NBA players ignite
Sports-wide strike vs. police terror

By Monica Moorehead

Kenosha, Wisc., became the epicenter of the anti-racist struggle, after Jacob Blake, a 29-year-old Black man, was shot seven times in the back at point-blank range by a white police officer on Aug. 23. Kenosha is 40 miles from Milwaukee, Wisconsin’s biggest city. A recorded video showed that the unarmed Blake was shot as he attempted to enter his car. Three of his children were in the back seat and watched his shooting in horror.

Blake’s father, Jacob Blake Sr., has reported that his son, now paralyzed from the waist down, is still fighting for his life. For a short time, Jacob Blake was handcuffed to his hospital bed while being heavily sedated.

Two nights later, an avowed white supremacist, 17-year-old Kyle Rittenhouse, fatally shot two anti-racist protesters who were protestin in Kenosha. Rittenhouse was taken into custody only on the next day — alive and unharmed. Rittenhouse reportedly attended a pro-Trump rally in Des Moines, Iowa, in January.

Even more damning evidence of racist police bias was a videotape showing the Kenosha police thanking armed white-supremacist vigilantes for patrolling the streets — not long before the fatal shootings took place. Cops offered water to the vigilantes, including Rittenhouse. After the shootings, the cops inside tanks ignored Rittenhouse, who walked past them with his hands up.

On Aug. 26, reacting to these recent developments in Kenosha, as well as to all the protests ignited by the public lynching of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May, the six teams in the National Basketball Association playoffs carried out what amounted to an unprecedented and historic wildcat strike, with no warning to the NBA hierarchy and NBA billionaire bosses.

This strike began when the Milwaukee Bucks refused to come onto the court for their scheduled game against the Orlando Magic. The other teams — Los Angeles Lakers, Portland Trailblazers, Houston Rockets and Oklahoma Thunder — showed solidarity with the Bucks by withholding their labor, that is, their skills and talents.

These teams, along with others eligible for playoffs, have been playing in a contained environment separated from their families — a bubble — in Orlando, Fla. The bubble is aimed at preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

These teams represent the main U.S. professional basketball league, second only to the National Football League in terms of popularity in the United States. The rosters of these NBA teams are over 75% African American. Many of these players come from communities similar to the one in which Jacob Blake lives — that is, underserved and plagued by police terror.

Many of these players, like Jacob Blake, are from young children. When they look in the mirror, they can identify with Jacob Blake. Since late May, many of these same players, before entering the bubble, joined protests demanding justice and an end to police brutality and racism.

Bucks denounce injustice

Bucks players Sterling Brown and George Hill read their team’s official statement on Aug. 26: “The past four months have shed a light on the ongoing racial injustices facing our African American communities. Citizens around the country have used their voices and platforms to speak out against these wrongdoings.

Over the last few days in our home state of Wisconsin, we’ve seen the horrendous video of Jacob Blake being shot in the back seven times by a police officer in Kenosha and the additional shooting of protesters. Despite the overwhelming plea for change, there has been no action, so our focus today cannot be on basketball.

“When we take the court and represent Milwaukee and Wisconsin, we are expected to play at a high level, give maximum effort and hold each other accountable.”

Anti-racist solidarity

Kenosha’s labor history

By Martha Grewatt

Since the near-lynching of Jacob Blake by police, the city of Kenosha, Wis., population 100,000, has become a focus of the Black Lives Matter upsurge. Up to that point, Kenosha was just a dot on the map to most people. However, the city’s United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 72 played a pivotal role in labor history and had a decades-long record of fighting racism.

Automobile manufacturing in Kenosha began in 1902, when Thomas Jeffrey converted a bicycle factory to a car assembly plant. In 1916, the plant was acquired by Nash Motors, whose president, Thomas Nash, subjected workers to long hours, low pay and brutal conditions.

When Nash imposed a piecework system in November of 1933, during the depths of the Depression, 100 workers staged a sit-down strike. Nash then locked out all 3,000 workers in the plant — but after a week on the picket line, the workers won recognition as a local of the American Federation of Labor. After a second successful strike in 1934, Nash workers flocked into the union. With membership close to 100%, Nash’s Lafayette became the country’s first union-made car.

After the founding of the UAW in 1935, the Nash union was chartered as Local 72. Its delegates “demanded elected leaders and submitted an 11-point resolution to the Convention that called for a single union organizing all auto industry workers ‘regardless of kind of work, race, creed or color.”’ (uawlocal72.org) As early as the 1940s, with many Black workers in the plant, the local established a Fair Practices Committee. By 1947, Local 72 secured contract language prohibiting race discrimination.

Mergers, megamergers and plant closings

In 1936, Nash merged with Kelvinator to form Nash-Kelvinator, which in turn merged with American Motors Corporation (AMC). Local 72 in Kenosha remained a militant thor in the side of management and solidarized itself with the emerging Civil Rights Movement.

The local actively opposed school segregation and racism in Woodworth’s stores in Kenosha. Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

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Washington Mystics (in white shirts) lead five other Women’s NBA playoff teams against the killing of Jacob Blake, Aug. 26.

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Washington Mystics (in white shirts) lead five other Women’s NBA playoff teams against the killing of Jacob Blake, Aug. 26.
Inspired by their collective experiences during June protests for George Floyd, high school students from both sides of the “City Line Divide” are challenging the education inequity between city and suburban schools here.

