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Evo Morales returns

Bolivians eject coup regime

By John Catalinotto

Nov. 16 — Evo Morales — president of Bolivia from 2006-19 before a U.S.-backed right-wing coup forced the first Indigenous president to leave both his office and his country — returned in triumph Nov. 9, as the workers and farmers of Bolivia dealt a blow to imperialist domination of their country and the continent. On Nov. 8, the day before Morales returned, newly elected President Luis Arce and Vice President David Choquehuanca of the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) were inaugurated. Now in office, the MAS candidates had won the long-delayed Oct. 18 election by a landslide — receiving 55% of the votes compared to 29% for the center-right Carlos Mesa and 14% for the neo-fascist Luis Fernando Camacho.

In the past year, the mass movement of Indigenous peoples, workers and peasants was able to retake the government and drive out the right wing. They did this even though the rightists had a near monopoly of arms and had control of the Bolivian state — the army and police — plus their own armed paramilitaries. (See Jan. 18 editorial in Workers World — workers.org/2020/01/45843/) Hundreds of thousands of supporters greeted Morales and former Vice President Álvaro García Linera as their motorcade wound through some 700 miles over three days, starting at the Argentine border. On Nov. 11, the caravan reached Chimoré airport in the heart of the Chapare region, where Morales once organized coca growers. At just about the geographic center of Bolivia, the airport had been on a U.S. military base until 2006. The Morales government expelled the U.S. forces from this base. A year ago the Bolivian oligarchy and



Bolivian masses welcome back former President Evo Morales and former Vice President Álvaro García Linea, Chimoré airport, Nov. 9.

right-wing parties used armed gangs — the equivalent of fascist thugs — with the tacit and sometimes open support of the police to challenge a much closer election than Morales nevertheless won. Marching from their base in the eastern part of Bolivia, the fascists attacked MAS officials and political leaders, sometimes burning

their homes or beating them. The general leading the national army, instead of defending the elected government, virtually ordered Morales to resign, which he did. Morales and García Linera left from Chimoré airport for Mexico, then went to Buenos Aires, Argentina. At the time the Organization of American States, and of course all agencies of U.S. imperialism and U.S. corporate media, backed ousting Morales. Most charged the MAS with voting fraud and mismanagement of the government, without evidence.

Movement reverses coup

Police and soldiers carried out two massacres of mostly Indigenous people demonstrating in the towns of Sacaba and Senkata in the week after last year’s coup, killing 11 people in each town and wounding many more. Despite this and other repression, the popular movement continued defending itself and rebuilding

Continued on page 10

Pandemic surges, economy sputters

It’s really quite sickening. The bourgeoisie calculates profit and loss with callous disregard for the masses suffering from both the soaring COVID case-load and a collapsed job market. Now, many who became unemployed in the spring are running out of their 26 weeks of unemployment benefits. There were nearly 1 million new applications for unemployment insurance in the second week of November. But the stock market went up and down like a roller coaster last week, as hopeful news about Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine was followed by reports of surging viral infections. On the one hand, the shareholders could not contain their orgiastic excitement over Big Pharma making big money on millions and millions of vaccinations. But their enthusiasm was deflated as they counted the costs of more COVID cases: more

medical bills for insurance companies to cover, more workers calling out sick, more deaths — and potentially more mass anger. Why does the Dow Jones or the S&P rise and fall? Stock fluctuations basically reflect optimism or pessimism on the part of the 1% about their future bottom line — i.e., their ability to maximize the exploitation of labor. If there is a successful vaccine that will eventually help get workers back to producing what Marxists call “surplus value,” the portion of sales revenue above and beyond the cost of labor power, they will reap profits. But right now, workers can’t produce wealth if they are sick, dead or have to be quarantined so they don’t bring the virus into the workplace. Republicans and Democrats have failed to put forth a badly

Continued on page 10

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Storms, hurricanes devastate Indigenous communities 3

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

Stop
Amazon
censorship
2

2020 Elections

- The vote & class solidarity 5
- Im/migrant movement lessons 9
- Editorial: A first step 10
- A Palestinian view 11



Kaepernick:
'Free Mumia!' 5



6-8



Virus in prisons:
Pennsylvania to Montana
Activist Arroyo speaks out
Disciplinary terror in Texas
A survivor on self-defense
Another death in Cleveland jail

COVID profits 3
Free Them All protest 3



Sue Davis, ¡presente! 4

Amazon is censoring

We need your help to distribute this book!

“Capitalism on a Ventilator” is a new anthology comparing the effective Chinese response to COVID-19 to the disastrous response in the U.S. This book pushes back against the racist anti-China campaign in U.S. media.

However, Amazon is currently censoring the book’s distribution. We need your support to get the book out and to fight back against censorship!

Make a tax-deductible \$25 contribution to oppose Amazon and you’ll be sent a free copy. The book’s table of contents and list of authors, along with four chapters and a donation button, are available at wp.me/p4Yme1-404.

The U.S. establishment continues its growing hostility toward China, with an accompanying surge in anti-Asian racism. The effort to place this challenging book on a corporate website has turned into a struggle against censorship. Amazon, the world’s largest online bookseller, claims ease of placement and lack of censorship — but failed to deliver.

Instead, the company sent a notice censoring this book and its up-to-date information about COVID-19: “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.”

The notice claimed Amazon refers people only to “official sources for advice” on the COVID-19 virus. But the corporation has accepted books with wild pandemic conspiracy theories — that the virus is exaggerated, a hoax or human-made, and that masks and quarantines are useless.

Readers are urged to break the ban on “Capitalism on a Ventilator” by sharing the link widely on social media, along with your short reviews. Maintain pressure against Amazon banning books with a left perspective by tweeting the Washington Post @JeffBezoz.

“Capitalism on a Ventilator” was written by people around the world, edited by a U.S. activist and a Chinese activist, and answers a question working people worldwide are asking: Why has China done so much better in containing COVID-19 and saving lives?

Evidence and available data provide a very different answer from that given by the corporate media. China



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!

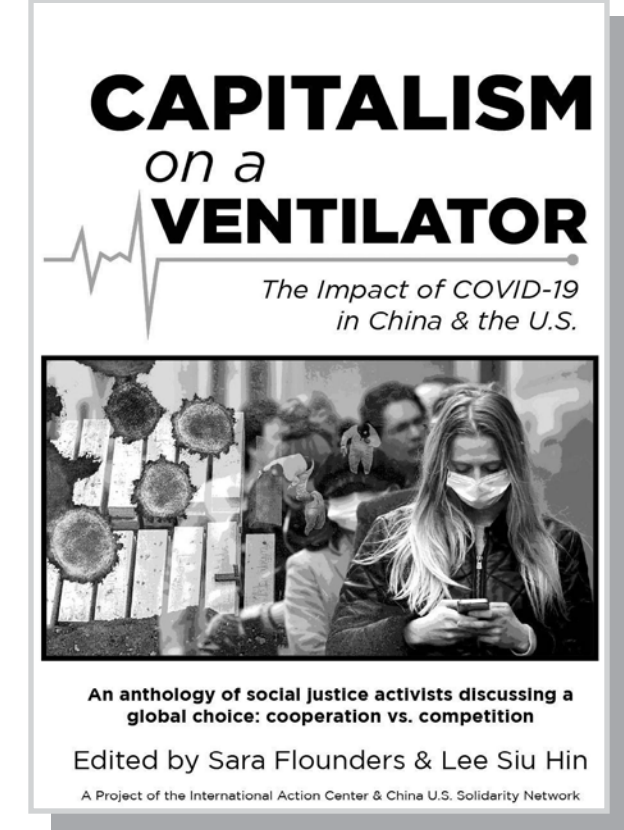
Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

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

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contained the virus because its free medical care and planned economic system are science based and intensely cooperative. By every statistic, countries building socialism have done far better in combating the virus: Cuba, China, Laos, Vietnam and North Korea, to name a few.

We hope you read “Capitalism on a Ventilator” and explore the reasons why China and other countries building socialism are doing better in this pandemic than the capitalist world. Please share the preview chapters: wp.me/p4Yme1-404. And your tax-deductible \$25 (or more) contribution to this campaign against censorship will qualify you for a free copy!

Make a tax free donation directly at: tinyurl.com/y6pleh23.

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

this week

- ♦ **In the U.S.**
 - Amazon censors ‘Capitalism on a Ventilator’2
 - Capitalists profit off pandemic3
 - Bay Area: ‘Close the camps, abolish ICE!’3
 - Remembering Sue Davis4
 - Vote and multinational working class solidarity . .5
 - Kaepernick joins the call to ‘Free Mumia!’5
 - COVID death sentence for Montana prisoners . . .6
 - PA prisons: Breeding ground for pandemic6
 - Ramsey Prison terrorizes Texas incarcerated. . . .6
 - Bryant Arroyo on prison COVID protocols7
 - A survivor speaks: ‘I had to defend myself’7
 - Yet another death in Cleveland jail 8
 - Election lessons from im/migrant movement9
- ♦ **Around the world**
 - Bolivians eject coup regime, Evo Morales returns 1
 - Storms endanger Indigenous peoples, workers . .3
 - A Palestinian comments on the U.S. election11
- ♦ **Editorial**
 - Pandemic surges, economy sputters1
 - Stop #45-- a first step10
- ♦ **Noticias en Español**
 - Naciones indígenas de Oklahoma ganan fallo . . .12
 - COVID-19 y la economía12

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Bay Area protest demands ‘Close the camps, abolish ICE!’

By Judy Greenspan
San Francisco

Nov. 14 — If today’s demonstration is any indication, the Bay Area immigrant rights movement holds both Republican and Democratic Parties responsible for inhumane U.S. detention camps and deportations and won’t stop until all camps are closed and ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) is abolished. Chanting “Joe Biden heed our call, now’s the time to free them all,” several hundred people marched from Union Square through the Tenderloin to the San Francisco Federal Building. The protest was organized before the elections under the call: “No Matter Who Wins — Close the Camps and Abolish ICE,” and despite the election results

the action did not stray from that theme. The protest was organized by the Free Them All Coalition, which includes the Committee to Close the Camps and Free Our Children, DSA chapters San Francisco and East Bay, Party for Socialism and Liberation, No Justice Under Capitalism and Workers World Party. At the Union Square, speaker after speaker lambasted both the Trump administration and President-elect Biden for anti-im/migrant policies such as the kidnapping of migrant children and their placement in cages as well as the forced sterilizations of migrant women in a Georgia detention center. All agreed that the immigration system was broken before Trump was elected president and that militant action was needed by the entire progressive movement to support

im/migrants in the U.S. Rosa Carranza, a TPS (Temporary Protective Status) holder and activist with the National TPS Coalition, expressed her concern for the hundreds of im/migrant children who have been stolen from their families. She laid the blame for this policy on the Obama administration which built the cages and on Trump who is now using them. “Both administrations are guilty,” she said. Speakers called out serious human rights abuses in U.S. prisons and jails and demanded that the criminal injustice system “Free Them All.” The march stopped at a halfway house run by GEO Group, a major private company managing ICE detention centers. Malik Washington, a current resident of the Tenderloin halfway house and the new editor of the SF



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

The Free Them All Coalition marches in San Francisco, Nov. 14.

