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COVID: A tale of two classes

Trump, COVID and poetic justice

By Nathaniel Chase

Donald Trump, who sat by while so many died, undercut health professionals' recommendations for fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, mocked wearing a mask, placed capitalist profits over the lives of thousands and put forward no serious plan to address the pandemic, is now sick himself. The chickens have come home to roost.

Unlike the millions of workers who have lost their jobs and health insurance because of the pandemic, or never had coverage in the first place, Trump is receiving top-of-the-line health care, including experimental treatments not yet available to the public. While he is receiving medical care immediately after his diagnosis, most people, especially people of color, must wait until they develop serious symptoms to be treated.

No resource will be spared to save the man who has allowed more than 214,000 people, disproportionately Black, Brown and Indigenous, to die from the pandemic. The U.S. response under his watch has been a complete failure: With only 4% of the world's population, the U.S. as of Oct. 5 has had more than 20% of total COVID deaths (worldometers.info/coronavirus), with many more to come.

There is without doubt poetic justice to Trump falling ill, and it is grotesque to expect that those upon whom he has inflicted so many horrors — from his open support for white supremacy and mass migrant detentions, to warmongering abroad and a disastrous pandemic response at home — should extend to him a kindness and concern he has shown himself so completely incapable of expressing toward others.

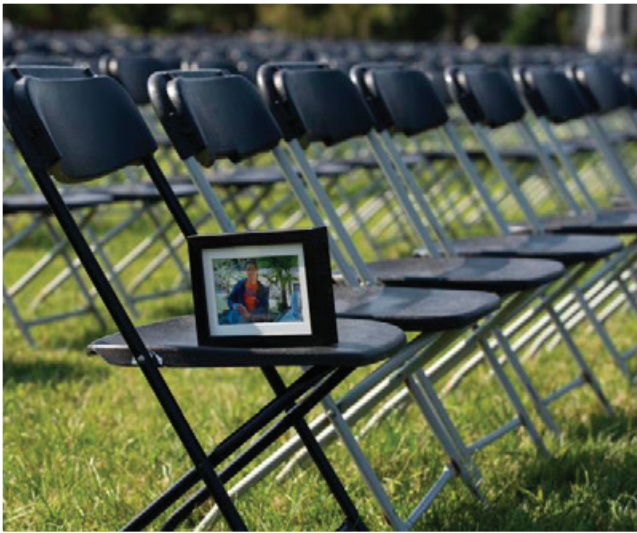
This is not how the liberal wing of the ruling class views the situation, however. Within hours of Trump's announcement, Joe Biden, Rachel Maddow and other liberal figures expressed their best wishes

and hopes for his recovery.

In a moment Trump is transformed, in the liberal view, from a monster single-handedly capable of destroying the world to a frail and infirm elder statesman.

Ruling class unites behind system

The ease with which the vitriol of 24-hour cable news evaporates exposes that the different wings of the ruling class, from the most liberal to the fascists, have



On the Ellipse outside the White House, a photograph of Leo Villanueva, who died from COVID-19, rests on one of 20,000 empty chairs, representing some of the over 214,000 lives lost so far in the U.S. during the pandemic.

more in common than it might appear and that they are all united in their commitment to maintaining the political machinery underpinning the capitalist system. Their disagreements mostly boil down to different approaches toward that shared goal, to how much the carrot vs. the stick should be used to keep working and oppressed people in line.

While liberals may call for turning the other cheek, for extending love to those who hate, the revolutionary view is rather different: You do not owe kindness to

Continued on page 10

Essential food workers battle virus

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

Big business neglect of the COVID pandemic continues to bring suffering and death to workers everywhere.

Essential workers, like the packinghouse workers at a frozen vegetable plant in Pasco, Wash., are fighting back. Hundreds of other strikes and job actions are also taking place across the country.

Workers at Twin City Foods in Pasco, along with those in the nearby Yakima Valley, held a work stoppage earlier in the pandemic. They have been demanding recognition of their union, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1439, to protect themselves from Twin City's attacks and neglect during the pandemic.

Two of the plant's workers have perished from COVID-19. One of them had been taken directly from the plant to the hospital, where he died. Some 80 workers rallied in protest at the plant on Oct. 2. They received statements of support from at least five local elected officials.

The two who died were both seasonal workers from Mexico. The picketers say that those who come here to work are being sent back in ashes. The plant has 300 to 400 workers, of whom 230 are year-round packinghouse workers. The seasonal workers come from Mexico on temporary visas, an expanding program of the most exploited.

The workers want union representation. They demand basic COVID protections, affordable health care and a voice

at work. They want to be paid as essential workers, have improved access to protective equipment and have the plant shut down to be sanitized.

Earlier this year, when workers brought their cloth face coverings to work, they were told by management they weren't authorized to wear them. One worker said she knows at least 15 workers who have tested positive for COVID. Union organizers say that management is not giving workers any updated information on sick or quarantined workers.

One of the workers, Jose Rafael Garcia, said he developed symptoms of COVID-19 in August. After recovering, he notified the company on Aug. 29 that he had now tested negative, but was told by management that he wouldn't be allowed to return to work.

Twin City Foods has great wealth to provide health and compensation for the workers. It has four big plants in the states of Washington and Michigan, with \$225 million in yearly sales.

Twin City's war on the workers is shown by its discriminatory treatment of its employees, most of whom are Latinx and im/migrant. These workers are essential, because they risk their lives in a crowded plant so that the rest of the country can have food on the table. Yet they are treated as if their lives are worthless.

This can be seen in the fact that 43% of Washington state residents who have COVID-19 are Latinx, while Latinx people comprise only 13% of the population.

The entire power structure is complicit in this, from the Trump administration on down to the state's Democratic officialdom, who refuse to enforce basic health, safety and labor regulations.

Workers have gained considerable support in the Pasco/Tri-Cities area, which is greatly needed when going against the pro-agribusiness power structure of the region. □

TEAR DOWN THE WALLS

Black trans lives
Second chance
Troy Davis remembered
Incarcerated women & trans people
Calls to release Jamil Al-Amin

4-5

Editorial
Workers' democracy – not capitalist charity 10

Denver labor for Black Lives	2
Louisville grand jury exposed	3
Mumia: Breonna's deathbed	3
Debate debacle	6
Voter suppression in the South	6
BLM protest vs debate	7
The election mess	7
Hands off refugees	8
Cops & white supremacists	9

Denver Area Labor Federation condemns fascism in Colorado

On Sept. 24, the Denver Area Labor Federation delegate body, representing 90,000 union members, unanimously passed the following resolution condemning the actions of Denver District Attorneys Dave Young and George Brauchler following a July 17 protest. They had arrested six protest leaders, held them for over a week without arraignment, and charged them with “kidnapping” because demonstrators encircled a police building. It is posted at Denver Area Labor Federation Facebook.

Whereas, the Denver Area Labor Federation delegates reaffirmed our oath in 2016 to stand against fascism and to speak out when we saw [it] occur in our government.

Whereas, six peaceful protestors face felony charges, including kidnapping, for their involvement in protests on July 17, 2020, in Aurora, Colorado. These arrests and ridiculous charges against organizers are a clear example of fascism. The government is cracking down on the right to organize, protest, and dissent. We must live up to our oath and defend our democratic rights in this time of growing fascism.

Whereas, charging the organizers with “kidnapping” for holding a protest outside the office of those in power is a dangerous precedent. This opens the pathway for employers to call the cops and arrest union members on picket lines for similar charges of “kidnapping.”

Whereas, the union members who fought and died for our rights as workers in Colorado faced similar charges of “inciting a riot” and “destruction of property.” Police and the government targeted our leaders and activists in the past. If we do not stand against these unjust arrests now, we do a disservice to the memory of those who built our labor movement.

Whereas, we must draw a hard line now. We know that if we do not stand up to these attacks against organizing and protesting, union organizers will be targeted next.



Demonstrators protest death of George Floyd at the Colorado State Capitol Building in Denver, on May 23.

Whereas, the organizers arrested have been held without a bond hearing for over five days. This is clearly a violation of due process rights and an effort to intimidate and retaliate.

Whereas, we shall never forget that recently deceased Congressman John Lewis was also arrested and beaten by the police when he and 600 civil rights activists marched on the highway in Selma, Ala. Upholding civil rights and the right to live with dignity and respect requires civil disobedience.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Denver Area Labor Federation calls on District Attorneys Dave Young and George Brauchler to drop the charges against the recently arrested anti-racist organizers;

Resolved that the Denver Area Labor Federation condemns the actions of District Attorneys Young and Brauchler for using their offices to overcharge protest leaders in a clear effort to intimidate protestors;

Resolved that we urge our affiliates and partner organizations to adopt a similar resolution,

Resolved that this resolution be made public for any and all to see. □



Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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♦ In the U.S.

Trump, COVID and poetic justice	1
Essential food workers battle COVID-19	1
Denver Area Labor Federation condemns fascism. . .	2
New evidence in Breonna Taylor’s murder	3
Philly: ‘Stop racist police murders!’	3
Breonna’s deathbed	3
Fierce advocate for Black trans people in prisons. . .	4
A second chance for Kushal	5
Troy Davis ¡Presente!	5
Incarceration of women and trans people	5
Jamil Al-Amin’s birthday: Release him	5
Presidential debate: Trump and Biden bicker.	6
Voter rights Pushing back fascists in NC	6
Thousands protest presidential debate.	7
Preparing for ‘the Interregnum’	7
Trump, ‘Get your hands off Somali refugees!’	8
White supremacists infiltrate police	9
Election Defenders: Call to Action.	10

♦ Around the world

Zhiqiang was not arrested for ‘anti-communism’ . . .	8
No stopping the student BDS movement.	9
Pakistan: Say ‘No’ to Bahria Town!	11
Greek workers tell Pompeo: ‘Go home!’	10

♦ Editorial

‘Capitalist charity’ vs workers’ democracy	10
------------------------------------------------------	----

♦ Noticias en Español

La amenaza del Interregno	12
Mumia sobre Breonna Taylor.	12

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New evidence in Breonna Taylor’s murder

By RJ Red

When Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron announced Sept. 23 that a grand jury was not charging a single police officer in the cop murder of Breonna Taylor on March 13 in Louisville, Ky., mass demonstrations erupted there, in New York City and in many other cities. On Sept. 25, Taylor’s family demanded the grand jury “open the books” and reveal the evidence used to reach its decision.

New evidence has now been released. Recordings from the grand jury proceedings and body cam footage from some police officers at the scene have raised many doubts about the legitimacy of the investigation and the handling of the crime scene by the Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD).

Cameron’s case for the LMPD officers hinges on their claim that they announced themselves before breaking into the apartment where Taylor lay sleeping beside her partner, Kenneth Walker. Cameron’s key witness testified to confirm this.

