MLK tomará medidas para prepararse para una acción no violenta generalizada, incluyendo protestas y paros laborales, coordinando la capacitación de

las fuerzas de paz y otros entrenamientos necesarios". AFSCME Local 304, representando a los trabajadores del estado, había aprobado una resolución dos días antes instando al Consejo a tomar esta posición.

El 20 de octubre, un seminario web para discutir la estrategia de la huelga general presentó a la Presidenta de la Asociación de Auxiliares de Vuelo-CWA, Sara Nelson, una posible candidata a suceder al Presidente de la AFL-CIO, Richard Trumka. Decenas de miles de sindicalistas de base han firmado un compromiso de "defender la democracia" para tomar las calles y cerrar el país, si es necesario para evitar un golpe de estado. La sucursal del área de Detroit del Sindicato de Trabajadores Postales Americanos apeló a sus miembros para que firmaran el compromiso.

Trumka aún no ha tomado una posición sobre los llamados a la huelga general. Pero, como afirma Doreen McGrath, miembro de Portland Electrical Workers (IBEW): "Hay mucha corriente de trabajadores de base que presionan a la dirección del sindicato para que aprueben estas resoluciones."

Las huelgas generales - paros laborales colectivos que involucran a una gran sección de trabajadores en un área o país

en particular - son poco comunes en los Estados Unidos. Además del Primero de Mayo de 2006, las huelgas generales más conocidas tuvieron lugar en Seattle en 1919 y en Minneapolis y San Francisco en 1934. Otras ocurrieron en Terre Haute, Ind., en 1935, Lansing, Mich., en 1937 y Oakland, Calif., en 1946 - todas hace mucho tiempo.

Seguramente vendrán más llamados a "no hacer negocios como de costumbre" si Trump no respeta el voto de los trabajadores y la gente oprimida. Esta huelga general sería una de las pocas huelgas políticas —a diferencia de las huelgas económicas— en la historia laboral de EE.UU. La más reciente fue la huelga masiva de trabajadores inmigrantes el 1 de mayo de 2006. En 1947, 250.000 trabajadores de la industria automotriz abandonaron el trabajo para protestar por la Ley Taft-Hartley, que se oponía a los sindicatos, y que condujo a la destrucción de sindicatos en todo el país en las décadas siguientes. Recientemente, atletas profesionales hicieron una huelga en solidaridad con Black Lives Matter.

Una huelga general en todo el país —o incluso en lugares dispersos— por una crisis política intensificaría la lucha de clases de maneras nunca vistas en décadas. □

## Este sistema está enfermo

La crisis de COVID-19 está arrojando una luz evidente sobre las contradicciones y los fracasos del capitalismo. Millones de vidas están en riesgo, y no tiene por qué ser así.

Aquí en los Estados Unidos —un país que durante más de un siglo ha estado a la vanguardia de las naciones económicamente más desarrolladas del mundo— la pandemia está matando a cientos de personas cada día. Casi un cuarto de millón de personas en los Estados Unidos han muerto por el virus desde diciembre

pasado —menos de un año. Eso es casi una quinta parte de todas las muertes en el mundo por esta enfermedad.

¿Por qué decimos que el capitalismo es responsable? Sólo compara a los EE.UU. con la República Popular China, que NO es capitalista.

China tiene una población mucho más grande - 1.4 mil millones de personas, o cuatro veces la población de los EE.UU. de 331 millones - que viven en casi la misma cantidad de tierra. Y antes de que la revolución socialista de China triunfara en 1949, su desarrollo se había visto frenado por las intervenciones imperialistas - de Japón, los EE.UU. y Europa.

China también fue el primer país en ser golpeado por el coronavirus. El primer

caso fue reportado en Wuhan, en diciembre de 2019.

El gobierno chino tuvo que movilizarse rápidamente para averiguar qué estaba pasando con esta nueva enfermedad. ¿De dónde vino? ¿Cómo se trata? ¿Deberían ponerse en cuarentena barrios enteros? Si es así, ¿cómo obtendrá la gente comida y otras necesidades?

Todo esto tenía que ser resuelto y actuado rápidamente.

Y eso es exactamente lo que pasó. Los equipos médicos fueron llevados rápidamente a Wuhan. En pocos días se construyeron nuevos hospitales.

Y a los enfermos no se les preguntó: "¿Tienen seguro médico? ¿Quién pagará por esto?"

La enfermedad fue contenida rápidamente. A partir de este 19 de octubre, China, con cuatro veces la población de los EE.UU., ha tenido sólo 4.634 muertes por el virus, en comparación con 224.824 muertes en este país, y sigue aumentando. (worldometers.info/coronavirus)

Esto se reduce a la estadística de que una persona que vive en los Estados Unidos tiene 200 veces más probabilidades de morir de un coronavirus que una persona en China.

¿Qué acusación de este sistema

capitalista!

¿Qué hace esta gran diferencia?

China tiene una economía de planificación centralizada y de propiedad social, lo que significa que en una emergencia de este tipo, todos los recursos de la sociedad se pueden centrar en hacer frente al problema. La salud de la gente, no las ganancias de unos pocos, se convierte en la primera prioridad.

Si eso significa que el comercio en un área afectada debe ser cerrado, así sucede. Si la gente necesita estar en cuarentena, se hacen planes para asegurarse de que los alimentos y otras necesidades se les entreguen de forma segura. Si no pueden llegar a sus trabajos, no serán echados de sus casas o dejados para que mueran de hambre.

Todo eso fue solucionado cuando el virus se desató por primera vez en Wuhan.

Esto es inconcebible en un país capitalista, incluso uno tan rico como los Estados Unidos.

En este momento, millones de personas

han sido despedidas. Las pequeñas empresas están fallando mientras la gente se aprietan el cinturón a causa del virus. Los beneficios adicionales de desempleo se

terminaron en julio. El llamado pago de "estímulo" individual de 1.200 dólares en abril se gastó hace meses, y ni Trump ni Biden están hablando de otro. (Cabe señalar que ahora hay más millonarios que apoyan a Biden que a Trump).

Esto es el capitalismo. Si eres un trabajador, estás por tu cuenta. Cada día se hace más claro que la acumulación de tantos problemas, tanto sufrimiento, viene de este sistema de lucro.

No tiene por qué ser así. La opresión engendra resistencia.

La resistencia une a la gente para luchar por una causa común. Y la lucha debe ir más allá de tratar de aliviar los síntomas. Debe llegar a la fuente de la enfermedad misma: el capitalismo. □

**MUNDO OBRERO**  
*editorial*

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