Bayview newspaper, expressed the solidarity of the prisoners’ rights struggle with the fight for justice for im/migrants. At the Federal Building, demonstrators sprayed stenciled words on the street and sidewalk demanding an end to the camps, cages and inhumane conditions of im/migrants. The coalition has vowed to continue its efforts to both close the camps and abolish ICE. □

Alaska and the Caribbean

Storms increase dangers for Indigenous peoples, workers

By Paddy Colligan and G. Dunkel

Nov. 16 —The storms battering the north and northwest coast of Alaska and the hurricanes rampaging through the Caribbean and southeastern North America may or may not be produced by human-generated global warming. Scientists differ on this question. But scientists and people trying to survive these storms do agree that they are becoming more intense and more dangerous, particularly to the Indigenous people and workers living in their paths, who often do not have the money to move out of the way or weatherproof their homes. How close are we to the tipping point when human intervention can no longer interrupt the climatic feedback loops and when global climate change cannot be reversed, halted or even slowed?

Hurricanes in the Caribbean

There have been 30 named storms as of Nov. 15 in the current season, surpassing the record 28 major storms in 2005. The character of the 2020 hurricanes has also changed. The winds are more intense; gusts last longer, and the speed is higher. This means winds now destroy more roofs, topple more trees and power pylons and damage more houses and other buildings. Since warm air carries more moisture, the 2020 hurricanes dropped more rain. The hurricanes also moved significantly slower, and, surprisingly, some grew in intensity over 24 hours, increasing their wind speed by as much as 70 miles per hour, according to Kerry Emanuel, a meteorologist at the Massachusetts Institute



People in Honduras deluged after 2020 hurricanes.

of Technology. “It’s a forecaster’s nightmare,” Dr. Emanuel told the New York Times Nov. 3. Hurricanes going from Category 1 to Category 4 in 24 hours are especially dangerous. Hurricane Eta hit Nicaragua Nov. 3 as a Category 4, before slamming into Honduras and Guatemala. Some 120 people died and 113 are still missing, with 210,000 evacuated from their homes. Communities living along the Caribbean coast, particularly the Indigenous Miskito and Garifuna peoples, have been devastated by mudslides, floods (Eta dropped over 25 inches of rain) and high winds. Some of the missing are feared to be entombed in the mud. A new storm, Hurricane Iota, is threatening to come ashore in the very same area of Central America as a monster Category 4. The pandemic, in addition to the threat of Hurricane Iota, is making recovery very difficult. The Red Cross is handing out hand sanitizer and masks, but with hundreds of thousands of people crowding into mass shelters and living under

bridges and abutments, the sanitary situation is not good. The Honduran government estimates that over a billion dollars will be needed — money it doesn’t have — to recover. The U.S. Agency for International Development has donated \$100,000. (Guardian, Nov. 3) Storms in the Arctic When one of these writers first went to work in the Arctic a dozen years ago, the Arctic Ocean in July could have been mistaken for a large lake. No waves lapped the beach, and the waters were calm as far as you could see. On the horizon was a line of something that looked like the opposite shore but was actually the edge of the ice. The height of waves in the Beaufort Sea, the eastern part of the Arctic Ocean, could not even be measured then because ice covered most of it all summer. At least 2,000 years ago, peoples settled on the Arctic coast on both sides of the Bering Strait to be near the seals, fish, walrus and whales on which they depended. Once they began hunting the huge bowhead whales, their communities were able to support several hundred people. Whale hunting requires enough people to hunt



A home in Nome, Alaska, underwater after 2020 melting of ice covering on sea and shore.

Capitalists profit off pandemic

By Deirdre Griswold

Many countries around the world have successfully contained the coronavirus. Most notable is China, the most populous nation and the place where the virus first appeared. As of Nov. 15, China reported a total of 4,634 deaths from COVID-19 and only 13 new cases. (worldometers.info/coronavirus) Here in the United States, however,



251,525 deaths have already occurred, and there is now a surge of new cases. This shocking number is only expected to grow as cold weather sets in. Clearly, the U.S. capitalist government has done practically nothing to protect the population from this lethal new disease. With mass sickness and quarantine has come a drastic downturn in the U.S. economy. As of mid-October, almost 21.5 million workers had lost their

jobs. Others were trying to work from home in order to get by. Deaths were rising in more than 20 states, and the number of people living in poverty had jumped by about 6 million. But there has been one bright spot. Guess where? You got it — Wall Street. The investment bank Morgan Stanley has announced that, in the three months from July to September, it reaped \$2.7 billion in profits — a rise of 25% compared to a year earlier. Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley’s principal rival, was doing even better. It

announced quarterly profits of \$3.62 billion, or twice what the firm had earned in the same quarter in 2019. If this were a society based on serving the people, rather than boosting the profits of a few, wouldn’t all that money be spent on helping the sick and the dying while finding a cure for this terrible disease? It’s just another reason, on top of so many others, why we need revolutionary change in this country. □

Remembering Sue Davis: Comrade, fighter, writer (1942-2020)

By Kathy Durkin

Workers World Party lost a dynamic, dedicated comrade on Sept. 26 when Sue Davis died, a month after suffering a major stroke. A member of the party since 1967, Sue had early on been a militant activist on the streets with Youth Against War and Fascism, the party’s youth group, protesting the U.S. war against Vietnam and supporting the Black Panther Party against government repression. She was also a staunch fighter for women’s, workers’ and LGBTQ2S+ rights.

Sue was an opponent of capitalism, the root cause of oppression, war and poverty, and advocated for socialism for 53 years, alongside her comrades.

Larry Holmes, WWP’s First Secretary, says of her that “Comrade Sue was so remarkable and formidable that she could have chosen any path for her life and succeeded. But she chose to be a revolutionary socialist fighter, and dedicated her entire life to the struggle of the workers and the oppressed. She was a model for anyone, regardless of their generation, who makes the hard decisions to give their life to the struggle for socialist revolution.”

No U.S. war in Vietnam!

After joining YAWF, Sue, along with other members, participated in “Stop the Draft Week” marches in December 1967 in downtown New York City. Wearing a helmet, she participated in many protests against Washington’s war in Vietnam in the late 1960s and early 1970s, chanting “Big firms get rich, GIs die.”

Sue reached out to women’s groups and helped mobilize for the historic women-led march of Oct. 12, 1969, on Fort Dix in New Jersey, supporting anti-war GIs in the stockade there. YAWF organizer Laurie Fierstein was a coordinator of that bold action. That year, Sue was added as a technical editor on The Bond, newspaper of the American Servicemen’s Union.

For decades, Sue made major contributions in the movement for women’s rights, especially for reproductive justice, by her activism and her writing. Sue was instrumental in initiating the Women’s Caucus of YAWF in 1969 and co-edited Battle Acts, the organization’s magazine, published from 1970 to 1974.

This publication covered news and struggles of working-class women, especially low-income and Black, Latinx, Asian and Indigenous, immigrants and those with disabilities, LGBTQ2S+ individuals, prisoners, youth and seniors. Articles supported the Black Panther Party and other liberation movements at home and abroad.

The magazine’s international features expressed solidarity with the women of Vietnam, under siege from Washington’s bombs, and the women of South Africa resisting racist apartheid. Articles sided with our sisters in socialist Cuba subjected to a U.S. blockade, and hailed Puerto Rican independence fighters, such as Lolita Lebron. (Read back issues at tinyurl.com/y37k2dp2)

YAWF Women promoted the need for struggle and solidarity with the most oppressed women, shown in its banner “Sisters: Unite and Fight!” that was carried in demonstrations around the country.

International Women’s Day: 1970

On March 7, 1970, the YAWF Women’s Caucus organized a 1,000-strong march for International Women’s Day to the notorious Women’s House of Detention in NYC’s Greenwich Village, in solidarity with oppressed women imprisoned inside. As the demonstrators chanted “Free our

sisters!” the women inside yelled out the windows “Power to the people!”

Sue was instrumental in this mobilization. One way she contributed was to research the march route taken on March 8, 1908, by 15,000 immigrant garment workers demanding higher pay and an end to sweatshops and child labor. That demonstration had been an impetus for women socialists in Europe to establish International Women’s Day in 1910.

YAWF Women reclaimed the militant, socialist character of this special day by following the route taken in 1908, while highlighting the struggles of the most oppressed women in the first such protest in the U.S. in decades.

A fighter for workers’ rights, Sue attempted to unionize staff at publishing company McGraw-Hill. In April 1970, she was fired by the bosses, who opposed not only her pro-worker activism, but her workplace organizing against the Vietnam War and support for the Black Panther Party. The group Women in Publishing and other workers in the industry picketed the company’s building, calling for Sue’s rehiring and denouncing this political repression.

In 1987, Sue joined the National Writers Union and played a leadership role for the last 20 years centered on dealing with grievances and contracts. She also mentored NWU volunteers on how to work on behalf of the members. She strongly urged the NWU to take a significant role in supporting political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. The union’s wonderful tribute to Sue appears on the NWU website and was emailed to its members (tinyurl.com/yy3vw8sy).

Reproductive justice now!

YAWF Women and WWP participated in the mass movement demanding legal abortion since its beginning. The right was finally won from the Supreme Court in 1973. Sue made fighting for reproductive justice—and writing about it in WW newspaper and other publications—a special focus for decades. In addition to her activism and writing, Sue was involved in defending women’s clinics to protect workers and clients from the vile right-wingers attacking them.

A YAWF Women’s banner was carried to every demonstration on reproductive

rights. Its slogan, unique in that period, read: “Free, safe legal abortions! No forced sterilization! Raising healthy children: The choice must be ours!” This was always the pro-working class, anti-racist viewpoint espoused by YAWF and WWP on reproductive rights, explained in a brochure entitled, “Abortion and Class Society.” Composed by Sue and this writer, it was updated frequently as the struggle developed into a multi-issue movement, speaking to the needs of all women.

Representing YAWF Women, Sue became very active in the Committee to End Sterilization Abuse, founded in the early 1970s by Dr. Helen Rodriguez Trias. The organization, which included the American Indian Movement and the Third World Women’s Alliance, campaigned against the rampant coercive sterilization of women in Puerto Rico and of Black, Latinx, Indigenous and poor women in the U.S. The group successfully won regulations barring this racist practice and mandating informed consent, first in New York City in 1975-77 and then federally in 1979.

Anne Teicher, Sue’s friend and collaborator, told WW that they both were members of the Steering Committee of the Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse, formed in 1977 to oppose the Hyde Amendment and the barring of Medicaid funding for abortions. The group was active through the 1980s.

In the late 1980s, Sue and Anne wrote a pamphlet on sterilization abuse. Sue also edited a CARASA book, which was reissued as “Women Under Attack: Victories, Backlash and the Fight for Reproductive Freedom.”

“Sue was a tireless advocate, organizing demonstrations, writing newsletter articles and tabling on the streets,” explained Anne.