But Vice News obtained audio recordings of the original interview with this witness, who can be heard plainly saying, “No, nobody identified themselves.” Only after this initial interview did the witness change their story. Cameron presented no information from the first interview, but only testimony from the later interview that confirmed the cop narrative. (tinyurl.com/y24l86dz)



A protest against the police killing of Breonna Taylor, held Sept. 24 in Louisville, Ky.

This is a huge indication of bias in the case presented to the grand jury, since this was the only witness claiming to hear the police identify themselves. None of the dozens of other neighbors interviewed by Vice said they heard the police announce themselves.

Inconsistencies, lies in official narrative

Another inconsistency in the official narrative stems from the claim by the city and the LMPD that none of the officers who broke in were wearing body cameras. According to police, the officers were wearing plain clothes and were not required to wear body cameras.

But recently released photos from the scene show Officer Tony James wearing a body cam, which he did not turn on, in

a violation of department rules. The cam footage would have provided crucial evidence of the shooting. Without that, the case comes down to the word of the cops against that of Kenneth Walker, who fired a gun at unknown men breaking into the apartment. (tinyurl.com/yxt5nwj4)

Many hours of video footage are now available which show officers after the shooting, the scene during investigation and the arrest of Walker. One body cam recording shows one officer who fired a weapon, Brett Hankinson, walking back into the crime scene and being asked to leave by investigators. Hankinson lingers and asks questions. Another involved officer, Mike Campbell, is seen walking around, interviewing neighbors. (tinyurl.com/y5b7u865)

This later body cam footage clearly shows both these cops in violation of standard departmental practice after a cop shooting. Involved officers are supposed to be separated and assigned a “peer support officer,” in order to ensure they don’t speak to others on the scene or tamper with the investigation.

More than fifteen hours of tapes of released grand jury proceedings show other police distortions and inconsistencies. For instance, Officer Hankinson claimed that from outside he saw someone with a long gun inside the apartment. But no long gun was recovered, and the window he said he looked through was covered by blinds. (tinyurl.com/y55segjh)

This new evidence strongly confirms public suspicion and anger about Taylor’s death and the state’s protection of police terror.

In July, Taylor’s family accused the LMPD of a cover-up, after it came to light that investigators interviewing Officer Mattingly asked leading questions to coach him into a story that would clear him of wrongdoing. This behavior indicates that from the get-go, the investigators had every intention of sweeping the murder of Taylor out of sight. (tinyurl.com/y4jc6cjw)

The state’s investigation has utterly failed to pursue justice for the killing of Breonna Taylor. Unrelenting protesters continue to push for the only real justice that can be had — the defunding and abolition of the police. □

Philly protesters demand ‘Stop racist police murders!’



Hundreds of activists gathered at the “Rocky Steps” in Philadelphia on Oct. 3 to hear speakers from Black Lives Matter Philly, Black Philly Radical Collective, Black Alliance for Peace and Mobilization4Mumia condemn the racist police murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Mya Hall and countless others.

March leaders used the event to teach participants about organizing strategies. They led the crowd down the Ben Franklin Parkway to 20th Street, where Black activists gave short, on-the-street classes on jail support, state surveillance and counterinsurgency practices and showing solidarity with political prisoners.

The march resumed, ending in the wide streets around Logan Square, where participants took part in three workshops — Organizing 101, Street Medic Care and First Aid and Self-Defense.

— Photos and story by Joe Piette



Artists and activists honor Breonna Taylor with this 7,000-square-foot mural, about the size of two basketball courts, in Annapolis, Md.

Breonna’s deathbed

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

Taken from a Sept. 23 audio column on prisonradio.org.



Mumia Abu-Jamal

Her name, Breonna Taylor, has become a chanted and shouted call in protests, along with those of many other Black people killed by the state with absolute impunity.

In a recent decision, a grand jury* in the state of Kentucky did not issue a single indictment of murder against the police officers who broke into her apartment, shooting more than a dozen times.

At least six shots hit Breonna as she lay in her bed. The policemen were ostensibly carrying out a raid against drug trafficking, but, note that they did not find any drugs.

Only one cop, who had been fired before, now faces charges. He is accused of endangering neighbors by shooting at their apartments.

Philosophers sometimes conduct

thought experiments to see all sides of a controversy. Imagine, if you can, that a 26-year-old white woman named Breonna Brezinsky, who worked as a technician in medical emergencies, is killed, shot in her bed by half a dozen police officers in a misguided raid.

What do you think would happen to those police officers?

The case of the Black woman, Breonna, reminds me of Black Panther Party leader Fred Hampton, a 21-year-old Black man, shot in his bed after being drugged in the early morning hours of Dec. 4, 1969, in Chicago. Fifty years later, and the lives of Black people still matter.

From the imprisoned nation, I am Mumia Abu-Jamal.

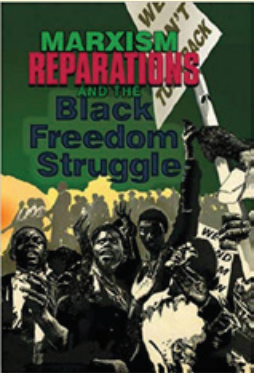
**A grand jury does not determine a person’s innocence or guilt as a jury in a criminal case, but investigates a possible crime, accuses one or more persons and establishes the charges against them.*

Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

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

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COVER GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON

Janetta Johnson: Fierce advocate for Black trans people in prisons



By Janetta Louise Johnson

The following is an edited version of a talk given by Janetta Louise Johnson during the Sept. 24 webinar Women & Gender Oppressed Prisoners; Survival & Resistance. Johnson, a formerly incarcerated Black transgender woman, is the Executive Director at Transgender, Gender-Variant, and Intersex Justice Project. She has been an activist and advocate in the transgender communities since 1997, when she moved to San Francisco from Tampa, Fla. She survived three and a half years in federal prison and, while inside, fiercely and tirelessly advocated for her rights as an incarcerated transgender person.

Johnson believes that currently and formerly incarcerated trans people without a voice will be people without hope. She will continue to struggle to instill hope and belief in a better future for every transgender person that she can reach.

I constantly am reminded of the trauma, the abuse, and atrocities that trans people are currently experiencing inside of custody. We [Transgender, Gender-Variant, and Intersex Justice Project] have a program where we correspond with trans people every Tuesday, which has not exactly been up since COVID-19. We have a staff to address a lot of the correspondence we received.

We just hired a formerly incarcerated trans woman who has been out for about five months. She is one of the legal assistants to our legal director, Alex Binsfeld. And we’ve just been receiving a lot of information from various people on the inside, about the abuse and the trauma and atrocities that the trans people are experiencing.

We especially think about trans people being the most vulnerable population inside the criminal justice systems generally, and when there’s a national pandemic. For many years, since I’ve lived in San Francisco in the Bay Area, I’ve always been concerned that if there was ever a national pandemic, how will Black trans people be served.

I’m a firm believer that things [have] only gotten



worse, because any type of disease or stigma is always more attached to trans people, and those are my concerns about the safety for trans people.

We’ve received a lot of correspondence through various institutions that we’re very close to. One of them is Mule Creek [State Prison]. We are very connected to there. We’ve received information from the inside that there’s a lot of things going on in Kern Valley [State Prison], and that a lot of needs of the people in prison are not being met.

So we’ve been doing a lot of legal correspondence with people, teaching them how to advocate for them-

selves to ensure that they are strengthened enough to use their own voice and their own penmanship in order to get their needs met. We’re working on various bills and policy to get people to cut down to 65% of the prison industrial complex, to meet that goal.

We are trying to make sure that trans people are a large part of that population that would be cut and released. We work with the city, county courts, and probation officers to ensure that no trans people will be booked inside the system — that they will come to our organization which is doing things to support trans people inside, and getting them into safer opportunities as they’re being released.

It’s been a lot of work. There’s been a lot of lack of resources or fundings and various things. We have been

doing our best, really showing up and creating opportunities and trying to get trans people in more permanent, stable housing situations. There are so many co-factors that put trans people at higher risk.

‘Reentry must come with a paycheck’

At TGIJP, I firmly believe that Black trans women will welcome anybody here. We’re just doing everything we can to create safe opportunities for people coming directly out of prison. Since COVID-19, we’ve brought on four trans people, who have spent long terms in prison, as reentry staff currently working with us.

Reentry must come with a paycheck. There’s no other way to do reentry, because people don’t have the ability to access reentry opportunities that do not come with a paycheck. Especially with all the different things that were experienced, and movement for Black lives, so many Black trans people being murdered, it’s really difficult. You’re trying to create safety for people on the inside plus create safety for people on the outside.

One last thing that I wanted to raise. I’m a formerly incarcerated Black trans woman. I hate it when people refer to people in prison as prisoners. I really have been talking to our legal director and saying that, I think you need to contact every organization that has “for prisoners” as their name or on the website. We should use a name that don’t forget that we are people in prison.

I was a person that was in prison and served many, many stints of time in prison. I’ve met so many amazing people in prison. This was the one time in my life that I felt empowered enough not to allow myself to be labeled as a prisoner because I had to look at my value of my worth and my wealth that I have on the inside. I’m not a prisoner. I’m a person who was a prisoner.

There’s a lot of reasons why I was a person in prison based on the inequities and injustices that happens to Black trans people that are part of the criminal injustice system. So I really wish and would like to ask if we could please [stop] calling people that are in prison “prisoners.” There are so many amazing people that are in prison. Give them the opportunity and the proper access.

As we talk about defunding the police and investing more in communities, that’s more and more people that we could bring in and out of the criminal justice system, and provide them with opportunities that’s needed. And I just always will encourage people that re-entry must come with a paycheck. □

A second chance for Kushal

By Kushal K. Shah

As a child, I was a loner. I was not popular with my peers and I was the black sheep of my family. I had a speech issue and because of that I was picked on and made fun of.

When it came to family outings, I was not invited. My family felt like I would be an embarrassment to them, so my siblings were invited and I was not.

In school I proved to be better than other students in sports but was not selected to play due to my speech issues, and the very fact that I was not a popular kid.

As a result, my childhood was very lonely.

Later on during my childhood, things got really rough in my home. I started to suffer abuse, and I put forth every effort to hide it from school officials so they would not report it. One day I showed up at school and my teacher noticed the bruises all over me, so the state police were called. I was removed from my home and placed in a group home.

From that point on, my juvenile years would be plagued by juvenile detention

and group homes. At the age of 18 years and 20 days old, I was with an individual whom I considered to be a friend. And things went far out of whack, a crime took place, and I was charged with a shooting. Throughout the court proceedings, I was represented by a public defender and court-appointed counsel who did next to nothing for me. I wrote to the court complaining about my so-called counsel; however, my cries fell on deaf ears.