Sue also self-published her novel, “Love means Second Chances”—a moving examination of abortion within a family. In her words, “Ultimately the book shows that women must have access to all options to enable them to own their own lives.”

Sue was also active with YAWF Women in protests initiated by the Joanne Little Defense Committee, which the Norfolk, Va., branch of WWP helped to found, along with the Prisoners Solidarity Committee. Little, who is African American, defended herself against a white deputy sheriff



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Sue Davis and WWP members participated in the Women’s March on Jan. 18, in New York City’s Foley Square.

who attempted to rape her in a prison in Beaufort, N.C., in 1975. She was tried for murder and faced life in jail or execution, but a national campaign won her acquittal and release.

Support Workers World newspaper!

Sue’s dedication to WW newspaper went back to the 1970s, when the staff worked (pre-computer) at the office until the wee hours of the morning, went home, slept for a few hours, and then went to their day jobs. For over four decades, Sue wrote, proofread and copyedited, using her professional expertise for the working-class weekly. She covered labor activism in her biweekly column in WW newspaper, On the Picket Line.

Monica Moorehead, a WW managing editor and coordinator of the International Working Women’s Day Coalition in NYC, said: “Sue Davis was an indispensable member of our editorial staff, a brilliant copy editor who paid so much attention to both political and grammatical detail. Her articles on labor and women’s issues helped to raise the sensitivity and political level of our readers.

“Sue helped to found our IWWDC in the early 2000s, when she would speak at our rallies and forums on reproductive justice which she spent many decades of her life defending and fighting for. She was always expanding her political understanding where gender oppression was concerned. The working class movement has truly lost a precious revolutionary whose spirit can never, ever be duplicated and I have lost a dear friend and comrade.”

Because of her firm commitment to the newspaper, Sue single-handedly initiated and carried out the WW Supporter Program for 43 years, sending out a monthly letter, which included a personalized hand-written note to each donor. That’s about 35,000 letters! She cultivated friendships and regularly kept in touch with many supporters.

Sue’s work raised funds that helped to publish and mail out the publication. She was elated when supporters donated. Sue was so dedicated to WW newspaper that she prioritized donating as generously as she could every month to publish it—like clockwork.

Sue had friends from many milieus, even going back to her high school and college days, who had vastly different political viewpoints and philosophies. Yet she maintained her anti-racist, pro-worker and pro-socialist perspective. Sue led a full life, contributing to many struggles, diligently working on WW newspaper, advocating for NWU members and demonstrating—all while enjoying New York’s cultural events and treasuring her family, friends and comrades.

Sue Davis, Presente!

Political and personal comments by Sue’s comrades and friends are posted at workers.org/2020/11/52183/



Sue Davis (in helmet) and Deirdre Griswold (right) at a 1968 demonstration against the Vietnam War in New York City.



Sue Davis speaks at a June 27, 1970 protest after publisher McGraw-Hill fired her for pro-union and political organizing.



Sue Davis (center) and Stephanie Hedgecock on an International Working Women’s Day panel, March 12, 2017.

WW PHOTO

The white vote for Trump

Is multinational working class solidarity possible?

By Nathaniel Chase

Why did nearly 73 million people vote for Trump, given his disastrous pandemic response and the economic collapse?

The answer, simply put, is racism. In a country built on white supremacy, from slavery and genocide to mass incarceration and imperialist war, it should come as no surprise that a substantial portion of the population would back a candidate openly espousing white supremacist views.

Trump's voters were overwhelmingly white. They cut across class lines, coming from the ruling class, the petty-bourgeoisie and the working class. Trump was the near unanimous choice among the police, Border Patrol and so forth.

There were exceptions. Among all voters, including white voters, the majority of the LGBTQ2S+ vote went to the Biden/Harris ticket, for example. (NBC, Oct. 1) But even among white union members, a significant number backed Trump.

It is easy to see why a sector of the ruling class would support Trump. Same for the cops, and for the petty-bourgeoisie, historically the base for far-right movements. Why so many white workers supported Trump, given his openly anti-working class program, is a more complex question.

Material basis for racist ideology

Support for white supremacy among white workers is not a new phenomenon in the U.S. This support has two primary sources: one material and one ideological.

Materially, white workers are in a contradictory position in relation to the capitalist, imperialist, white supremacist system. On one hand, white workers on average enjoy a substantially higher standard of living, greater democratic rights, more positive cultural representation, and a generally higher status than Black, Brown, Indigenous and Asian workers. The ruling class buys off white workers with crumbs, the biggest crumbs going to cisgendered, non-disabled white men.

On the other hand, they are still



In the 2019 Buffalo Pride Parade, the Anti-Capitalist Leftist Solidarity Bloc contingent, including Workers World Party, marched to fight racism.

WW PHOTO: WWP-BUFFALO

exploited as workers, with surplus value extracted from their labor by the ruling class, though to a lesser degree than from oppressed workers. This means a commitment to white supremacy actually facilitates their own exploitation by limiting the possibility of a united struggle — crucially, with oppressed workers in the leading role — against the ruling class. So there is a contradiction between two aspects of their identity: the “white” aspect aligning them with the white ruling class, and the “worker” aspect aligning them with workers of color.

In addition to the material contradiction, there is the ideological factor. As Karl Marx put it: “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas.” This has never been more true than in the age of 24-hour news, consumer culture and social media. We live inside the most expansive propaganda machine ever devised, one that indoctrinates us with the ideas of the ruling class. The ruling class uses this machine to ensure a majority of white workers identify more as white than as workers.

As Malcolm X put it: “If you're not

careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.”

Struggle breaks through ruling class propaganda

The ideological arena is not completely under ruling class control. The struggle of working and oppressed people can have enormous influence. Consider this summer's rebellions following the racist police lynching of George Floyd. A Pew Research Center study found that 67 percent of U.S. adults supported the Black Lives Matter movement this past June. But, by September, support had dropped to 55 percent. In June a surprising 37 percent of white Republicans supported BLM, but in September less than half that, only 16 percent. (tinyurl.com/y42xf7mm)

This leads to the peculiar conclusion that millions of white workers, even Republicans who cast ballots for arch white supremacist Trump, had voiced support for an anti-racist movement just months before. What could account for such an enormous contradiction? The anti-racist struggle!

In June the rebellions were at their height, but by September they had tapered off amidst growing attacks against them, emanating from both Republicans and Democrats. At their peak, the rebellions affected the consciousness of millions of people in the U.S. Imagine if the organization of working and oppressed people had been sufficient to sustain and expand the rebellions indefinitely!

Democrats pose no threat to white supremacy

The other ruling class party, the Democrats, has abandoned almost all pretense of defending the interests of working people. This strengthens white supremacy by giving more space for the most reactionary ideas to prosper. Make no mistake: Biden also is a white supremacist. Biden's list of racist policies includes the 1994 Crime Bill, destroying welfare in 1996, organizing imperialist coups in Honduras and Libya, and backing millions of deportations while vice president under Barack Obama.

If the Democratic Party pays lip service to progressive ideas, it is a disingenuous maneuver to capture and defang people's movements. The post-election hostility mobilized against social democrats like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Bernie Sanders makes this clear.

The leadership of organized labor, by tying itself to the Democratic Party and rejecting independent working class

action, has not seriously challenged white supremacy. This holds back the power of the rank and file, based at the point of production, to push back against racism.

However, last summer numerous unions issued a statement calling for workers' action against racism. (laborforblacklives.org) This is a major positive development. Now the call to action must advance to actual action.

Need for anti-racist revolutionary consciousness

Examining the material and ideological basis for white workers' racism explains the strength of Trump's support, and also raises questions of revolutionary strategy: Can white workers develop revolutionary consciousness, or are they hopelessly racist and reactionary? Does the white aspect of their identity inevitably dominate the worker aspect? Again, let's look to this summer's rebellions.

Oppressed nations within the U.S. have risen up countless times against the police. But one aspect distinguishes the 2020 rebellions from all earlier ones: the participation of millions of white youth, following the leadership of the oppressed.

This radical development is the result of the decline of U.S. imperialism. The crumbs with which the ruling class buys off white workers are procured from the labor of super-exploited oppressed workers, both inside the U.S. and around the world. As the crisis of an unsustainable capitalist system deepens, it is increasingly unable to provide those crumbs.

This produces two contradictory responses among white workers. Some, anxious over their loss of privilege compared to oppressed workers, gravitate to racist, anti-migrant fascist positions. Others, seeing a future more similar to that of oppressed workers, move towards solidarity with the most oppressed. The decline of U.S. imperialism creates greater reaction, and at the same time, a greater materialist basis of solidarity.

Dare to struggle, dare to win!

Again, the ideological struggle is key. It is the duty of revolutionaries, in particular white revolutionaries, to sharpen burgeoning anti-racist class consciousness among white workers. Without the intervention of organized revolutionaries, the ideological apparatus of the ruling class will always prevent the development of revolutionary, anti-racist working class solidarity, regardless of the strength of its material basis. Revolutionaries must build class unity on the basis of total commitment to the struggle against racism and recognition of the leadership of the most oppressed sectors of our class.

Oppressed nations may, understandably, reject organizing with white workers entirely and choose a separate path. The choice to carry out their struggle as they see fit must be defended on the basis of self-determination. Defending, not opposing, the right of oppressed nations to self-determination builds unity.

An honest assessment of the consciousness of white workers can be demoralizing, to put it lightly. But we would do well to look to this past summer for a hint of what is possible. And we should remember that countries as vast and riven with contradictions among the people as the Russian Empire and feudal China were able to build revolutionary unity and overthrow their oppressing classes.

So let us march forward, equipped with revolutionary optimism to face the challenges before us. □

Kaepernick joins the call to 'Free Mumia!'

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

A virtual press conference on the critical juncture in the fight to free political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal was held here Nov. 16. A special highlight was a seven-minute message from Colin Kaepernick, expressing his support. Kaepernick sacrificed his stellar athletic career

in 2016 when he began to take a knee in protest against police terror during the playing of the U.S. national anthem at National Football League games.

Kaepernick called on the current movement against racist policing to join in the work to bring Mumia Abu-Jamal home: “If the Black Lives Matter movement is to mean anything, then Mumia's life and legacy must also matter. Mumia still fights for our human rights. We must continue to fight for his right to be home.”

Kaepernick's statement concluded a distinguished panel who addressed the history and status of Abu-Jamal's case. The speakers, including Pam Africa of MOVE, Prof. Linn Washington Jr., Kwame Ajamu, Prof. Greg Gonsalves, Dwayne Betts and



WW PHOTO: BETSEY PIETTE

Colin Kaepernick addresses video press conference for Mumia on Nov. 16.



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Angela Davis says 'Free Mumia' to Nov. 16 video press conference.

Angela Davis, also commented on the fight to abolish the carceral state. The event was chaired by Johanna Fernandez. Go to tinyurl.com/y4dr42eo to see the complete 2.5-hour video.