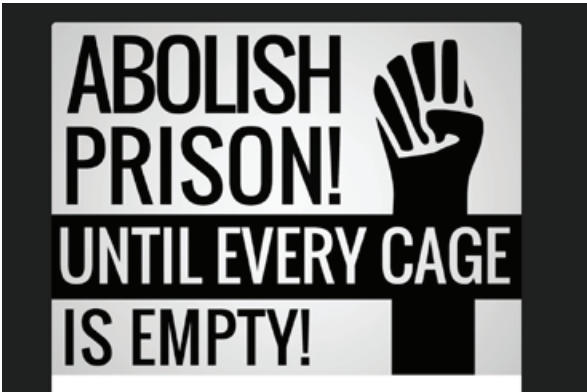
Powerless to resist, I would plead guilty in order to avoid the death sentence. Without the help of a competent counsel, I knew that I did not stand a chance against the state’s prosecutor.

I was sentenced to life in prison, and was initially placed in the Maximum Security Housing Unit. This is basically an isolation unit where there is no human contact. I became very depressed, lacking support, and I began suicide attempts. I felt hopeless and drained.

At this point I started to fight my case on my own. I would spend hours reading legal cases and legal books. I became

knowledgeable of the law and I started to find hope. I would write to random attorneys and ask them for their old law books.

I made praying my daily routine. I knew without divine intervention I would spend the rest of my life staring at brick walls. I have sought forgiveness from the Almighty and I continue to do



so. I know and understand that my fellow man will always pass unfair judgement, which is why I constantly seek the assistance of God.

At this time I am litigating cases for other prisoners. I am often called upon for legal advice and assistance. I am currently fighting against Gilead Sciences for

another prisoner. This company is selling toxic medication. ... I am single-handedly fighting this corporation from a prison cell.

I have received praise from attorneys for my work. My goal is to obtain a resentencing hearing, get out of prison and become an attorney. When I get released I can help other individuals better their positions. I would take a special interest in juvenile cases, because being passed around in the system at that age is traumatizing for a child. I understand their pain because I have experienced it myself. I want to use my mistakes and misfortunes to better other people’s lives.

There is currently a U.S. Supreme Court case which criticizes sentencing young people to life in prison. I fall into that category.

You can write me at:

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Smyrna, DE 19977

Troy Davis ¡Presente!

By **Mirinda Crissman**
Houston

Oct. 9 marks what would have been Troy Anthony Davis’ 52nd birthday. He was legally lynched by the state of Georgia on Sept. 21, 2011. Davis was an innocent man, wrongfully convicted of killing an off-duty police officer in 1989. He should have never been executed, let alone held in a cage for so long. Before his death, Davis told members of his family that he wished they would clear his name and end the death penalty altogether.



PHOTO: AP PHOTO/SAVANNAH MORNING NEWS
Troy Anthony Davis enters Chatham County Superior Court during his trial on Aug. 22, 1991.

Davis was executed despite no evidence linking him to the crime. In fact, seven of the nine key witnesses later recanted their testimonies, prior to his fourth and final

scheduled execution date. Troy Davis was prosecuted by a district attorney in the Georgia county that has produced one-third of the state’s exonerations and 40% of its death row exonerations.

The “justice” system in Georgia and across the U.S. gets things devastatingly wrong so often because it was designed to serve a select few people accumulating property on stolen land.

Federal executions have surged in 2020 from just three people in the last 56 years to seven executions this summer alone. Support and actual use of the death pen-

alty in individual states has dramatically declined over the last decade. The places where it persists are in the U.S. South, largely in states where Reconstruction efforts were beaten back by racist counterrevolutionaries. Texas leads with 570 executions, followed by Virginia, Oklahoma, Florida, Missouri, Georgia and Alabama with 113, 112, 99, 90, 76 and 67 executions, respectively.

The death penalty evolved from the rope to the chair to the needle. It has evolved directly from the conditions of Indigenous genocide and enslavement of African people on this stolen land. The death penalty persists despite it not being a deterrent to crime, despite

the legal system getting things wrong so often. And the state does not have the moral authority to kill anyone!

In 2009, a now landmark study concluded that 88% of the nation’s leading criminologists do not believe the death penalty is an effective deterrent to crime. In June 2009, Amnesty International wrote: “Scientists agree, by an overwhelming majority, that the death penalty has no deterrent effect . . . States without the death penalty continue to have significantly lower murder rates than those that retain capital punishment.”

As of 2019, there have been 172 exonerations from death row across the U.S. (Deathpenaltyinfo.org) — a pretty high margin of error when we’re talking about people’s lives.

There are countless more oppressed people currently being held in cages simply for trying to survive. Folks who end up on death row are a small population compared to the nearly 2.5 million incarcerated in the U.S. But now with COVID-19 ravaging prisons, jails and detention centers, more incarcerated people are facing possible death by state neglect.

Whether people committed some “crime” or even some sort of act of violence does not mean that they should be subject to death. How many are incarcerated workers, jailed because they were

deemed the enemy of a white-supremacist, hetero-patriarchal, ableist, imperialist empire?

The real criminals, the people who finance endless war and misery, hold the keys to these cages. People like Donald Trump, who publicly called for the death penalty against innocent Black people like the now-exonerated Central Park Five, are part of a larger system of settlers with serious entitlement issues.

The Supreme Court of the United States holds final say on state executions and was granted this power by the same people who actively killed Indigenous people and enslaved Africans. SCOTUS wields the power of the state to continue exploiting in the name of the mighty dollar. They have no moral authority to say who gets to live or die. We will not get justice on their watch.

Justice in the case of Troy Davis would mean that he would be alive and would have never seen the inside of a prison cell in the first place. Since we can’t see that justice be done, we must work to undo all that placed him in the vulnerable position that ended his life. As Troy Davis’ birthday approaches, let us sit with his needless loss and abolish not only the death penalty — but the racist system that enabled his execution. Not one more lynching! □

On Jamil Al-Amin’s birthday Atlanta calls for his release

By **Dianne Mathiowetz**
Atlanta

Oct. 4 — Supporters of a new trial for Imam Jamil Al-Amin (the former H. Rap Brown) gathered in the West End Park today to mark his 77th birthday and to declare this will be the last birthday he spends unjustly held behind prison bars.

Through the initiative of the Islamic Council of North America and Students for Imam Jamil, the rally was held in Atlanta as well as in other cities on Al-Amin’s Oct. 4 birth date.

On stage in front of a mural of Imam Jamil prominently visible in the park, a number of speakers proclaimed support for his freedom, including rappers T.I. and Killer Mike, who both live in Atlanta, and Linda Sarsour, outspoken activist

for Palestine and for justice for Breonna Taylor.

Kairi Al-Amin, Jamil’s son, is a lawyer like his mother, Karima Al-Amin. He emceed and delivered an account of the frame-up charge that the imam had killed a deputy sheriff and wounded a second officer on March 16, 2000, as well as the government misconduct charges in the 2002 trial. Dr. Yusef Salaam, one of the exonerated Central Park Five, also spoke in support of a new trial for Jamil.

The invigorated effort to win a new trial springs from the creation of a Conviction Integrity Unit in the Fulton County District Attorney’s office to review past trials where there is evidence of injustice. A glaring example of injustice in Al-Amin’s case is the admission by Otis Jackson that he himself was in fact the shooter.

A fighter for justice and self-determination

Whether identified as H. Rap Brown or Imam Jamil Al-Amin, this Black liberation fighter has been consistent in his efforts to bring justice and self-determination to oppressed and exploited people.

As a young leader of SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) in the mid 1960s, he was well-known for courageous and effective organizing in rural areas of Alabama and Mississippi to gain voting rights for Black people, despite life-threatening intimidation by the KKK and other segregationist forces.

Following his conversion to Islam, Al-Amin moved to Atlanta and established a masjid — across the street from where the rally was being held — in a community that was besieged by drugs and violence. He is widely credited with establishing



programs that brought peace and security to the neighborhood and transformed the lives of many youth.

A petition for a new trial and more information about his decades of work can be found at whathappend2rap.com and ImamJamilActionNetwork.org. □

Challenging incarceration of women and trans people

By **Mirinda Crissman**

The following are slightly edited opening remarks given during the Sept. 24 webinar Women & Gender Oppressed Prisoners, Survival & Resistance.

In our global struggle for liberation from capitalism, imperialism, white supremacy and patriarchy, we cannot waver in our determination to ‘Tear Down the Walls’ of human cages. Since the inception of these United States, prisons, jails, migrant detention centers, and psychiatric facilities have been targeting particular populations for genocide.

Racist, sexist, homophobic, and anti-poor practices have been codified into law by enslavers and perpetrators of Indigenous genocide. They have been upheld through courts, police and prisons. However, facing physical violence has not always been a given, nor does it have to be. The 1% of the ruling class denies us the right to fight back against a system that seeks to eradicate us. Who are they to deny us the right to fight back?

An existential threat to anyone’s life produces a response. When we think about how the only cop who faced legal recourse for the murder of Breonna Taylor

was hit with a charge about firing a gun that could have hit neighbor’s property; when we think about the forced sterilizations of migrant women in ICE detention in Georgia; or when we see the righteous anger of mass anti-racist protests in response to the myriad of killings



PHOTO: RONNIE GOODMAN

enacted by the state, Workers World Party supports the right of the oppressed to self-defense against racist and anti-LGBTQ2S+ assault.

We not only ask for life, we demand it. We cannot look [for change] to the system responsible for our present condition. At every turn it has been codified into law, and perpetuated violence against women and gender-non-conforming people worldwide. But we can look to each other and militantly fight what we’re all facing.

An injury to one is an injury to all. And we know justice comes from the people. People are powerful. We’ve seen before the might of our movements’ wins for freedom for friends, family, neighbors, and our class in cages. Struggles and fightbacks in support of the New Jersey 7, the San Antonio 4, CeCe McDonald, Joan [Joanne] Little and the MOVE 9 have seen tremendous wins and proven mass movements as credible threats in resisting our oppressions collectively.

The long history of movement struggles around women and gender-oppressed people in prisons has produced many important wins. Supporting the survival and resistance of women and gender oppressed,

Continued on page 8

Presidential debate

Trump and Biden bicker as COVID rages on

By Nathaniel Chase

The Sept. 30 presidential debate featured two white men throwing mud at each other in performances a fifth-grade debate team would have found embarrassing.

This debate will be remembered for its continuous, cable-news-style bickering and interrupting, which prevented either candidate, and in particular Biden, from expressing themselves at length. It is an open question whether either would have been capable of doing so, had they been given the opportunity.

Neither candidate put forward any proposals to address the multitude of crises facing working and oppressed people in the U.S. — from COVID-19, unemployment, housing and health care to racism, police brutality, migrant deportations, environmental catastrophe and imperialist war.