Washington, a Philadelphia journalist who has covered Abu-Jamal's case from the beginning, described the “obscene judicial, prosecutorial, and police misconduct that has marked this case” as “blue suit, black robe corruption that masquerades as justice not only in Pennsylvania but across the U.S.”

Long-time activist Angela Davis stated: “Mumia's case exemplifies the length to which the state will go to silence the critics of police power. It is time to accelerate the campaign to bring Mumia home!” □

Pennsylvania prisons

Breeding grounds for coronavirus

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

When the coronavirus first became a global pandemic in the spring of 2020, there were widespread demands, met with promises from state officials, to release particularly vulnerable incarcerated workers. Some states and municipalities did release people, but never in the numbers the situation warranted.

Instead of broad releases, prison officials in Pennsylvania instituted draconian lockdowns where prisoners daily spent 23 hours in cells and were given only 45 minutes per day to shower, make phone calls or get fresh air. In person visits were stopped, and access to libraries, commissaries and other programs were strictly curtailed. Exercise and hot meals ended.

While until recently, only 160 cases of COVID-19 were reported among the incarcerated workers, these restrictive measures never applied to the guards and prison staff, who appear to be the ones bringing COVID-19 into the prisons.

Fast forward six months, and prisons, including those in Pennsylvania, are facing a deadly full-blown resurgence of COVID-19 among those incarcerated as well as staff. The result has been outbreaks of COVID-19 in 21 of the 23 state prisons. As of Nov. 12, there have been 17 reported

deaths of incarcerated people. At least 442 prisoners and 244 staff have tested positive. According to the Department of Corrections, when staff have requested testing, more than half are positive for the

lockdown policies have been kept in place for over seven months now, amounting to mass torture for the over 46,000 incarcerated workers.

The DOC is also limiting testing for



Protesters in Philadelphia call for prisoners to be released due to COVID-19 surge, April.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

coronavirus. Testing of staff is not mandatory. (Philly.com, Nov. 12)

Rather than release more people or make staff testing mandatory, PADOCC officials have responded by moving prisoners who test positive to other prisons or isolation units within a prison. The

incarcerated workers to those facilities with larger outbreaks. In State Correctional Institution Chester just outside Philadelphia, as of Nov. 10, half of prisoners' test results and 90% of staff tests were positive. Incarcerated workers there are reporting that prison officials



are passing out power of attorney and property release forms in anticipation of more deaths. The 943 men in Chester are only tested if they have a fever, even when many are experiencing other classic COVID-19 symptoms.

The crisis is not limited to state prisons. A recent court filing by U.S. attorneys reported 80 prisoners and eight staff tested positive at the Federal Detention Center in Philadelphia. At the Federal Corrections Institution at Fort Dix, in nearby New Jersey, 150 men out of 220 in one unit tested positive.

As far as numbers in county jails, Claire Shubik-Richards, executive director of the Pennsylvania Prison Society said: "We don't know, because our county governments aren't telling us, and that is astounding." (Philly.com, Nov. 12)

The consistent refusal by prison officials to release at-risk incarcerated workers, and to even provide basic PPE and other preventative items, amounts to the cruel and unusual punishment expressly forbidden by the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It is turning every sentence into a death sentence with no chance of appeal. □

Montana issues COVID death sentence to prisoners

By Johnnie Lewis

Montana State Prison reported Nov. 6 that Robert Gonzalez, 70, died Oct. 24 of COVID and that "underlying health conditions contributed to his death." MSP reported another prisoner Jeffery Alan Lafield died of COVID the same day. (tinyurl.com/y4ay7e5f) According to NBC Montana, this prisoner, also in his 70s, had underlying conditions. (Nov. 2)

Age, in itself, is an underlying condition. At 17.6%, Montana ranks No. 1 in U.S. states for its percentage of older (55+) prisoners. (tinyurl.com/y52wjkh) Additionally, according to 2015 Bureau of Justice statistics, 32% of people in prisons and 40% in local and county jails are disabled, making them more susceptible to COVID. (tinyurl.com/yydu9df7)

In April, Disability Rights Montana and ACLU sought the release of all prisoners with disabilities, older people



PHOTO: SARA DIGGINS

In October, Montana families turned out in Missoula to support incarcerated people.

Numbers are also rising in the women's prison in Billings; Indigenous women make up a disproportionate 34% of the state's female prison population. (tinyurl.com/y94mkgdn) The numbers issued by state reports may also hide COVID deaths inside overall death statistics.

The state reports no racial/ethnic statistics for COVID

and those with underlying health conditions. The state's Supreme Court unanimously denied the claim. (tinyurl.com/y4yj7kt8)

COVID-19 deaths and infections are increasing in Montana prisons. Of some 3,600 prisoners that the Montana Department of Corrections listed in the state system at the end of 2019, percentages of infections have been reported variously, from 12% of the population at MSP to 43% at privately run CoreCivic's Crossroads in Shelby (tinyurl.com/yyh2bwur).

infections and deaths among incarcerated people. While Indigenous people comprise 6% of the state's population, overall they make up 22% of those in prisons and 26% of jail populations. (tinyurl.com/y94mkgdn) While the state's Black population is 1%, 3% of prisoners are Black and are incarcerated at 5.7 times the rate of whites. The Latinx population is 3% and makes up 5% of prisoners. (prisonpolicy.org/profiles)

The MSP warden has said that unless people in the prison show COVID symptoms, none of the 1,400 inside are tested. No PPE is distributed. No social distancing protocols are in place. All prisoners are locked down 23.5 hours per day. All are assumed positive for the coronavirus.

COVID among guards and staff in all Montana prisons and jails is rampant. (tinyurl.com/y3lwtgns) National Guard military police and battlefield medical units — some veterans of U.S. wars on Iraq and Afghanistan — have been deployed to 17 prisons and jails across the state, ostensibly to assist prison staff with distribution of meals and mail, laundry and inmate counts. (tinyurl.com/yxnz3g7l)

But the pandemic death threat and repressive prison conditions raise the possibility that military forces have been brought in to put down any possible uprising by incarcerated people. □

Ramsey Prison terrorizes Texas incarcerated

By Gloria Rubac

"We're already stressed out because of the virus. We've all had it, and now there are new threats that it's returning. On top of that, there's a new warden who is known as 'the clean-up warden,' who is preparing for audits and trying to make the prison look good so it can get more funding. And once again, Lieutenant Lopez is having guards write up a disciplinary case every shift, even if they have to make it up." So wrote a prisoner at the Ramsey Prison Unit south of Houston.

A quota system was imposed at the Ramsey Unit two years ago through a written order that all guards issue at least

three disciplinary write-ups per shift. An email ordering the quotas was found by a prisoner and smuggled out and sent to Workers World, as well as the Houston Chronicle and other publications. It was widely reported, resulting in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice changing a policy to expressly prohibit disciplinary quotas.

But now there is reportedly a new, unwritten verbal order from Lieutenant Joe M. Lopez for a write-up every shift, leading to fabricated infractions.

On a phone call the evening of Nov. 12, a prisoner told this reporter he's starving. "I got up at 3:00 a.m. to go to my prison job. When I got off around 11:00 a.m.,

it was too late for lunch; and right now it's after 8:00 at night, and they are still feeding dinner. I haven't eaten in over 24 hours! I'm going to refuse to go to work tomorrow, even if I get written up. It's not worth it to be so hungry," he reported.

The Ramsey Unit is expecting a PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) audit in November and a security audit in December according to prisoners.

"Stress is at an all-time high, and false cases over ridiculous charges — like having a clothesline up to dry our clothes or not wearing a mask, which are only sporadically given out — it's crazy. We try to keep our clothes clean, washing them and hanging them up to dry. Now it's illegal

unless done during certain hours. We've always worn our shorts and T-shirts in the day room, but now if we don't have on the prison uniform, we're written up," a prisoner reported. "This is for the audit, to show that the prison management is strict on enforcing rules."

According to other reports from prisoners, "Rules are not being followed by staff. A lieutenant is supposed to be on each cell block at least two times a day. This never happens. Guards are supposed to walk each cell block every 15 minutes — also rarely happens."

The stress of no visits, no recreation time, no craft shop time, of hunger if you

Continued on page 8

A survivor speaks: 'I had to defend myself'

I first met Wendy Howard when I joined the No Justice Under Capitalism Coalition in spring 2020. She attended many of its demonstrations demanding mass release of prisoners due to the COVID epidemic. Later I found out Wendy was facing felony murder charges for killing her physically and sexually abusive spouse. Howard, a mother of seven, was also defending her daughters against her ex-partner, who was a sexual predator. Wendy is a strong, heroic woman, now working tirelessly for survivors of domestic violence. Her trial is scheduled for March 29, 2021. She could be facing 50 years inside one of California's women's dungeons. The Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party supports Wendy Howard and joins the demand that the Kern County District Attorney drop the charges now. Self defense is a right! — Judy Greenspan

This is a slightly edited version of a talk given at the webinar "Women and Oppressed Genders: Survival and Resistance" hosted by WWP's Prisoners Solidarity Committee on Sept. 24.

By Wendy Howard

I'm facing charges of first degree murder, which will come with a 50-to-life sentence if I am convicted. And this was after years of abuse, restraining orders, ineffective policing, with very little to any help in those phone

calls to police. The non-prosecution of this person, and him not being held accountable, ended up empowering him. And so things got worse.

When the unfortunate situation occurred in which I had to defend myself, I called the police seeking their assistance and help and ended up being the one taken to jail. I truly believed in the justice system up to a point that I was impacted by it.

At that point, when I went in there, I quickly learned exactly the tactics that they use, even in the county jail. And I wasn't even convicted of anything, I was only charged with something. Some of the things that they do in even the jails are harmful. I had just experienced a traumatic attack, and they did not give me any kind of medical evaluation or attention, specifically a mental evaluation. They also denied me my medication

for six weeks. I have to take a shot every week for rheumatoid arthritis; they denied me medication, and I ended up with permanent joint damage.



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Wendy Howard with daughters Bailey (left) and Miranda (right) in front of the office of the Kern County District Attorney.

'Brought us to have a connection and a deep respect'

I also met other ladies that were in there with similar charges as mine. When I first went in, I was not as close to the ladies as I could have been. But then I realized that a lot of the ladies in there were in there for things that really they didn't have control over, such as [spouse/partner] abuse, early childhood abuse — some with stories as bad as mine, if not worse.

That brought us to have a connection and a deep respect for each other and helping one another while we were there.

I found a lot of discrepancies in the way that the system works. There's one lady in particular that has charges

that are very similar to mine. She's been through two mistrials. And they're now trying her for the third time. They have refused to give her bail reduction. And she

Continued on page 8

COVID-19 protocols

Recipe for disaster in Pennsylvania prisons

By Bryant Arroyo

Incarcerated workers across Pennsylvania are demanding that Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel reverse his disastrous decision to begin mass transfers of prisoners at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following commentary is from jail-house organizer and environmentalist Bryant Arroyo, confined at State Correctional Institution Frackville, falsely convicted of a crime.

The DOC policy contradicts Wetzel's supposed responsibility of care, custody and control. People are feeling anxiety. We can't tell what it's gonna be from one day to the next because of these unpredictable decisions that are detrimental to our very lives.

It exacerbates mental health. It has staff in the middle. They can't say anything because they're employed here. But the top officials making these decisions place them in harm's way, as well as us.

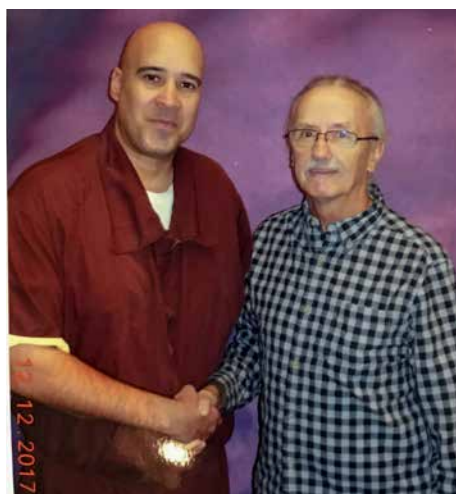
Concerned staff tell us that their boss, Wetzel, "would rather have a dangerous plan in place than no plan." Wetzel has not only backpedaled on policies that seemed to be working to protect people, he is now putting staff and inmates in a more vulnerable position. But he's not here. He's in an office. [Staff] are on the ground. The fish rots from the head down.

These are not emergency transfers. There are Plan B sites that can be used in the event of natural disaster, but these are not being utilized. Instead, prisoners are being transferred from COVID-19 hotspots into other facilities.

What if one of them gets it from an inmate transferred from a particular hotspot, and that officer takes it home? Then what do you have? You're creating one outbreak on top of another, instead of coming up with a true solution and protecting us at all costs.

Subsequent to this policy change, SCI Pine Grove announced it will be transferring all of its adult prisoners and converting to an exclusively youth detention facility. The DOC intends to do this mass transfer at the height of the new spike in cases.

Meals are usually delivered during lockdowns, but now prisoners are made to wait



Bryant Arroyo (left) with Joe Piette of WWP Prisoners Solidarity Committee.

in line and bring meals back to their cells. The meals are cold by the time they receive them. Meals for those in the Behavioral Modification Units and other restricted housing units are delivered in "hot carts" to keep them warm. But there aren't enough for general population. It's not even winter, and the meals are already stone cold by the time prisoners receive them.

Isolation anxiety

We need sunshine, exercise and, most importantly, social interaction. We are locked into our cells 23 hours a day. The mass mental health crisis that's exploding in prisons, after [people are] being confined like this for over eight months, is isolation anxiety. It creates panic, rage, loss of control and complete mental breakdown. We need at least two hours [out of our cells]. Straight. No intervals. Or three hours, one period during the day and one at night.

The tension of solitary confinement is causing fights to break out during the few hours imprisoned workers aren't locked in. Like a chemical reaction, the end result of isolation anxiety is you react and combust. It's like we're starved dogs getting let out of a cage. All you want to do is eat, nourish yourself and feel normal. And Secretary Wetzel has put the entire Pennsylvania DOC in direct defiance of the protocols set out by the Centers for Disease Control.

There are a hundred people on the block. Each tier is about 50 people. They are unlocked on a staggered schedule, one

tier at a time on one-hour intervals, which creates a situation that deprives us of our full time. Even when people can congregate on the block, are they able to practice safe social distancing? Not at all. You can't stay six feet apart.

Prisoners are taking extraordinary measures to stay safe. We're taking our showers. We're provided with extra cleaning utensils to keep the hygiene to the highest standard. And that's proven by the track record of what we've been doing for the last seven to eight months, which has been working.

But all that is changing as Wetzel's pandemic transfers makes it impossible for prisoners to protect themselves from the virus.

Making matters worse, incarcerated workers like John Ludovici have raised the alarm on a systematic violation of their rights as mental health patients. He says his two staff psychologists work in the same office as his unit manager. The presence of someone who is not a patient's health care provider — let alone someone who is their jailer — during sessions is a flagrant violation of privacy rights enshrined in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. Ludovici has filed a complaint to the board of licensure that certified his staff psychologists. He also filed an administrative grievance against his unit manager, despite being pressured by her not to do so.

Protocol noncompliance

There are both male and female staff who are sincerely and genuinely concerned about not only contracting [COVID-19], but taking it home to their family members. Wetzel is opening up the floodgates into a facility where we have had basically zero cases.

There are 256 inmates [who] fill up the dormitories, which are open without cell doors. Ninety-eight men who were transferred to Camp Hill during recent renovations in this housing unit are now being

brought back to Frackville.

Staff are wearing MP95 masks. Guards are being given mandatory overtime because of staff shortages, as there are those allegedly quarantining for 14 days. I don't know if they even retest [the guards] after that.

An additional 28 or so inmates just came in from [SCI] Dallas. One of them tested positive for the antibodies; in other words, he's been exposed to COVID-19. Then they re-tested him, and he came back negative. So we're dealing with that, too.

Protocol noncompliance is the major thread that goes through everything I'm explaining to you and revealing to you while I'm here. Presently and again, Secretary Wetzel is the person behind it. It's a recipe for disaster.

This is part of an ongoing series of articles based on conversations of Workers World reporters with Bryant Arroyo.

PICTURING



A WORLD WITHOUT PRISONS

ARTWORK BY BIANCA DIAZ

From an inside / outside art exhibition "Picturing a world without prisons," curated by Project NIA and Free Write Jail Arts & Literacy Program in 2013.

Yet another death in Cleveland jail

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

On Nov. 9 Shone Trawick became the third person to die in Cleveland’s Cuyahoga County Jail this year and the 12th jail death since June 2018. Trawick is the first casualty to be blamed on violence by another prisoner. Those in nearby cells reportedly screamed for help on hearing the assault.

Preventable deaths were previously attributed to overdose, suicide and inadequate medical care. Lea Rayshon Daye, a 28-year-old Black trans woman, died last August in her cell. Michael Wormick died in July. Both were homeless at the time of their arrest.

Daye had written a letter, found in her cell by her mother, intended to expose human right violations including inedible and inadequate food and substandard medical care.



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Demonstrator outside the Cuyahoga County Jail, May 29. Since the protest, three more people have died in the jail.

Beatings by guards — not by other incarcerated people — have led to multiple lawsuits. The same week that Trawick’s death was reported, Jasper Muldrow Jr. sued the county over the 2018 traumatic beating of his mentally ill son, Jasper Muldrow III. The jail officer, Charles Enoch, who instigated the assault, was recently sentenced to a year probation with no jail time. Four other guards who joined Enoch in attacking Muldrow have not been charged.

The jail’s scandalous conditions and high rate of deaths led to the formation of the Coalition to Stop the Inhumanity at the Cuyahoga County Jail in December 2018. Regular protests have taken place outside the downtown jail for almost two years. The Coalition joined LGBTQ+ and homeless advocates in a joint online press conference (covered by Workers World) after Daye’s death.



What drew media national attention to the county jail, however, was not the deplorable conditions. It was the widely-hailed decision to shrink the jail population to limit COVID-19 spread. But many prisoners were then transferred to state prisons that were COVID hotspots. Now the county jail population, previously subjected to massive overcrowding that intensified spread of the virus, is again nearing capacity.

It is possible that jail authorities will use Trawick’s tragic death to impose collective punishment — such as lockdowns and harsher restrictions — on all 1,500 people now housed at the county jail.

Everything happening at the Cuyahoga County Jail is another argument for prison abolition and another reason to “free them all.” □

Ramsey Prison terrorizes Texas incarcerated

Continued from page 6

have no money for commissary food and now false disciplinary cases is pushing prisoners to the brink. Those who are coming up for parole know they’d better keep quiet. Those whose family live near Houston don’t want to be sent to a prison 500 or 600 miles away. Prisoners who file grievances or just complain have been immediately shipped out to another prison. For this reason, no prisoner names are used in this article.

On a phone call Nov. 16, the problem with feeding prisoners was again described: “We had breakfast at 3:00 a.m. but lunch was 12 hours later, from about 3:00 p.m. until 4:30. Then dinner was just an hour and a half later. This craziness is just more stress.”

Ramsey Unit: over a century of abuse

The Ramsey Unit opened in 1908 and was a huge property consisting of five former plantations. It has had a long and sordid history of racism, violence, brutality and deaths. This continues today. As in all Texas prisons, the guards wear grey and blue uniforms, the colors of the Confederate army.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott has largely ignored the pandemic inside the Texas prison system. The Texas Observer reported May 13 that about 77,000 people were eligible for parole. Another 15,000 people have been approved for release and are waiting for counseling, substance abuse



Just like in this 1970s Houston Chronicle photo, Texas prisoners still pick cotton with armed guards on horseback overseeing them. Prisoners earn \$0.00 an hour.

classes or other programs they’re required to finish before leaving lockup — programs that prisoners claim have been delayed during the pandemic.

Last week the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas released a report, “COVID and Corrections: A Profile of COVID Deaths in Custody in Texas,” which read as an indictment of the prisons and jails in the state.

These facts from the report explain why Ramsey

prisoners and all Texas prisoners would be stressed to the max:

- At least 231 people have died from COVID in Texas correctional facilities. This includes staff, jail and prison deaths;
- Of prisoners who died, 58% were eligible for parole at time of their death;
- Twenty-one prisoners died with less than 2 years left on their sentences;
- 21 people had served 90% or more of their sentence at time of death;
- 73% of people who died from COVID in prison didn’t have a life sentence;
- 80% of people who died in local jails from COVID were not convicted of a crime;
- Nine who died in prisons from COVID were approved for parole but were not yet released;
- Incarcerated Texans are dying from COVID-19 at a rate 35% higher than the rest of the U.S. prison population; and
- No hand sanitizer is allowed because the TDCJ says it could be used to drink or to start fires.

These statistics represent actual crimes against real people—incarcerated workers. In a real peoples’ court, the whole prison and jail systems would be found guilty and shut down for their murders and total disregard for humanity.

But that is our job. As the chant says: “What do we want? Justice! And if we don’t get it? Gonna shut shit down!” □

A survivor speaks: ‘I had to defend myself’

Continued from page 7

has been in pretrial detention, not guilty of anything,

I have this kind of survivor’s guilt, I guess I would say, because I was given bail reduction in my hearing. I am now out on a \$500,000 bail, while she is still being held on a \$1.5 million bail. It’s kind of made me pretty angry to see those discrepancies and to see how they treat people in there. Because the only real difference that I can see between her case and my case is the color of our skin and how we’re perceived in that regard.

‘An eye-opening experience to be in the system’

So as soon as I got out on bail, I decided that it was time to hit the ground running and try to make as many changes as I possibly could until I was put in that trial room and tried. Which was another whole thing, the whole plea bargain thing [before the trial]. They really do try to intimidate people into taking those pleas, including things such as one of my friends still there was told that she would never see her kids again if she didn’t take this plea bargain. It was an unreasonable

My passion now is to try to bring that to light and bring people to realize that the people that are inside are really people who have suffered. And maybe there’s a different way that we can look at what healing and restoration to community might really look like in the future. That’s my goal.

and overcharged plea bargain. She didn’t take it, and now her public defender isn’t really fighting for her. And because of COVID and the courts being closed, her family’s not there to hold him accountable either.