The debate, if one can even call it that, began with an argument over Trump’s right to nominate a judge to the Supreme Court before the election. Little of substance was said, and as expected there was no mention of the Supreme Court as an anti-democratic institution through which the death of a single judge can throw the hard-fought democratic rights of millions into question.

Trump accused Biden and the Democratic Party of wanting “socialist medicine and socialist health care.” Biden emphatically rejected this — he had previously made clear he does not support Medicare for All — and proudly stated he had beaten Bernie Sanders. By saying “I am the Democratic Party,” Biden was actually messaging that the Democratic Party will never be a vehicle for progressive change outside of ruling class control.

Both candidates claimed they would provide better health care at lower prices, but neither put forward Medicare for All as an obvious solution when the pandemic leaves millions of unemployed workers without employer-based health insurance.

On the pandemic, Biden attacked Trump for allowing more than 200,000 people in the U.S. to die with no end in sight. He pointed out, correctly, that Trump has no plan for the pandemic. But Biden never described his own plan. Incapable of

defending his complete failure to address the pandemic, Trump bizarrely claimed it would have been even worse—2 million dead—if Biden were president.

Both candidates competed to appear the most aggressive towards China, while painting the other as too accommodating. Both argued their opponent was in Russia’s pocket. Trump used racist, anti-China language to refer to the COVID-19 pandemic. All their approach serves to do is build anti-China and anti-Russia sentiment in preparation for new U.S. imperialist wars.

Both fail to condemn white supremacy

Neither candidate expressed support for the Black Lives Matter uprising in the aftermath of the police killing of George Floyd. Both rejected defunding the police, while accusing their opponent of supporting it. When asked about community control of the police, neither candidate even dared a response. Biden acknowledged the issue of police brutality, but his solution was more funding for the police. Biden reduced unending police murders to the action of “some bad apples.” Trump demanded more “law and order,” a classic dog whistle call for racist state oppression. Needless to say, the role of the police as the descendants of slave catchers and enforcers of ruling class power over working and oppressed people was never mentioned.

Tellingly, neither Biden nor Trump could stomach saying “police brutality” or “Black Lives Matter” a single time during the debate. The ruling class fears even naming its crimes.

Moderator Chris Wallace challenged Trump to condemn white supremacist violence. Trump unsurprisingly refused, instead issuing the equivalent of a presidential order for white supremacists to “stand back and stand by.”

Trump’s calls for fascists to “stand by,” that “somebody’s got to do something about Antifa” and “urging my supporters to go in to the polls and watch very carefully” are laying the groundwork for right-wingers to intimidate voters, delegitimize the election if the result is not in Trump’s favor, and carry out racist

and anti-Left attacks. His comment was actually acknowledged gleefully by the neo-fascist Proud Boys with the social media tweet: “Standing down and standing ready, sir!”

Trump condemned the Left as responsible for people being killed in anti-racist protests. In fact, a recent study showed that since 1994, anti-fascist forces in the U.S. have not killed a single person, while right-wing attacks have killed 329. This figure does not include the thousands killed by racist police. (tinyurl.com/y6hewpuk)

Biden also condemned the rebellions of the spring and summer, saying, “Violence in response is never appropriate. Peaceful protest is, violence is never appropriate.” This offensive liberal nonsense condemns as “violent” those who resist by any means necessary the greatest source of violence in the world today—U.S. imperialism. But

Only the organization and struggle of working and oppressed people can defend and expand democratic rights, defeat the move towards fascism, smash racism and lead the way to a revolutionary socialist future, with a society organized to meet the needs of all, instead of the profits of a few.

of course the ruling class will never praise working and oppressed people for how they resist and overthrow their oppressors.

On the environment, Trump hemmed and hawed about acknowledging human-created climate change, and spouted confused nonsense about fire management in California. He attacked Biden for supporting the Green New Deal. As with health care, Biden emphatically rejected a progressive position, putting forward his own far smaller plan. While the Green New Deal can and should be criticized from the Left as an attempt by a section of the ruling class to cash in on “Green” energy

technologies, both candidates placed themselves far to the right of that.

The need for people’s self-defense

Perhaps the most ominous part of the debate was the final section on the question of election fraud. Trump continued to lay the groundwork for disputing the validity of the election, while Biden’s response was simply telling people to “show up and vote.”

Predictably, there was no call for mass action or demonstrations in defense of the right to vote, or to smash openly white supremacist forces Trump is gathering in his defense. Biden is aware that any such movement would condemn him also for his decades of service to U.S. imperialism, his support for the mass incarceration of Black people, dismantling of welfare and scores of other reactionary policies he has helped implement.

The debate was also notable for what was not mentioned. The 90-minute event did not include a single reference to the migrant crisis, housing, LGBTQ2S+ oppression or U.S. imperialist wars.

The debate makes it more clear than ever that working and oppressed people cannot rely on either of the ruling class parties. They simply have no answers for us.

Only the organization and struggle of working and oppressed people can defend and expand democratic rights, defeat the move towards fascism, smash racism and lead the way to a revolutionary socialist future, with a society organized to meet the needs of all, instead of the profits of a few.

The inability of either ruling class party to put forward a presidential candidate who meets even a minimal standard of competence is an expression of the intensifying crisis facing U.S. imperialism. The system is increasingly unable to function.

In such times the status quo cannot continue, and a drastic move either further to the Right — or to the Left towards revolutionary socialism — is inevitable.

Given that choice, the need for the working class to intervene independently of the two ruling class parties and move toward the Left is greater than ever. □

Voter rights

Pushing back fascists in North Carolina

By calvin deutschbein
Chapel Hill, N.C.

During this election season, the struggle for “Defend the Vote” protection is especially sharp in the South, where



A 24-foot ‘Black Lives Matter’ billboard was installed in July in Chatham County, N.C., paid for by a local GoFundMe campaign, to protest the flying of a Confederate flag.

ballot access has historically been a powerful organizing tool in the Black freedom struggle, including the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In 2013 in North Carolina — one of the states still under limited federal oversight by the VRA — the state legislature had a number of voting-related laws which were slated to be struck down as unconstitutionally racist under the VRA. Then the Shelby v. Holder decision by the U.S. Supreme Court gutted the VRA and opened up years of vicious attacks on access to the vote by poor and oppressed people.

The struggle to access the vote has showed up dramatically and locally at polling sites such as those in Chatham County in rural North Carolina during the 2020 primary. There, members of various white-supremacist militias staged a “flagging” demonstration, flying equal numbers of Trump, Confederate, U.S. and white-supremacist militia flags at

the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center on Feb. 15. They arrived to intimidate during the first Saturday of early primary voting — and at the same time as major efforts from local Black community organizers to turn out the vote.

The militias present included the League of South — a national group that gained infamy for numerous violent felonies at the Unite the Right fascist demonstration in Charlottesville, Va., in 2017 — and a number of local groups, such as the Sons of Confederate Veterans, a white-supremacist militia. These groups took over the parking lot and demonstrated at the only entrances to the polling site, even inside the legally mandated buffer zone. Within that zone, supposedly no electioneering is allowed, and voter harassment is barred. The militias demonstrated there with impunity, under the direct protection of the Chatham County Sheriff’s department.

For the general election this November, local anti-racist formation Chatham Stands Up and Democracy N.C., the statewide organization sponsoring the Election Protector program, were able to respond to the neofascist threat and win minor changes to election law that offered slightly better protection for voters across the state.

One approach by Democracy N.C. relies on an all-volunteer group of vote protectors to find and report voter intimidation and suppression efforts to civil rights attorneys. These are then able to gain new polling sites and improved hours and investigate irregularities in reported vote totals.

With President Trump’s recent message to the Proud Boys militia to “stand by” for intimidation during the coming election, the need has accelerated for strong local “Defend the Vote” actions to stop these racist, fascist groups. □

Thousands raise up Black Lives outside presidential debate

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

While presidential candidates Joe Biden and Donald Trump were debating in what many have labeled a “shit-show,” thousands of Greater Clevelanders came out for a “Protest for Black Lives and Climate Justice.” A broad coalition spread the word about the action on social media. Sponsors included Black Lives Matter Cleveland, Black Spring Cleveland, Coalition to Stop the Inhumanity at the Cuyahoga County Jail, Inter-Religious Task Force on Central America and Colombia, and Cleveland Sunrise Movement

Latonya Goldsby, cousin of 12-year-old Tamir Rice, came in a shirt that said “Cleveland police murder Black people.” Goldsby, president of Black Lives Matter Cleveland, spoke at the rally about the many families in Cleveland impacted by police killings. “Not one of the officers in those murders has been charged or convicted,” she said. “Yet, we see these candidates come in and out of our cities pleading for the Black vote, making promises that they never intend to keep.”

Rice was killed in 2014 while playing with a BB gun outside a city recreation center. No charges were brought against the two cops involved in his killing. After the rally, marchers chanted his name repeatedly along



Cleveland protest targets first presidential debate, Sept. 29.

WW PHOTO: SUSAN SCHNUR

with the slogan “He was 12 years old, how you justify that?” Other signs and chants drew attention to Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Sandra Bland, Tanisha Anderson (killed by Cleveland police nine days before Tamir Rice), and all the victims of racist police violence.

The organizers were forced to move their protest to a site a distance away from Cleveland Clinic, where the debate took place. The city administration created a militarized zone around the Clinic’s Samson Pavilion,

intimidating potential protesters with help from heavily armed federal troops and Ohio National Guard with tanks, suburban police, Secret Service, the FBI, surveillance cameras and undercover cops in unmarked vans. This repressive atmosphere was made possible despite initial complaints from city officials, who were not consulted before the debate was announced.

To create an additional obstacle for demonstrators, City Hall banned street parking around the protest site and paid parking garages nearby were closed to the public. Wade Lagoon, where the rally was held, was in the “debate zone” where a list of items, including canned goods, coolers, water bottles, wood and plastic sticks and sound amplification, were banned. After organizers moved the protest from a site close to the debate, the city expanded the zone to include the area around the lagoon.

The coalition outmaneuvered the state, however, escorting groups of people from parking areas and mass transit stops to and from the site. A support system included medics, marshals, food, and healing space.

The diverse groups that came together for the Sept. 29 action hope to build on that success and create a united front to fight for justice — regardless of the outcome on Nov. 3. □

WW COMMENTARY

Preparing for ‘the Interregnum’—the election mess

By Teresa Gutierrez

In researching this article, a cool-sounding word came up: “pettifoggery.”

It means “given to quibbling over trifles.”

The word was used in an article by Barton Gellman in the November Atlantic magazine, “The Election That Could Break America.”

Gellman’s point is that it is a waste of time to quibble over whether the 45th president of the United States will leave office on Inauguration Day — Jan. 20, 2021. He makes an exceptionally sound case that, no matter what happens on Election Day — Nov. 3, 2020 — Donald Trump will not concede his position.