It’s a really eye opening experience to be in the system and impacted, especially at my age. Having once believed in the justice system — and not just believed in it, but I actually was in criminal law and was on the eligibility list to become a law enforcement officer and was also married to a sergeant.

So it was quite the eye opener. Definitely a rude awakening, when I found myself in this system and saw how things really worked. Thank you for your time and for listening to my story.

Some actions you can take to support Wendy Howard: Contact Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer and Deputy Attorney Courtney Lewis to demand justice for Wendy: Email: czimmer@kernda.org and clewis@kernda.org. Call: (661) 868-2340. BCC: justice@justiceforwendy.com so Wendy can use emails in court. Sign and share the petition: facebook.com/groups/JusticeForWendyHoward.

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From the Immigration Movement, for the Left Election 2020 lessons

By Teresa Gutierrez
San Antonio

These slightly edited remarks were given on a Workers World Party Nov. 12 webinar, "What Now?"

The huge voter turnout from the Latinx and the im/migrant rights movement for the 2020 presidential election must be put into the context of developments on immigration since 2006.

Under a Democratic administration, a horrific war against immigrants began, one that was intensified by Trump. I am talking about the Latinx and im/migrant movement, but want to make it clear that I do not want to imply that all im/migrants are Latinx.

In fact, they are Central and South Asian, African, Haitian, etc. But the bulk of migrants are Latinx because they come from south of the U.S. border, so I'm putting it within that context.

Also, the Latinx vote is not a monolithic vote. There's a Latinx vote, but not a Latinx voter. It is very, very complex. Many Cuban Americans are beholden to anti-communism, and they will vote in a certain way. Puerto Ricans tend to be more progressive and revolutionary and will vote or not vote a certain way and so forth. So it's not one vote.

But I want to specifically talk about the im/migrant rights movement and what happened with the vote.

The reports I've heard are that some millions of im/migrant rights advocates and Latinx voted in this election. There was massive organizing, there was a mobilization of three million workers. There were 800,000 calls made by VotoLatino. My phone, my email were really burning up before the election. Every im/migrant rights organization that I've ever worked with in New York or Wisconsin or Arizona — everybody was reaching out.

Defeat of Trump — 'buoyed, not duped'

We've got to understand that the defeat of Trump for the im/migrant rights movement is a step forward. That movement is buoyed by this defeat of Trumpism. They're buoyed, but they're not duped. I want to make that clear. This is a sophisticated, experienced movement. As many activists have said, they mobilized not to pick a savior, but to pick a target.

We talk of a class war, do we not? And in a war, you've got to assess the strength of your soldiers, of your class. We're in a class war — and in a war, you need a

We have an opportunity to push like hell right now and win some concessions from the ruling class, because capitalism is at a dead end. And it can go either fascist, or it could go to where they have to give us some more concessions. We've got to organize that!

reprieve, you need a respite, you need a break, you need to breathe.

The im/migrant rights movement, in particular — because of Trump and because a Democrat like Obama deported more than any other U.S. president ever in history — they needed a reprieve. They needed to get the boot of Trump off their neck, and they were able to do this.

This is a very complex and wonderful development that we can be hopeful about, because even though it is within the context of a bourgeois election, this sector of the working class was not passive, but active. And because they're not duped by the Democratic Party, we can be hopeful.

Fight for concessions now

This is a moment to fight for concessions. This is a moment when the oppressed and the working class can make gains and win concessions. For example, here in San Antonio there is a housing project with a long history of struggle and a symbol for the community.

At the end of December, it stands to face many evictions when the moratorium ends. Many of the supporters are connected to organizations that mobilized for Biden. They should count on his administration to give some concessions because it will be an embarrassment for Biden to be inaugurated with all the evictions, with all the deaths from COVID.

So we've got to push hard to get some concessions from this government.

I'm very excited by the struggle that's going on within the Democratic Party because for once it's out in the open. And we have to credit women of color for bringing that struggle out into the open. AOC — Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez — said

that she may not run again because the Democrats are blaming the "Defund the Police" slogan as a reason why some of them did not win. The women of color are calling [the Democrats] out on this publicly.

I've been getting on some calls with the National Nurses United, the nurses' union, a fighting organization. A Black Lives Matter activist from Missouri, Cori Bush, was on one of these calls — she had been on the ground during the Mike Brown struggle and rebellion. She's a nurse — and this sister just got elected to Congress! And she is now part of the "Squad."

But we are not naive about the role of the Democratic Party. We know that they will try to put a brake on the struggle. We know that with the next police murder, they're going to say "Chill." We know that they can go to war at any time. We know that they're going to go against the Venezuelan revolutionary government. We know they're not going to find housing for the victims of the hurricanes, and so forth and so on.

We have an opportunity to push like hell right now and win some concessions from the ruling class, because capitalism is at a dead end. And it can go either fascist, or it could go to where they have to give us some more concessions. We've got to organize that!

Abolish ICE!

As for freeing the thousands of people who are still in ICE detention, I think that's why this im/migrant rights movement was so active in this period. They felt like Trump, who wants to be a fascist and openly represents a fascist movement, was like a dog whistle to the right wing, an armed right wing.

Now I think that the im/migrant rights movement is very much going to challenge the Biden administration and the Democratic Party about ICE detention. They're going to mobilize, they're going to expect some victories.

Already Biden has supposedly agreed publicly that he will stop building "the wall." I don't think that's a major victory myself — Trump wasn't even able to build the wall that he talked about. But Biden has said that the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) youth will get full relief. He has said that he will look for a



Teresa Gutierrez

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

path for citizenship and amnesty for the undocumented. We'll see where that goes.

Deep organizing

The main point I want to make about the im/migrant rights movement is how we have to really deepen our organizing, as Marcello was saying earlier, among the working class.

This is what has saved the im/migrant rights movement. This is what has resulted in fewer deaths and deportations. We have so much to learn, not just from the Black Lives Matter movement, but from the im/migrant rights movement as well.

The day-to-day work of organizing means building a base, winning the trust and understanding of the masses, and for the movement of immigrants rights it has meant moving as a bloc.

This is the kind of deep organizing that we have to do if we're going to influence any of those 70 million that voted for Trump. And if we're going to win back people from the Democratic Party, we've got to get on the ground. And we've got to sustain.

The elections determine who governs, not who rules. It's still the Wall Streeters and the Bill Gates types, they're the ones who are really ruling, right?

So how are we going to get to rule? How are we going to defund the police or abolish ICE? How are we going to get there? We're only going to get there if we do the deep organizing that especially the young comrades are talking about. I really feel like that's the task of revolutionaries.

The lessons from the im/migrant rights movement are to deepen ourselves among the working class, to elevate consciousness, to win the victories of defunding the police, but also get to the point where we abolish ICE and abolish the police altogether. We have to do that.

And that means abolishing capitalism, because as long as capitalism exists, the threat of fascism is real. That's why the victory of defeating Trump was so important. Because it was a pushing back of white supremacy, and an element in this country that would very much welcome fascism. To push it back at this moment, that's no small thing.

This is the moment for the workers and the oppressed to win things. And do deep organizing. This is the lesson of the im/migrant rights movement for us right now. □



Many DACA children (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) are adults now, fighting to keep their families together in the U.S. One such Dreamer, so-called after a Congressional act meant to protect them from deportation, demonstrates in Washington, D.C., in 2018.

Stop #45—a first step

Pandemic surges, economy sputters

Continued from page 1

needed second stimulus bill, such as the HEROES Act passed by the House but not the Senate. Meanwhile, records are being broken every day for new infections. As with any crisis under capitalism dependent on racism, Black, Latinx and Indigenous communities suffer disproportionately.

It doesn't have to be this way

Even with the prospects of a COVID-19 vaccine, it's hard for the masses of working class and oppressed people to see light at the end of the tunnel. And a cure for the pandemic will not cure capitalism of its own built-in sickness — a drive to maximize individual profits by driving down labor costs and thus beating out competitors. This has, since the early 1800s, caused cyclical economic downturns — crises of overproduction — that are doubly devastating in the current period of generalized capitalist decline. A lot of the jobs recently lost will not come back. As COVID deaths in the U.S. approach 250,000, and cases top 11 million, China in contrast has had fewer than 90,000 cases and below 5,000 deaths. Progress on a vaccine is further along than in the U.S. Moreover, China's economy has not only reopened and recovered, it is the only major economy projected to grow in 2020. This is not just China boasting. The prediction comes from

the International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook report! Why the discrepancy? While there is a capitalist class in China, with some of its members very wealthy compared to the Chinese masses, China has a workers' state whose orientation is fundamentally socialist. This means that human needs take precedence over profit. Socialism is exactly what workers all over the world — and this country is no exception — need. With a socialized health care system, workers would no longer be at the mercy of the for-profit medical industrial complex. There would be no Big Pharma bosses, who see only dollar signs in a much-needed COVID vaccine and treatment drugs. There would be laws to guarantee that everyone's basic economic needs would be met. That won't come about overnight, of course. In the meantime, socialists need to be in the vanguard of pushing demands that address the survival needs of the working class. These include good-paying jobs for those able to work and comparable income for anyone unable; free health care for everyone; and safe working conditions including PPE, hazard pay and no retaliation against workers who become ill, have to be quarantined or refuse to work unsafely. As the struggle grows, so will the realization of this basic class truth: A system that cannot meet these basic demands is a system that belongs in the trash can of history! □