Gellman writes that “two men could show up on the 20th to be sworn in. One of them would arrive with all the tools and power of the presidency already in hand.”

No one has a crystal ball, but let’s face it, Gellman is probably right.

Donald Trump’s hubris as well as his pathology absolutely will not allow him to leave easily or quietly. Every tweet, statement, decree — every action of Trump since the 2016 election — has demonstrated his fierce hunger for staying in power, in the limelight and reaping the bounty for him and his family that comes with the presidency.

According to Gellman, Joe Biden and others have “misconceived the nature of the threat.” They say that if Trump refuses to leave the Oval Office, “the proper authorities will escort him from the White House with great dispatch.” Gellman argues that this hope is not enough.

Gellman’s piece covers all kinds of articles that have been written, studies carried out and even conferences held among legal and social scholars about the 2020 election. Constitutional scholars especially have examined multiple scenarios that could play out between Nov. 3 and Jan. 20 — a period Gelman calls “the Interregnum.”

That is the term for a period, especially between successive reigns or regimes, when normal government is suspended.

A police coup?

Gellman argues that even if there is seemingly a landslide vote on election night, the tabulation of mail-in votes, etc., could mean the final outcome is not determined for “days or weeks.”

The transfer of power in January has not received this much attention in generations. Even the U.S. military has weighed in.

On Sept. 25, in an article headlined “At Pentagon, fears grow that Trump will pull military into election unrest,”

the New York Times reported: “Defense Department officials said top generals could resign if Mr. Trump orders the active duty military into the streets to quell protests.” In remarks released last month, one general said, “I believe deeply in the principle of an apolitical U.S. military.”

Trump might not need to worry about armed support, however. He may not have enough to carry out a military coup — but his relationship with the police of this country is solid.

Trump has threatened on more than one occasion to mobilize “law enforcement” to poll watch on Election Day — an ominous threat, especially for Black and Brown people. Imagine the same agency that murders Black folks with impunity watching over their shoulder as they vote in Georgia or elsewhere.

In addition, the Republicans, according to Gellman, are “recruiting 50,000 volunteers in 15 contested states to monitor polling places.”

Think of that. The Republican Party watching over polls. This is the same party that in 2009 produced the Tea Party, the group of ultra-conservative zealots who eventually came in from the fringe to become what the Aug. 13 New York Times called an “enduring force” in U.S. conservatism.

This is the same party, the Times noted, that is determined to consolidate and cater to an “older, whiter, more male, more rural, more conservative” base.

And to worry more, the same Republican Party recruiting 50,000 “poll watchers” also just endorsed three candidates in California who support QAnon far right conspiracy theories! (Sacramento Bee, Sept. 28)

The role of revolutionaries and socialists

So, what do revolutionaries and socialists do — those who as Marxists understand that both parties represent the capitalist class, that the obscene donations from PACS and billionaires outweigh the influence of labor or any working-class interest group in a bourgeois election?

If the Democrats really were for the working class, they would overturn anti-union legislation. They would support union drives and the call for a general strike against racism, as some bold labor activists have already done.

They would move heaven and earth to make the oil companies pay for climate change. They would socialize health care. If Canada can do it, why not the U.S.?

They could call for a strike in Congress and in the streets to demand COVID relief. They could demand that the police who killed George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and so many other victims pay for their crimes.

If they truly represented the interests of the people, the



Labor Day protest for fair contracts, Sept. 7, Washington, D.C.

Democrats in Congress would shut down Washington until the police were punished or COVID money released.

But they do not. And they will not.

If Wall Street controls the elections, Congress and the White House, what can those who live on Martin Luther King Street, Cesar Chavez or Main Street possibly do to influence the elections?

Everything.

‘The transfer of power to the people’

Whatever happens in November, whoever wins the election, workers and oppressed people must organize and fight back. If ever there was a time for a movement for Workers’ Assemblies, this is it.

CNN and Fox News may have all the cameras aimed at the White House in November, but if the pitchforked masses are in the streets striking for what we need, all those cameras will turn toward the people.

To those scholars concerned about the defense of the Constitution during the Interregnum, we must ask where was the concern for the Constitution when George Floyd or Breonna Taylor lay dead?

What about the constitutional, human and civil rights of the migrant women who have been forcibly sterilized?

And what about all the essential workers who cannot work from home, those forced to risk exposure to COVID because neither the capitalist system nor the two capitalist parties represent them?

And all the hungry, houseless, incarcerated, impoverished masses — who is fighting for their constitutional rights?

Clearly, only the people can fight for themselves. That is the lesson of November.

The only transfer of power the masses must be concerned with is the transfer of power to the people: humanity depends on it. □

Trump, ‘Get your hands off Somali refugees!’

By Teresa Gutierrez

Before being admitted to the hospital for coronavirus infection, Donald Trump spent the last two weeks on yet another vile anti-immigrant tirade.

Both in a policy statement to Congress and on a campaign stop in Minnesota, Trump veered to his campaign cornerstone to send yet another message to his racist base that immigrants are not welcome in this country.

But it is more dangerous than that.

Trump went after Rep. Ilhan Omar in her very own home state and screamed to the crowd, “She tells us how to run our country, can you believe it? How the hell did Minnesota elect her? What the hell is wrong with you people?” (NYTimes, Oct. 1)

Rep. Omar’s background is Somali. She is the first Somali American, the first naturalized citizen of African birth and the first woman of color to represent Minnesota in Congress. Indeed, for her, quite an accomplishment in such a racist sexist country.

Such language against another elected official from Trump is uncouth at best. But from Trump to his white supremacist base, it can be even more perilous, as he is whipping up hostility toward a woman of color, which can result in violence.

In fact, tensions and harassment escalated after Trump’s campaign rally. Members of the Minnesota community held a press conference on Oct. 2 on kare11.com to respond to Trump’s statements.

One of the attendees at the press conference was 2020 Minnesota Teacher of the Year Qorsho Hassa. She reported that during a visit to Duluth, “a group of white men in a pickup truck circled around her and chanted ‘white power’ and ‘four more years.’”

In addition, the Executive Director of the Minneapolis-based Islamic Association of North America said, “Every election year, there is a playbook used by some politicians ... to use Muslims, Somalis, refugees and immigrants as scapegoats ... in order to divide people by what they look like, or where they came

from — instead of offering solutions that could help all of our families.”

In the streets and in Congress

While Trump was vilifying Omar, the Trump administration announced to Congress that it would be cutting further refugee admissions into the U.S.

According to the NY Times, the number of refugees can be no more than 15,000 people for the next year. This is after the Trump administration has already made a big cut, basically shutting down a humane option for people in desperate need.

In the notice to Congress, the administration proposed that no refugees would be admitted from Somalia, Syria and Yemen. These three nations have been devastated by U.S. imperialism and its allies. They have been bombed, sanctioned and blockaded. The U.S. should be allowing in every person from these countries who wants to enter.

Instead, Washington denies desperate people any options, a denial that will result in more deaths and devastation.

And racist and white supremacists will



Rep. Ilhan Omar

undermine the well-being of those refugees already here whose background is not European.

An organizer for FIRE (Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere), Tania Siddiqi, told Workers World: “As advocates and allies of all im/migrants and refugees in the U.S. and abroad, we stand in solidarity with the Somali community against Trump’s vilification. We denounce anti-Muslim racism under any administration, Democrat or Republican. We say let all the refugees in, as it is this government that has created the conditions forcing people to leave their homeland.” □

Ren Zhiqiang was not arrested for ‘anti-communism’

By Raymond Tyler

When influential, former property executive Ren Zhiqiang was given an 18-year sentence in China, the Western media were quick to label his imprisonment as due to alleged “anti-communist” activity. The Washington Post, CNN, the Guardian, and the New York Times parroted the same message: that Zhiqiang was imprisoned for being an “outspoken” critic of the Chinese Communist Party (CPC).

Their claim is that Zhiqiang was detained for publishing a critique of China’s response to COVID. This accusation is unfounded by the evidence generally available.

The logic of the Western media’s accusation can be summarized as follows: “If Ren Zhiqiang critiqued the CPC and was later sentenced, he must have been imprisoned for his critique of the CPC.” There’s a problem with this narrative. The charges brought against him were for embezzlement of an equivalent of



Ren Zhiqiang

\$16.3 million in public funds. The accusation of embezzlement has not been disputed, and there is no evidence to suggest that the charges were anything else. Zhiqiang confessed to these charges. (tinyurl.com/yyswjrgd)

All the media outlets mention the charges of embezzlement, and even mention that Zhiqiang confessed, yet the lens of the Western media has distorted and excluded facts surrounding this case, leading to the narrative of him being a

“political prisoner.”

The information that the public currently has about this case does not suggest corruption. What we do know is that the Western media have not let up on polemical attacks against China. If they give China any credit for successfully containing the outbreak of COVID-19, the credit is met with a disclaimer of other “draconian lockdowns” and “dictatorship.”

In the U.S. bourgeois media’s eyes every country with different systems and values is a “dictatorship,” even if those countries democratically elect their leaders. By contrast, the U.S. and its allies can sic their police on Black communities and protesters and not be considered authoritarian.

The standard for being labeled an authoritarian dictatorship is arbitrary and self-justifying. Any state that is labeled as a dictatorship is subject to endless attacks, sanctions and criminal charges against citizens in one of those “dictatorships,” which must, because of corruption and repression, therefore be

“illegitimate.” Journalists may or may not be conscious of their xenophobic bias towards other nations with different systems. Yet in most cases their editors are.

The fact is that countries building socialism have done far better handling COVID-19. China was hit first and somehow managed to come out of this with under 5,000 deaths. The U.S. government, which was expressly warned about this virus and had time to prepare, has racked up over 214,000. (Worldometer)

The Western media, with their anti-communist bias, cannot fathom how the richest country in the world — the United States — could do so poorly while socialist countries, labeled as “dictatorships,” have done so well. Ren Zhiqiang is the chosen martyr of truth. According to media narrative, he had the spine to speak out about COVID-19 in China. This attack and false narrative against the CPC serves one purpose: to dehumanize, ostracize and attack a nation that is wrongfully feared in this country. □

Challenging incarceration of women and trans people

Continued from page 5

especially in prisons, creates the opportunities for us to imagine, organize and build a world where harm against us is not a constant threat.

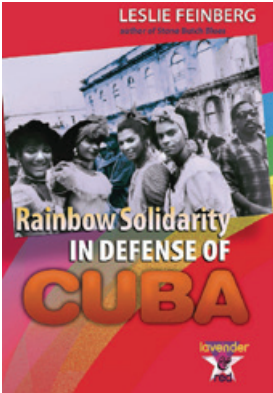
Another example of collective movements winning better conditions for us all, including the most oppressed, is the 1975 uprising at the North Carolina Correctional Center for Women in Raleigh that lasted five days. Sparked by a spontaneous sit-in over a range of grievances, the women refused all prison activities and engaged in pitched battles with guards and state police, and ultimately won the shutdown of the laundry where they worked.

Many of the women workers incarcerated at NCCC were historically subjected to forced sterilizations at the hands of the state. The 1919 “Act to Benefit the Moral,

Mental, or Physical Conditions of Inmates of Penal and Charitable Institutions” directly impacted women and gender-oppressed workers held there and partly fueled what became their militant work stoppage.

These sterilization programs were common across the U.S. South, but North Carolina was unique for at least continuing the practice until 1977. The stated purpose of this practice was to enhance the state’s “gene pool” by selectively sterilizing the “abnormal, unintelligent, or mentally disabled,” though it was justified in other ways. (“Dixie Be Damned: 300 Years of Insurrection in the American South,” 2015)

Winning better conditions for us all, inside the prison walls and out, can be done by the militant, collective withholding of labor. □

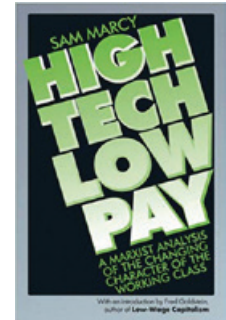


Rainbow Solidarity in DEFENSE of CUBA

By Leslie Feinberg, author of *Stone Butch Blues*

“Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba” is a compilation of 25 articles about same-sex love and sex/gender variance in Cuba’s pre- and post-revolutionary history. These articles make up parts 86 to 110 of the Lavender & Red series, which has run as a feature in Workers World weekly newspaper since the first article appeared in the June 3, 2004, issue.

It is available online at: workers.org/books



High Tech, Low Pay

A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class

By Sam Marcy with an updated introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of *Low Wage Capitalism*.

Available at major online booksellers.

Or read it at workers.org/marcy/cd/samtech/index.htm

No stopping the student BDS movement

By Michael Kramer

Oct. 4 — The worldwide Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement has become such a thorn in the side of the Zionist occupiers of Palestine that in 2015 the Israeli settler-state declared it a “strategic threat” and has since spent tens of millions of dollars to combat it.

Some of these funds have been used to set up cyber-based employment lists aimed at extortion, like the Canary Mission. The website targets students and teaching staff who are active in the Palestine solidarity movement.

But there was no stopping the students of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, a Midwestern mega-campus with over 50,000 students and over 2,500 teaching staff members. On Sept. 23, the Illinois Student Government backed a resolution which called for UI-UC to



Students at Columbia University celebrate BDS win.

“divest from companies that support fossil fuels, the prison-industrial complex, Israel’s military and local police departments.” (The Daily Illini, Sept. 28)

And on Oct. 1, students at Columbia University in New York City voted to

support a BDS referendum, with a final vote count of Yes — 1,081, No — 485, Abstain — 205. The referendum asked: “Should Columbia University divest its stocks, funds and endowment from companies that profit from or engage in the

State of Israel’s act towards Palestinians, that according to Columbia University Apartheid Divest (CUAD), fall under the United Nations International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid?” (tinyurl.com/y4ckefof)

Olivia Katbi Smith, the North American coordinator for the BDS Movement observed, “These campus BDS victories are indicative of the rapidly changing tide we’re seeing across the United States. Despite the escalating campaigns of repression on campuses and in the halls of government, it is becoming impossible to be ‘progressive except Palestine,’ because it is becoming impossible to silence our movement.

“The Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice and equality so clearly intersects with all other struggles of oppressed peoples everywhere.” (mondoweiss.net, Sept. 30). □

Government coverup as White supremacists infiltrate police

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

According to The Intercept, the FBI is now so “concerned about the infiltration of law enforcement by white supremacist groups and its impact on police abuse and tolerance of racism” that on Sept. 29 it released an unredacted version of agency surveillance about the infiltration, which supposedly started in 2006.

It is difficult to credit the FBI with “concern” when none of its reports on this racist activity were previously made public in full. Coverup may be more appropriate.

Redacted versions of the report had previously been published, yet the FBI has not once sounded an alarm to prevent the numerous police murders of Black and Brown people, which have gone on for too long. Perhaps local communities alerted in such a way might have acted sooner to stop racist abuses of authority and saved Black and Brown lives.

As early as 2006, the FBI raised “concerns” that individuals already within law enforcement were volunteering professional resources to white supremacist groups with whom they sympathized. The FBI’s redacted report raises serious questions — including just how deeply white supremacist groups have also infiltrated the FBI itself.



The people of Portland, Ore., march against racism and fascism on the city’s 100th continuous day of protest, Sept. 5.

most U.S. police departments should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the historic origins of police in this country — linked to the slave patrols sent after enslaved Africans who were seeking freedom from bondage.

Racist state strategy

In the Sept. 29 debate with Joe Biden, Donald Trump was challenged by moderator Chris Wallace to denounce white supremacists. Trump not only refused to do so, he rallied his supporters in white supremacist groups like the Proud Boys by using a military command term, “Stand back and stand by.”

In other words, Trump as Commander in Chief of the U.S. armed forces was saying to vigilante white supremacists: “Be ready to act on my future orders.” Days before the debate, the top two Department of Homeland Security officials, testifying in congressional hearings, acknowledged that white supremacists pose the most lethal threat to the U.S. (Reuters, Sept. 29)

Trump called on his far-right supporters to turn up on Election Day and beyond to

secure his continued rule, regardless of the voters’ choice. Even before commanding the Proud Boys during the debate, Trump had been championing his support from law enforcement groups, including the Fraternal Order of Police in Philadelphia.

Despite the widespread murders of people of color by police, Trump and those in his administration have made it clear that violent white supremacists are a valued part of Trump’s base, especially those within the police.

For instance, in Philadelphia in mid-July, members of the Proud Boys showed up for a party at FOP headquarters after a speech by Vice President Mike Pence during a “Back the Blue” event. Philadelphia police have come under heavy scrutiny for social media posts supporting racism. In June, white supremacist demonstrations in the city against Black Lives Matter protesters were openly defended by police.

Trump’s recruitment of police support is a direct response to the widespread outrage against police brutality in the aftermath of police murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and other African American people.

Trump made his support for police violence clear on June 1 in Washington, D.C., when he used federal police forces to brutally clear peaceful demonstrators in Lafayette Square so he could stage a Bible-thumping public relations event. This was quickly followed by his unleashing of federal and unidentified police forces to kidnap anti-racist protesters in Portland, Ore.

It remains a question whether Trump can count on military support if he attempts to carry out a coup after the

election, especially since many enlisted people come from Black and Brown communities. However, he can count on the overwhelmingly white police and paramilitary militia groups.

Throwback to McCarthyism

Historically, U.S. capitalists have relied on white supremacist groups to bolster their hold on power during times of social upheaval.

Case in point: In the mid-1920s, funding for the Ku Klux Klan reached an all-time high of \$4 million, even when membership was dropping. The Klan was used then to terrorize Black and immigrant communities demanding inclusion during the limited period of U.S. economic prosperity following World War I, before the collapse at the end of the decade which led to the Great Depression.

Now, Trump is blatantly trying to galvanize his white supremacist base against anti-racist, anti-fascist and left protesters.

Trump has especially been targeting the loose movement against fascism known as antifa. His campaign ads claim that “antifa mobs will terrorize U.S. [white] suburbs.” It is widely known that “antifa” is a philosophy, not an organized group.

Then, on Oct. 2, Homeland Security’s U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services issued a “Policy Guidance Regarding Inadmissibility Based on Membership in a Totalitarian Party.” This states that “membership in or affiliation with the Communist Party or any other totalitarian party” is grounds for denying citizenship.

On the surface, this may appear like another anti-immigrant attack, but it is far more serious. While Trump has frequently attempted to link Democratic Party presidential candidate Joe Biden with left-leaning elements, including Democratic Socialists of America who supported Bernie Sanders, obviously Biden is no socialist. Clearly Trump is taking aim at the political far left.

Fascism in the service of capitalism targets oppressed groups to split and divide opposition, particularly from the working class. Historically, the most serious fighters against fascism have been anarchists (antifa), socialists and especially communists.

Now, more than ever, a united fight-back by all these groups is what is needed, not just to oppose Trump, but to end the increasing misery from capitalist oppression and exploitation once and for all. □

The Klan & the Government Foes or Allies?

By Sam Marcy

Examines the special relationship with the state that has allowed the Ku Klux Klan to exist for over a century despite its criminal history of lynchings, murders, and intimidation. Published in 1983.

Read it free at www.workers.org/marcy/klan/

Voting rights
‘Capitalist charity’ vs workers’ democracy

During this U.S. election season, many people are still fighting to get access to the universal bourgeois right to vote, supposedly a cornerstone of capitalist “democracy.”

It’s been an uphill struggle since 1776 when only propertied white men who were Protestants could legally vote. Everyone else was denied — Catholics, Quakers, Jews, members of Native nations, Asians, Black people, whether enslaved or free, women, married or not, and poor white men.

There have been historic wins over the centuries — and setbacks. In the 1860s and 1870s, many states began to deny the vote to people convicted of felonies, a move tied to denying this right to Black people who were newly freed from enslavement.

But in 2018 in Florida, more than one million people with felony records, disproportionately Black and Brown individuals, had their right to vote restored after 64% of the voters — the majority white — passed an amendment to the state’s Constitution.

Then reactionaries set to work. The Republican-controlled Florida Legislature, spurred on by Gov. Ron DeSantis, imposed “fees” and “fines” on formerly imprisoned individuals as requirements to regain the vote. The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the law.

So it must have seemed like magnificent

generosity when billionaire Democrat Michael Bloomberg raised \$16 million to pay fines, fees and restitution for about 31,000 Florida residents with felony records, to restore their voting rights before the 2020 general election. (snopes.com)

What a charitable gift! Not. Bloomberg actually coordinated contributions for only 3% of the one million people denied the vote. He could have enfranchised them all. According to Forbes magazine’s “Richest on Earth” 2020 list, Bloomberg himself is worth \$54.9 billion, from owning information systems used by stock market traders to analyze data and pull in massive wealth.

How much is one billion? If a million were measured in seconds, it would be equivalent to 11.6 days. A billion seconds is equal to 31.7 years.

Think about the capitalist charity that Bloomberg tossed out as a few seconds in the number of years those Florida “felons” were imprisoned and working for slave wages. His “contribution” was worth a few days of the years of labor time it took workers of all genders, nationalities, ages and abilities to generate the profits that made him a super-billionaire.

Democrat Bloomberg handed out capitalist charity to a few people. The Republican approach is a bare-fisted attack to disenfranchise the many — from gutting the 1965 Voting Rights Act protecting Black voters, imposing voter-id

laws, closing polling places, attacking mail-in ballots, to dog-whistling for white supremacist vigilantes to join “the Army for Trump’s election security operation” to threaten voters at predominantly Black precincts.