Although the Democratic Party presidential candidates soundly defeated the Republicans by some 6 million votes overall, as well as with a majority of the undemocratic and bizarre Electoral College, #45 refuses to concede, continuing as if he and Mike Pence had won a second term. Meanwhile, he appointed his own toadies to be Pentagon executives, replacing those he appointed earlier. These earlier appointees were equally pro-imperialist officials, belligerent toward foreign rivals and enemies of U.S. imperialism. They were just more likely to disobey his orders. Reactionary Republican senators continue to back the lame-duck president's tweets that he will remain in office. On Nov. 14, a more significant event occurred. Some thousands of pro-Trump demonstrators, including some of the country's most vile venomous vermin from the Proud Boys and the KKK, held a super-spreader gathering in Washington, D.C., to shout their fervor for the election loser's second term. Because Workers World knows in our bones that the leadership of both big capitalist parties serves the U.S. imperialist ruling class, readers might mistakenly assume we're neutral in their conflict leading up to the Jan. 20 inauguration. Far from it. Although neither of those parties represents U.S. workers, their conflict and a possible "coup" by #45 affect the working class. Workers World addresses our comments to those long in the Marxist and Leninist movement, as well as anyone active in the movement for workers' rights and the rights of all people facing oppression under capitalism. **How the battle is fought** The working class of the U.S. has a stake in the outcome of the succession struggle. Even more, we have a stake in how the battle is fought. Regarding who is the next president, we start from this fact: The intervention of Black people, mostly led by Black women, in the election

process, itself flipped Georgia, Pennsylvania and Michigan. This determined the election. To allow #45 and his cultish followers to overturn that effort would be a blow to the rights of all oppressed peoples. That reason alone is enough to make it required to join this struggle. There are plenty of others. Remember that on Nov. 7, millions of people cheered all day in the streets after the corporate media announced #45's defeat. To excise the fascist tumor apparent in the D.C. demonstration, these millions should be called back into the streets — with masks, social distance and a will to win. They, and not some deal brokered by CEOs or centrist politicians, must assure that the legal democratic succession carrying out their legal vote occurs. A good day could be when the Electoral College meets, Dec. 11, or on Jan. 20. It might appear that a majority of the billionaire ruling class, happy with the trillions of dollars in tax breaks and the free access to federal and Indigenous lands that #45 handed the corporations, now back a more normal pro-capitalist Biden/Harris administration. First of all, their backing is no guarantee of victory. Struggles are decided by active forces. More important, an independent mobilization of workers and the oppressed is central to stopping the Trump gang from overriding the votes of tens of millions of people. Then, assuming the working-class mobilization wins, it is in a better position for the necessary next step. That next step is to bring the battle to the Biden/Harris administration, assuming they take office, as well as to the Republicans. From the Democrats we can expect an imperialist and warlike foreign policy — which has always been bipartisan. We can expect bad compromises with the Republicans, a friendly attitude toward the police and a wish to stay in the good graces of the ruling class. Only independent actions of the working class can challenge the rulers and their government, whichever party is in office. These can start by defeating Trump. □

Evo Morales returns Bolivians eject coup regime

Continued from page 1

its strength. By last spring and summer, the people fought the coup regime and held strikes in August to fix the election date for Oct. 18. Throughout the year, the coup government barred Morales and García Linera from returning to Bolivia. The MAS nominated Arce and Choquehuanca, who ran with Morales' political blessing and won. Besides winning the top posts, the MAS won 21 of the 36 seats in the Senate and 75 of the 130 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. A majority of representatives in both houses are women. The de facto (coup) government led by the "interim" president, Jeanine Áñez, was not only repressive, and ferociously corrupt, but incompetent in managing the Bolivian economy amidst a pandemic.



People march in 2019 with the wiphala, the Indigenous flag, in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in opposition to the right-wing coup.

Much of its already weak popular support started vanishing soon after the coup. During the past year, the coup parties pillaged a declining economy and fought each other over the spoils. According to a report by Argentine anti-imperialist journalist Marco Teruggi, who accompanied Morales' caravan to Chimoré airport, the Bolivian rightists remain divided in three parts: Áñez and others in the coup government who fear being charged with political or other crimes for their role and have retreated to their strongholds; Carlos Mesa and his allies, who have taken on the role of legal opposition; and Camacho, based in Santa Cruz in the East, who is plotting the next coup. (See Teruggi's Nov. 13 article at workers.org) The Camacho forces held a demonstration in the capital on the eve of the inauguration, trying to stop it. The MAS had to defend its own ceremony. Fascist elements bombed a MAS office in the capital, La Paz, only days earlier. As Teruggi wrote, "Requests to Jeanine Áñez to suspend the inauguration went unanswered; the Supreme Court of Justice refused the

demand for an audit of the vote, and the military ignored the call" to stop it by force. The rightists must have looked so weak that all the international observers validated the voting and the count. This included the OAS, which a year earlier had played a key role in ousting Morales. Last year the U.S. government became one of the first to recognize the "interim" regime in November, after what was clearly an illegal grab for power. Washington's earlier role in executing the coup was obvious. Following Bolivia's Oct. 18 election, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called Arce on Nov. 4 and congratulated him for his victory. Since as of Nov. 15, Pompeo still supported Donald Trump's illegal attempt to remain in office for a second term, his concession in Bolivia indicates how low the U.S. considers the chances of the Bolivian rightists. **What next?** As the experience of the 2002 failed coup attempt in Venezuela against Hugo Chávez showed, when a mass movement reverses a reactionary coup, it can open a road to advance the revolution. The coup makers exposed themselves. There is widespread desire to purge or prosecute those



The Bolivian people celebrate the return of former President Evo Morales at the Chimoré airport in the Chapare region, Nov. 9.

who carried out crimes against the people. Up till now, the overwhelming electoral victory has prevented reactionaries in the Bolivian army from intervening against the workers and oppressed communities. Yet the threat remains. The police and many military officers still have their ties to the oligarchy. Under those conditions, any steps the Bolivian popular movements take to create their own defensive forces deserve support from the anti-imperialist movement inside the U.S. □

A Palestinian comments on the U.S. election

By Susan Abulhawa

As results of the U.S. presidential election started coming in last week, the reaction across the country, at least on the left, was incredulity. They could not fathom that the race could be so close after four years of Donald Trump, whose administration — they all agreed — had been aberrant and evil.

They are right that his overt racism, incitement to violence, and explicit misogyny have been more pronounced than that of previous U.S. presidents, who’ve tended to mask their impulses for all the above with social spit shine. It is also without question that Trump lacks minimal compassion for others.

But is he really so different than his predecessors? More brutal? More racist? More egomaniacal? I do not think so.

Donald Trump has been the most honest expression of the United States we’ve ever seen in a president. For those of us who’ve watched or felt the sheer barbarity of the U.S. war and surveillance industry around the world, this is clear.

Of course, the horror and outrage U.S. citizens feel against the Trump administration have been justified. The separation and caging of families seeking refuge at the border under his watch, his denigration of women, his promotion of white supremacy and emboldening of racist paramilitary militias, his in-your-face nepotism, conflicts of interest, use of

public office for self-enrichment, and his mismanagement of the pandemic, shady businesses, and tax avoidance are shocking to people in the U.S. and the world.

But the truth is that the only thing that truly separates him from past presidents is that he turned the ethos of supremacy, racism and division inward, whereas his predecessors — in all their polish, at times eloquence, winning smiles and even tempers — unleashed them on the defenseless of the world.

Tell me, how is Trump saying “Stand back and stand by” more egregious than President Bill Clinton carpet bombing Iraq’s water infrastructure to distract from his domestic sex scandal with Monica Lewinsky?

Or more egregious than U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Madeleine Albright declaring that 500,000 dead Iraqi children as a result of U.S. sanctions are “worth it” (presumably worth the destruction of an ancient civilization to get its oil and ensure Israeli hegemony in the region)?

Or more egregious than Secretary of State Hillary Clinton quipping, “We came, we saw, he died,” about the gruesome murder of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi and the utter decimation of yet

another previously high-functioning Arab and African nation?

Generational destruction and pain inflicted on Global South

It is true that Trump winning almost half of the votes points to the already well-known sentiment that Black America has been talking about for decades — that this country is racist as hell. But what does the sheer shock, incredulity and outrage of many of the “other half” who are anti-Trump say about the U.S.?

It says they have never seen — or even bothered trying to see — the ongoing inef-fable generational destruction and pain the U.S. has inflicted on the Global South and, in particular, Arab nations who have done nothing to the U.S., but who lie in indescribable tatters and anguish as a result of the U.S. war industry.

To this half of the United States, I say: You are wrong, Trump is not an aberration. He is the truest face of this country, all of it, save for the minority who have a sense of history and global human solidarity.

To this half of the U.S. now celebrating Biden’s victory, I ask: What will you do when he launches a new war? Because he will. That is the only thing U.S. presidents



Susan Abulhawa

know to do when they need to increase their popularity.

And with a country so divided now, it is almost certain Biden will take that route. He has already hinted that Iran needs to be put in its place, and as the U.S. seems to do Israel’s bidding in most things, it may well become the latest target of U.S. imperialism.

This slightly edited article originally appeared in Al Jazeera on Nov. 12 as “Donald Trump is the truest face of the United States.” Susan Abulhawa is a Palestinian writer and the author of the international bestselling novel, “Mornings in Jenin” (Bloomsbury, 2010) and her most recent “Against the Loveless World” (Simon and Schuster, 2020).

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Cómo COVID-19 revela las desigualdades en la economía de EE.UU.

Continúa de la página 12

que dependen de las propinas o de la comisión de ventas.

Los trabajadores peor pagados, con pocos o ningún ahorro de emergencia, ahora se enfrentan al mayor desempleo. El número de empleos para los trabajadores que ganaban menos de \$14 por hora ha bajado un 20% desde enero. El número de trabajos que pagan entre 14 y 20 dólares por hora ha disminuido casi tanto como el 16%, mientras que el número de trabajos para los trabajadores que ganan 32 dólares o más por hora ha aumentado en un 2%. (Encuesta sobre la población actual)

Los jefes se hacen más ricos, los trabajadores se enferman

Mientras que los trabajadores sufren bajo el azote del desempleo y se ven obligados a aceptar trabajos peligrosos y mal pagados para sobrevivir, los ricos se hacen cada vez más ricos. Los ingresos del tercer trimestre de Google ascendieron a 46.020 millones de dólares, frente a los 37.990 millones del trimestre anterior. Amazon informó que los ingresos del tercer trimestre fiscal de 2020 aumentaron un 37% con respecto a los de 2019, hasta alcanzar los 96.100 millones de dólares.

Un área de venta al por menor que



Los trabajadores de un supermercado de Brattleboro, Vermont, salieron el 29 de junio para protestar por la cancelación por parte de la empresa de la bonificación por peligrosidad relacionada con la pandemia de COVID.

sigue funcionando a plena capacidad son las tiendas de comestibles, incluyendo la tienda Whole Foods, propiedad de Amazon. Aunque sus propietarios están obteniendo miles de millones de beneficios, los trabajadores de las tiendas de comestibles siguen enfrentándose a riesgos mortales todos los días, a pesar de que los jefes les han cortado su paga de “bonificación por peligrosidad”.

Según el Washington Post (12 de agosto), “Al menos 130 trabajadores de supermercados de EE.UU. han muerto, y más de 8.200 han dado positivo por

el nuevo coronavirus desde finales de marzo”. Con o sin pago por riesgo, dadas las altas tasas de desempleo actuales, los trabajadores están dispuestos a aceptar los trabajos.

Los grandes jefes —que saben lo desesperados que están los trabajadores por poner comida en la mesa para sus familias y mantener un techo sobre sus cabezas— se amontonan en el trabajo, recortan las horas y obligan a los trabajadores a tratar con clientes sin máscaras que no tienen en cuenta el distanciamiento social. Algunos trabajadores están tan disgustados con su tratamiento que renuncian a mitad de turno. Pero otros están tan desesperados que vienen a trabajar aun enfermos.

Las estadísticas de EE.UU. comparadas con las de China

El Departamento de Comercio informó que la producción de bienes y servicios de los Estados Unidos, el Producto Interno Bruto, cayó por el precipicio en el

segundo trimestre (abril, mayo, junio). Se redujo un 9,5%, unos 450.000 millones de dólares. Este fue el mayor descenso porcentual desde 1875. Esto siguió a un descenso en el primer trimestre.