Fortunately, like the fight back led by formerly enslaved people against the “White Terror” of the 1870s Reconstruction era, people are organizing to defend the polls and access to the right to vote. A coalition of progressive organizations has mobilized over 6,000 “election defenders.” (See box on this page for more information.)

What a contrast Cuba’s socialist workers’ democracy provides to the almost 250 years of unrelenting voter denial and suppression in the U.S.!

Under its national constitution, Cuba is a socialist democracy in which the National Assembly of People’s Power (Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular) is its parliament and supreme body of state power. Of its 600-plus deputies, half are

nominated at public meetings of municipalities. During regular elections, from 70% to over 90% of the electorate attend the nomination assemblies.

To ensure representation of all the people, half the deputies are nominated by mass organizations, such as trade unions, women’s groups, farmers’ cooperatives, student federations and people’s councils. No political parties, including the Communist Party of Cuba, are permitted to campaign!

Voting age is 16 for Cuban citizens who have resided on the island for at least two years.

In the 2016 U.S. presidential election, 46% of the electorate voted. But who knows how many voters were disenfranchised under the capitalist system?

In Cuba’s parliamentary elections in 2018, 85% of the electorate voted.

That is what voting rights look like in a workers’ democracy, in a revolutionary grassroots democracy. □

Trump, COVID and poetic justice

Continued from page 1

those who wish to exploit and kill you — you are worth more than that. To feel anger, rage, even hatred toward them is not narrow-mindedness; it is a statement of self love, a demand for dignity, for yourself and working and oppressed people as a whole.

The liberal approach values respectability and decorum over the righteous rage of the oppressed. It is for peace, with or without justice (most often without). In this sense, it is very much an obstacle to working and oppressed people fighting for a better future, an obstacle more subtle but sometimes even more powerful than the open reaction of the far right.

In any case, Trump is likely to recover from his illness, given the exceptional standard of care he is receiving. But should he die, it would be a mistake to expect that the many crises facing working and oppressed people — from health care, police brutality and unemployment to housing shortages, forced migration, imperialist war, environmental catastrophe and so many more — will be resolved as a result.

It’s the system

These crises existed before Trump, and they will exist after him. They are not the

result of an individual’s actions or even those of a political party, but of an entire system: capitalism.

Capitalism is based on private ownership of the means of production by a class, the capitalist class, which rules and organizes society for its own benefit, for its profits. This is in contrast to a socialist system, in which working and oppressed people take over the means of production, which they have built with their sweat and blood, and reorganize society to address the needs of all.

It’s not a coincidence that countries building socialism — like Vietnam, Cuba and China — have had uniformly superior responses to the pandemic. The solution to the crises before us lies not in the removal or coincidental death of a single individual, but in the revolutionary overthrow of the entire capitalist system through the organized struggle of working and oppressed people.

But getting back to Trump himself and whether he and his class are deserving of compassion, it’s worth remembering the jacket that Melania Trump, who is sick now along with others in his entourage, wore when visiting migrant children separated from their parents. On the back it read: “I really don’t care. Do U?” □

Election Defenders Call to Action

With the stakes being as high as they are, voter suppression already more rampant than ever, and the nationalist right emboldened by conspiracy theorists and the president himself, we can’t depend on anyone else ensuring people are able to vote freely and safely.

Election Defenders will be working to provide safe supports for voting (such as Personal Protection Equipment and water), and election and voter defense, de-escalating right-wing intimidation tactics and signaling to a network of groups and lawyers if and where trouble breaks out.

These trainings will cover different areas each week, so we are asking everyone to attend all four trainings or email to request a video of training. (See tinyurl.com/y31e7u81)

- Poll Monitoring
- Bystander Training
- De-escalation
- Direct Action 101
- Combating Disinformation



Trump holds mask but would not wear one.

Pakistan Say ‘No’ to Bahria Town!

By Tania Siddiqi

Bahria Town, one of the largest private real estate development companies in Asia, is known for its overly opulent master-planned communities constructed for Pakistan’s ruling class — and for its intimidation tactics that target Indigenous and Aboriginal peoples. Like all corporations, greed and resource exploitation fuel Bahria Town’s robbing of Indigenous folks’ ancestral land, and its structural violence against Pakistan’s most oppressed groups. Indeed, Bahria Town’s acts of horror are extensive. To accomplish its 45,000-acre luxury housing development endeavor in Karachi, Bahria Town has used state-endorsed violence to remove Indigenous farmers from their homes.

On March 19, 2016, police invaded the small village of Juma Morio Goth, and demolished many homes to clear the way for a Bahria Town road. An interviewee in Dawn magazine stated: “The job was quickly completed and the rubble hauled away while hapless villagers looked on in a daze, knowing full well there will be no justice for them.” (April 18, 2016)

Bahria Town has not just destroyed homes, it has also desecrated graves. The Guardian reports that after the company’s devastation in 2019, “The graveyard in Usman Allah Raki Goth remains partially destroyed.” (July 8, 2019)

While a few graves are somewhat visible among the destruction, it’s clear that Bahria Town’s fountains and sculptures now occupy sacred space where graves used to be.

This development company’s involvement in structural violence takes even more insidious forms. Many villagers live in District Malir, an area where Bahria Town has constructed a massive housing project that depends on underground water aquifers for survival. Mohammad Saleem, president of the Voice of Indigenous Community Empowerment, stated that wells drilled by Bahria Town are rapidly draining the underground water supply. (Dawn, April 18, 2016)

Cutting off a community’s access to water is fundamental to systematically eliminating their existences on

their land. Most recently, on Oct. 2, Karachi Bachao Tehreek reported that personnel from Bahria Town and police violently entered Haji Ali Mohammad Goth, a village in Karachi, and attempted to forcefully remove Indigenous farmers from their homes. Those who serve the ruling class brought bulldozers and excavators to coerce and intimidate Indigenous folks into surrendering their land to Bahria Town. (KBT Instagram, Oct. 2) KBT noted that “the villagers’ land ownership and use rights” are legally recognized and afforded protection under the law. Bahria Town’s unfettered continued attacks on Aboriginal people demonstrates the state’s obvious disregard for Indigenous rights and mirrors the mindset of other oppressive forces.

Indigenous people under attack worldwide

The attacks by Bahria Town mirror worldwide attacks by capitalist forces on Indigenous peoples and their rights. This year the U.S. government resumed federal executions after a 17-year hiatus, and legally lynched Lezmond Mitchell, the only Indigenous person on federal death row. (Workers World, Aug. 26). Mitchell was a Navajo Nation member, and was sentenced to death for a crime committed on tribal land.

The Navajo Nation’s sovereignty is supposedly federally recognized, with its leaders the ones to determine whether to apply the death penalty to offenses under the Federal Death Penalty Act. But before Mitchell was killed, the federal government denied the Navajo Nation’s request to halt his execution. Moreover, the state’s actions reflect that its systematic harm, which targets oppressed communities, including Indigenous peoples, is limitless.

Prior to Mitchell’s execution, the Navajo Nation expressed its solidarity with Mitchell and openly condemned the federal government’s actions against a member of their community.

Those dedicated to the struggle are aware of forces acting against them, as they simultaneously focus on their acts of resistance and solidarity.

The late Chacha Faiz Muhammad Gabol, an

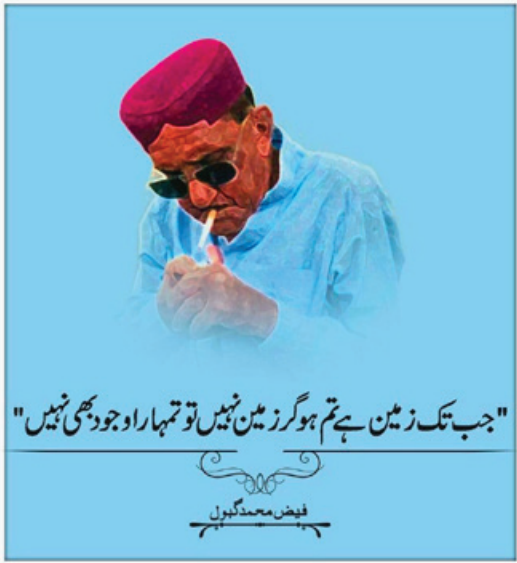


IMAGE: GUL HASSAN KALMATTI

The large text says “As long as the land is there, you are there. You cannot have existence without land.” The small text names the person in the picture: Chacha Faiz Muhammad Gabol.

Indigenous activist, refused to sell his land to Bahria Town and explained, “I told Malik Riaz [the founder of Bahria Town] that the ground is our mother. Would anyone sell their mother? Darthi, land, is our mother. This soil is precious to me.” (“Say No to Bahria Town — The Land Built with Perfect Corruption,” telefeeds.com, July 27)

Abira Ashfaq, a people’s lawyer in Pakistan, provided insight on the strategies Bahria Town is using to further disenfranchise Indigenous communities, at Chacha Faiz Muhammad Gabol’s Remembrance Day event on Feb. 25. Ashfaq stressed that the tactics parallel those used by British imperialists to create divisions among the masses. (tinyurl.com/y2xsd6my)

Deep solidarity with Indigenous peoples means solidarity with all who continue to disrupt and expose efforts by the ruling class to seize, desecrate and demolish Indigenous peoples and land. Liberation is inherently tied to those who are committed to working against state-sanctioned violence, who are fighting the same fight against neo-colonial and imperialist forces.

Say “NO” to Bahria Town! □

Greek workers tell Pompeo: ‘Go home’!

By G. Dunkel

Students and teachers at over 700 schools and universities throughout Greece walked out the first week of October. Thousands of workers marched in Thessaloníki, both at the beginning and at the end of September. Workers and other progressives had sharp confrontations with the cops. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was one special target of the protests. Pompeo’s visit to Greece at the end of September was designed to let Turkey, which disputes Greece’s claim on oil and gas in the eastern Mediterranean, know the United States is leaning toward supporting Greece.

Pompeo’s visit started in the second largest city in

Greece, Thessaloníki, a manufacturing and transportation hub for the Balkans. Thousands of workers were called out into the streets by the All Workers Militant Front (PAME) and the Committee for International Detente and Peace, as well as student groups, to protest Pompeo’s visit. Protesters marched behind a banner which read “No water, no land to the people’s killer.”

They also carried banners in English that read “Pompeo go home.”

During the last decade, U.S. and European banks forced an austerity on Greece that cost it over 25% of its economy and led over 500,000 people — mostly young and educated — to flee their homeland.

After visiting Thessaloníki, Pompeo flew to the home of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, himself the son of a former prime minister and a graduate of Stanford University and Harvard Business School. Speaking the next day at a joint U.S.-Greece military base, Pompeo hailed Greece as a “pillar for stability and prosperity.” He said the country had become a strong U.S. military partner. (Washington Post, Sept. 29)

The Greek Communist Party (KKE) held a march on the U.S. Embassy in Athens that sharply confronted the police. Police complained that red paint was thrown on the nearby statue of Harry Truman, who was U.S. president during Greece’s civil war of 1946-49 and intervened against the workers’ side.

The KKE says the Pompeo visit was designed to



Protest against austerity by Greek union confederations in Thessaloníki on Sept. 5.

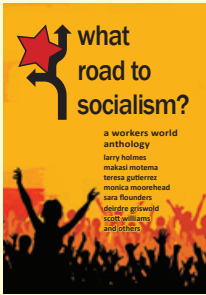
PHOTO: PAME

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- Reform or revolution?
- The state and building for revolution
- The centrality of fighting racism
- The working class will make history
- Fighting all forms of oppression: gender, sexuality, disability and age
- Socialism or death: Socialist countries lead the way to the future
- What is socialism?



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further the “co-exploitation plan between the bourgeois classes of Greece and Turkey” and to promote “U.S. geopolitical (economic and military) interests.” Greece has been turned into a vast military base for the U.S. and NATO. Its economy has been closely aligned with U.S. business interests. (tinyurl.com/y5ahc7un)

Earlier in September, Prime Minister Mitsotakis came to Thessaloníki to give a speech before a trade fair to propose a new austerity plan to Greece’s creditors. PAME, along with the other major trade confederations, held major demonstrations pointing out that the workers had already paid enough and that they were opposed to a third bailout involving more austerity.

They were demanding essential health protection measures in schools: fewer students in each classroom, new classrooms opened, teachers and cleaning staff appointed. The government’s response was authoritarian repression. Since clean schools that allow for social distancing are a matter of life and death, this struggle is unlikely to dissipate. □

Comentario de WW/MO

Preparándose para ‘el Interregno’ - el lío electoral

Por Teresa Gutierrez

Al investigar este artículo, surgió una palabra que suena genial: “mezquindad”. Significa “dado a discutir por nimiedades”.

La palabra fue utilizada en un artículo de Barton Gellman en la revista Atlantic de noviembre, “The Election That Could Break America”.

El punto de Gellman es que es una pérdida de tiempo discutir sobre si el presidente número 45 de los Estados Unidos dejará el cargo el día de la toma de posesión, el 20 de enero de 2021. Él presenta un caso excepcionalmente sólido de que, sin importar lo que suceda el día de las elecciones, 3 de noviembre de 2020: Donald Trump no cederá su puesto.

Gellman escribe que “dos hombres podrían presentarse el día 20 para tomar juramento. Uno de ellos llegaría con todas las herramientas y el poder de la presidencia ya en la mano”.

Nadie tiene una bola de cristal, pero seamos sinceros, probablemente Gellman tenga razón.

La arrogancia de Donald Trump, así como su patología, no le permitirán irse fácilmente ni en silencio. Cada tweet, declaración, decreto, cada acción de Trump desde las elecciones de 2016, ha demostrado su feroz hambre por permanecer en el poder, en el centro de atención y cosechar la recompensa por él y su familia que viene con la presidencia.

Según Gellman, Joe Biden y otros han “malinterpretado la naturaleza de la amenaza”. Dicen que si Trump se niega a abandonar la Oficina Oval, “las autoridades correspondientes lo escoltarán desde la Casa Blanca con gran rapidez”. Gellman sostiene que esta esperanza no es suficiente.

El artículo de Gellman cubre todo tipo de artículos que se han escrito, estudios realizados e incluso conferencias celebradas entre académicos legales y sociales sobre las elecciones de 2020. Los académicos constitucionales han examinado especialmente múltiples escenarios que podrían desarrollarse entre el 3 de noviembre y el 20 de enero, un período que Gelman llama “el interregno”.

Ese es el término para un período, especialmente entre reinados o regímenes sucesivos, cuando se suspende el gobierno normal.

¿Un golpe policial?

Gellman argumenta que incluso si aparentemente hay una votación aplastante en la noche de las elecciones, la tabulación de los votos por correo, etc., podría significar que el resultado final no está determinado por “días o semanas”.

La transferencia de poder en enero no ha recibido tanta atención en generaciones. Incluso el ejército de Estados Unidos ha intervenido.

El 25 de septiembre, en un artículo titulado “En el Pentágono, crecen los temores de que Trump lleve a los militares a los disturbios electorales”, informó el New York Times: “Los funcionarios del Departamento de Defensa dijeron que los principales generales podrían renunciar si el Sr. Trump da ordenes a las tropas

para ir a las calles para sofocar las protestas”. En comentarios publicados el mes pasado, un general dijo: “Creo profundamente en el principio de un ejército estadounidense apolítico”.

Sin embargo, es posible que Trump no tenga que preocuparse por el apoyo armado. Puede que no tenga lo suficiente para llevar a cabo un golpe militar, pero su relación con la policía de este país es sólida.

Trump ha amenazado en más de una ocasión con movilizar a las “fuerzas del orden” para que vigilen las elecciones el día de las elecciones, una amenaza ominosa, especialmente para las personas de raza negra y morena. Imagínese la misma agencia que asesina a los negros con impunidad mirando por encima del hombro mientras votan en Georgia o en cualquier otro lugar.

Además, los republicanos, según Gellman, están “reclutando 50.000 voluntarios en 15 estados en disputa para monitorear los lugares de votación”.

Piense en eso. El Partido Republicano vigilando las encuestas. Este es el mismo partido que en 2009 produjo el Tea Party, el grupo de fanáticos ultraconservadores que eventualmente llegaron desde la periferia para convertirse en lo que el New York Times del 13 de agosto llamó una “fuerza perdurable” en el conservadurismo estadounidense.

Este es el mismo partido, señaló el Times, que está decidido a consolidar y atender a una base “mayor, más blanca, más masculina, más rural, más conservadora”.

Y para preocuparse más, el mismo Partido Republicano que reclutó a 50.000 “observadores electorales” también acaba de respaldar a tres candidatos en California que apoyan las teorías de conspiración de extrema derecha de QAnon. (Sacramento Bee, 28 de septiembre)

El papel de los revolucionarios y socialistas

Entonces, ¿qué hacen los revolucionarios y socialistas, aquellos que, como marxistas, entienden que ambos partidos representan a la clase capitalista, que las obscenas donaciones de PACS y los multimillonarios superan la influencia de los trabajadores o de cualquier grupo de interés de la clase trabajadora en una elección burguesa?

Si los demócratas realmente estuvieran a favor de la clase trabajadora, revocarían la legislación antisindical. Apoyarían las

campañas sindicales y el llamado a una huelga general contra el racismo, como ya lo han hecho algunos activistas laborales audaces.

Moverían cielo y tierra para que las compañías petroleras pagaran por el cambio climático.

Socializarían la asistencia sanitaria. Si Canadá puede hacerlo, ¿por qué no Estados Unidos?

Podrían convocar una huelga en el Congreso y en las calles para exigir el alivio de COVID. Podrían exigir que la policía que mató a George Floyd, Breonna Taylor y tantas otras víctimas pague por sus crímenes.

Si realmente representaban los intereses de la gente, los demócratas en el Congreso cerrarían Washington

hasta que se castigara a la policía o se liberara el dinero de COVID.

Pero ellos no. Y no lo harán.

Si Wall Street controla las elecciones, el Congreso y la Casa Blanca, ¿qué pueden hacer los que viven en Martin Luther King Street, Cesar Chávez o Main Street para influir en las elecciones?

Todo.

Pase lo que pase en noviembre, gane quien gane las elecciones, los trabajadores y la gente oprimida deben organizarse y defenderse. Si alguna vez hubo un momento para un movimiento de Asambleas de Trabajadores, este es.

CNN y Fox News pueden tener todas las cámaras apuntadas a la Casa Blanca en noviembre, pero si las masas horquilladas están en las calles haciendo huelga por lo que necesitamos, todas esas cámaras se volverán hacia la gente.

‘La transferencia de poder al pueblo’

Para aquellos académicos preocupados por la defensa de la Constitución durante el Interregno, debemos preguntarnos dónde estaba la preocupación por la Constitución cuando George Floyd o Breonna Taylor yacían muertos.

¿Qué pasa con los derechos constitucionales, humanos y civiles de las mujeres migrantes que han sido esterilizadas por la fuerza?

¿Y qué pasa con todos los trabajadores esenciales que no pueden trabajar desde casa, los que se ven obligados a correr el riesgo de exponerse al COVID porque ni el sistema capitalista ni los dos partidos capitalistas los representan?

Y todas las masas hambrientas, sin hogar, encarceladas, empobrecidas, ¿quién está luchando por sus derechos constitucionales?

Claramente, solo la gente puede luchar por sí misma. Esa es la lección de noviembre.

La única transferencia de poder que debe preocupar a las masas es la transferencia de poder al pueblo: la humanidad depende de ello. □



Protesta en el Día del Trabajo por contratos justos, 7 de septiembre, Washington, DC.

El lecho de muerte de Breonna

Por Mumia Abu-Jamal

Su nombre, Breonna Taylor, se ha vuelto un llamado coreado y gritado en protestas, junto con los de muchas otras personas negras asesinadas por el Estado con absoluta impunidad.

En una reciente decisión, un gran jurado* en el estado de Kentucky no dictó una sola acusación de asesinato contra los policías que irrumpieron en su departamento, disparando más de una docena de veces. Por lo menos seis disparos alcanzaron a Breonna mientras yacía en su cama. Los policías ostensiblemente estaban llevando a cabo una redada contra el narcotráfico, pero, fíjense que no encontraron nada de droga.

Solo un policía, quien había sido despedido anteriormente, ahora enfrenta cargos. Lo acusan de poner en peligro a los vecinos por disparar a sus departamentos.

Los filósofos a veces conducen ‘experimentos del pensamiento’ para ver todos los lados de una controversia.

Imagínense, si pueden, que una mujer blanca de 26 años de nombre Breonna Brezinsky, quien trabajaba como una técnica en emergencias médicas, es asesinada a tiros en su cama por media docena de policías en una errónea redada policiaca en búsqueda de droga. ¿Qué creen que pasaría a esos policías?

El caso de la negra Breonna me recuerda el de un líder de los Panteras Negras de 21 años, quien fue asesinado a tiros en su cama después de ser drogado en la madrugada del 4 de diciembre de 1969 en Chicago. ¿Su nombre? Fred Hampton.

1969. 2020. Cincuenta años después, y las vidas de los Negros aún no importan.

Desde la nación encarcelada soy Mumia Abu-Jamal.

**Un gran jurado no determina la inocencia o culpabilidad de una persona como un jurado en un caso criminal, sino que investiga un posible crimen, acusa a una o más personas y establece los cargos en su contra.*