Incluso después de que el PIB de EE.UU. creciera un 7% en el tercer trimestre, ayudado por el paquete de estímulo de marzo, la economía de EE.UU. ha disminuido un 3,5% desde principios de enero.

Compare esto con la tasa de crecimiento de China del 1,9% según el Banco Mundial. China, que ha tenido 4.746 muertes de 91.921 casos de COVID-19 según la Organización Mundial de la Salud, (OMS) ha logrado controlar la pandemia allá.

China ha mostrado una respuesta ordenada, científica y altamente organizada a escala nacional. El gobierno de China sigue planeando poner fin a la pobreza antes de 2021 a pesar de la pandemia. Tiene previsto llegar a una sociedad moderadamente próspera para todos en 2030 y alcanzar una economía desarrollada y socialista en 2050.

Lo que está claro es que los trabajadores estadounidenses necesitan un nuevo enfoque para controlar esta pandemia y su impacto económico. China podría proveer un buen ejemplo de lo que se necesita. □



La wiphala, un símbolo de comunidades andinas reconocido en la Constitución boliviana y un emblema que para muchos representa a miembros del Partido de Movimiento al Socialismo.

‘Racismo y autodeterminación’ Naciones indígenas de Oklahoma ganan fallo de Corte Suprema

Por Gloria Rubac

Una decisión sorprendentemente progresista de la Corte Suprema encontró que más de un tercio de Oklahoma todavía se denomina como “nación indígena” según la ley federal para la tribu Muscogee Creek y otras tribus de Oklahoma.

El tribunal dictaminó el 9 de julio en el caso *McGirt v. Oklahoma* que, según tratados que datan de hace dos siglos, gran parte del este de Oklahoma es territorio indígena. Eso significa que la ley tribal y la ley federal se aplican allí en casos penales que involucran a ciudadanos nativos, no la ley estatal de Oklahoma. Los tratados están reconocidos en la Constitución de los Estados Unidos como “la ley del país”.

Hasta el fallo de la Corte Suprema, la mayoría de los delitos graves en el este de Oklahoma, incluidos los casos que involucran a ciudadanos tribales, habían sido procesados en tribunales estatales por fiscales de distrito. La decisión de la corte dependía de la cuestión de si la reserva Muscogee/Creek continuó existiendo después de que Oklahoma se convirtió en estado en 1907.

Esta decisión se aplica a las cinco naciones del este de Oklahoma: las naciones Muscogee o Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw y Seminole. Estas Cinco Tribus fueron expulsadas de sus tierras ancestrales en el sureste en el Sendero de las Lágrimas en la década de 1830 por el gobierno de Estados Unidos. Hoy, medio millón de ciudadanos tribales viven en docenas de condados de Oklahoma que cubren más tierra que el estado de Carolina del Sur.

Hace doscientos años, todo Oklahoma, excepto la península, era territorio indio. Este territorio incluía las tierras de origen existentes de varias naciones indígenas, incluidos los Apache, Arapaho, Comanche, Kiowa, Osage y Wichita.

El periódico *The New York Times* escribió el 9 de julio: “La decisión de 5 a 4, potencialmente una de las victorias legales más importantes para los nativos americanos en décadas, podría tener implicaciones de gran alcance para las personas que viven en lo que el tribunal afirmó que era un país indígena. Las tierras incluyen gran parte de Tulsa, la segunda ciudad más grande de Oklahoma”.

El juez Neil M. Gorsuch, que anteriormente se había puesto del lado de las



Los límites tribales de los territorios indígenas en 1889. ¡Oklahoma es y siempre ha sido un territorio indígena!

tribus nativas en otros casos, se unió a los jueces más liberales del tribunal en este fallo. En opinión de la mayoría, escribió que “el Congreso le había concedido a Creek una reserva y que Estados Unidos necesitaba cumplir sus promesas.

“Hoy nos preguntan si la tierra que estos tratados prometieron sigue siendo una reserva indígena a efectos de la ley penal federal”, escribió Gorsuch. “Debido a que el Congreso no ha dicho lo contrario, mantenemos la palabra del gobierno.”

El presidente del Tribunal Supremo John G. Roberts Jr. advirtió en una opinión disidente que la decisión del tribunal causaría estragos y confusión en el sistema de justicia penal de Oklahoma. Y en un lenguaje alarmista, el senador Ted Cruz de la vecina Texas tuiteó que la Corte Suprema “acaba de regalar la mitad de Oklahoma, literalmente. Manhattan es el siguiente”.

Causar estragos y genocidio en las naciones indígenas ha resultado en decisiones racistas desde la educación a la vivienda y el uso de la tierra indígena - esto es lo que el gobierno de EE.UU. y los estados individuales han hecho a los pueblos indígenas desde que las primeras colonias fueron colonizadas por Inglaterra.

Madonna Thunder Hawk, organizadora del Proyecto de Leyes del Pueblo Lakota, dijo que la decisión del tribunal y un reciente fallo federal que ordenó el cierre del oleoducto de acceso a Dakota del Norte habían sido motivo de celebración. Sólo

que no demasiado. “Es una guerra para nosotros”, dijo. “Hay algunas victorias, pero la guerra continúa”. (*New York Times*, 6 de julio)

‘Todavía estamos aquí’

La Comisión para la Protección de la Soberanía de la Nación Cherokee emitió un comunicado de prensa con varios puntos de preocupación después de *McGirt*. Uno de ellos es que el Jefe Principal se comprometa con los miembros del Congreso, que pueden estar contemplando la legislación, y se ponga a cualquier legislación que desestabilice las reservas tribales.

La Nación Cherokee, con más de 380.000 ciudadanos, es el gobierno federalmente reconocido del pueblo Cherokee. Tahlequah, Oklahoma, es la capital de la Nación Cherokee. Con 11.000 empleados y una variedad de empresas tribales que van desde contratos aeroespaciales y de defensa hasta lugares de entretenimiento, la Nación Cherokee es uno de los mayores empleadores en el noreste de Oklahoma, según *Indian Country Today*.

Mary Kathryn Nagle (Cherokee) habló en una transmisión de radio de ICT para explicar por qué el esfuerzo actual para desestablecer las naciones tribales va a fracasar. Como ciudadana y abogada



En 1880, delegados indígenas de 34 tribus frente al Consejo Creek House, Territorio Indio.

Cherokee, Nagle y Sarah Deer (Mvskoke) presentaron un informe amicus curiae en nombre del Centro Nacional de Recursos para Mujeres Indígenas, la Unión Americana de Libertades Civiles y otras organizaciones para analizar las implicaciones de género de la decisión. Ella habló en el aire para desafiar las preocupaciones que un grupo de expertos

conservadores, el Consejo de Asuntos Públicos de Oklahoma, ha llevado a toda la delegación del Congreso de Oklahoma. (tinyurl.com/y5oofhvk)

“No se puede firmar un tratado con una nación tribal, que lo firme el presidente, que lo ratifique el Senado de EE.UU. diciendo que es su reserva, y luego quitárselo porque en 2020 el estado de Oklahoma piensa que es una realidad inconveniente para ellos”, dijo Nagle.

“Los intereses privados no nativos han estado tratando de eliminar, desestabilizar, exterminar las naciones tribales. Los intereses corporativos han estado tratando de eliminarnos desde que los Estados Unidos existen. Ahora todos han fallado. Nosotros seguimos aquí. Y este esfuerzo también va a fracasar. . . . Petróleo y gas ven la decisión de la Corte Suprema en *McGirt* como una gran amenaza. Quieren caracterizarlo como una amenaza a la seguridad pública, cuando en realidad no lo es.

Y como notarás si lees esa carta, dicen, bueno, hay todos estos problemas creados por la decisión de la Corte Suprema en *McGirt*. La decisión de la Corte Suprema en *McGirt* no crea ni un solo problema.

“De hecho, un problema gigante que se ha aclarado es que Oklahoma estaba ejerciendo ilegalmente la jurisdicción que nunca tuvo, por más de cien años... Que Oklahoma no tenía esa autoridad, y sin embargo la estaba ejerciendo. Mucha gente como estos petroleros y gasistas se han referido a estas lagunas jurisdiccionales de seguridad pública. Eso también es una pista falsa. No hay lagunas jurisdiccionales.

“El simple hecho de la cuestión es que Oklahoma mantiene la mayoría de su jurisdicción. Todavía tiene jurisdicción sobre los crímenes cometidos por no indios. Los únicos crímenes sobre los que no tiene jurisdicción son los cometidos por indios, contra indios, en tierras tribales, en la reserva”.

En un año en el que se han cambiado los nombres y logotipos racistas de los equipos deportivos, cuando la Corte Suprema falló en contra del oleoducto de acceso a Dakota, cuando se han derribado o desfigurado estatuas racistas, el fallo de *McGirt* en julio es un paso más en el progreso de los pueblos que han estado luchando contra los invasores coloniales desde que se descubrió a Colón en 1492. □

Cómo COVID-19 revela las desigualdades en la economía de EE.UU.

Por G. Dunkel

La administración de Trump ha admitido que no tiene ningún plan controlar al virus COVID-19. El jefe de personal de la Casa Blanca, Mark Meadows, dijo a CNN el 25 de octubre que “No vamos a controlar la pandemia. Vamos a controlar el hecho de que tenemos vacunas, terapias y otras áreas de mitigación”.

Esta es una estrategia muy arriesgada, dado que las vacunas y la terapéutica aún no existen. Lo que Meadows está diciendo

realmente es que más trabajadores arriesgarán sus vidas al verse obligados a volver a trabajar para poder sobrevivir, y el gobierno no hará nada para ayudarlos. Los trabajadores que se enfrentan al mayor desafío son los que empezaron con los salarios más bajos y los que se enfrentan a la opresión sistémica. Eso es lo que revelan las estadísticas.

Los trabajadores en los EE.UU. han enfrentado tasas de desempleo tan altas como el 14,9% en 2020. En septiembre era de 8,9% para todos los trabajadores

- y esas tasas omiten a los trabajadores subempleados y desmotivados.

Si miras las tasas de desempleo de los trabajadores de color, como se informa en la Encuesta de Población Actual, las desigualdades saltan a la vista: 7,2% para los trabajadores blancos, los trabajadores Latinx 11,2%, los trabajadores negros 13,2% - casi el doble de la tasa de los trabajadores blancos. Para todas las mujeres, la tasa de desempleo es más alta que para los hombres.

Un gran porcentaje de las mujeres

negras y latinas se concentran en trabajos de servicios y de venta al por menor y se han visto especialmente afectadas. Bajo las presiones del comercio electrónico y la pandemia, cerca de un millón de trabajadores del comercio minorista han perdido sus empleos, que en un principio estaban mal pagados. Incluso cuando los restaurantes y las tiendas están abiertas, los clientes se mantienen alejados por miedo a ser infectados. Esto crea dificultades adicionales para los trabajadores

Continúa en la página 11