City Line Avenue has historically served as a dividing line between West Philadelphia and some of its wealthiest suburbs. It is also a stark contrast between predominantly white, middle-class and wealthy residents in suburbs like Ardmore, Lower Merion and Bala Cynwyd, and predominately Black West Philadelphia, where residents tend to be middle- to lower-income.

On Aug. 30 an estimated 50 people, including students from Lower Merion High School in Ardmore and Overbrook High School in Philadelphia, took to the streets demanding a change to an economic system that allocates $26,422 annually per student in Lower Merion, while just four miles away, $14,400 a year is spent per Philadelphia student. The median average household income in Lower Merion is $135,000, compared to under $35,000 in the neighborhoods surrounding Overbrook High.

The march, which included Lower Merion High School seniors affiliated with the group “Two Way Breathe” and members of the Philadelphia Student Union, started with a rally at the Cynwyd Station Park in Bala Cynwyd, just west of the city.

It was followed by a solidarity march to Tustin Playground and Recreation Center across the street from Overbrook High School in West Philadelphia, located along City Line Avenue from Lower Merion. The marchers led with a large yellow banner reading: “Lower Merion-Overbrook/Student Solidarity/Break the Divide of City Line.”

“Breaking the divide” must go beyond economic inequities for too long Black parents have also complained about the racism they and their children have experienced in the Lower Merion school district. Following the protests for George Floyd in June, it was reported that racist social media posts circulated there. One particularly disturbing and offensive post included two white students pretending to text about Floyd’s murder.

The district has also had controversies over school bus changes that disproportionately disadvantage Black students.

Saudia Durrant, one of the Lower Merion students, stated, “I believe a lot of people in Lower Merion, including myself, have grown up in a bubble and have not understood that 17-year-olds just across the street don’t get the same education that we do.” (Philadelphia Inquirer, Aug. 31)

Saudia Durrant, an organizer with Philadelphia Student Union, described the experiences of Black youth: “We’re in a moment where we don’t feel like our health is secure. We don’t feel like our housing, maybe our livelihood, is secure. We don’t feel like our loved ones are secure. That’s what it’s been like for Black youth in this country, long before 2020.” (Inquirer)

Caitlin McIntyre, one of the rally organizers, urged students to work together to address the education disparities: “We are here because we refuse to participate in a system that favors us and neglects our friends across the street... for too long we have knowingly and unknowingly reinforced a sociopolitical system that divides urban and suburban schools.”

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, LGBTQ+ 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, multigenerational and multigendered working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

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

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

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Vol. 62, No. 36 • Sept. 3, 2020 Closing date: Sept. 2, 2020

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Worlds of Empire:By Betsey Piette

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

A deadline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org. Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011.
Capitalist-fueled climate crisis
‘Another Gulf is Possible’

By Mirinda Crissman
Houston

Hurricane Laura made landfall Aug. 26 in west Louisiana and east Texas as a Category 4 storm, with winds clocking in at 150 miles per hour. The Gulf Coast region in the southern U.S. is on the frontline of a capitalist-in-duced climate crisis. Most of the people living there are in close proximity to petrochemical complexes, which are responsible for increasing the regularity and intensity of tropical storm systems.

Thousands lost their homes in the wake of Hurricane Laura, and 200,000 people are without water. (Louisiana Department of Health, Aug. 28) Hundreds of thousands across Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas are without electricity.

Many people are projected to lack electricity for several weeks, during extreme heat and under heavy petrochemical pollution. A petrochemical fire at a plant in Westlake, outside of Lake Charles, forced officials to issue a shelter-in-place order Aug. 27 — though not everyone had a place they could shelter in. (Vox, Aug. 29)

Over 1.5 million people were under evacuation orders in Texas and Louisiana just days before the storm made landfall. This sudden mass displacement of people forced to leave their homes may do little to demobilize, when many are without work or much — if any — income, resulted in conditions ripe for transmission of the virus.

Petrochemicals and pandemics

Marshes and coastal wetlands like those along the U.S. Gulf Coast are natural sponges and storm buffers, which are now largely suppressed by concrete cityscaping and especially by petrochemical extraction.

The petrochemical facilities, which dominate much of the southern coast, not only pollute local living conditions, but are a major factor in making the entire planet hotter — hot enough to fuel raging wildfires in California and in Australia. (Workers World, Jan. 20 and Aug. 26)

This pollution is hot enough to increasingly force hurricanes to release accumulated heat energy in the Gulf at a rate and intensity previously unseen in human history.

Hilton Kelley, executive director of the Texas Environmental Community In Power and Development Association, says local communities are dealing with multiple crises amid the devastation of Hurricane Laura: “Whenever you have a huge storm coming in an industrial community [in] the Texas area, what you find is that many of these industries go into shutdown mode.

That means they can’t process the oil and make all the products that they ordinarily make. Much of the product that’s left in the pipeline has to be sent to the flares and actually burned, along with a lot of the gases that build up.”

Kelley explained further, “What you see coming off the smokestacks or the derricks are these huge, huge plumes of black smoke and soot. Much of it is contaminated with benzene. Much of it is contaminated with sulfur and other toxins that are not being processed, also volatile organic compounds. And so people are ingesting all of these dangerous toxins and at the same time dealing with COVID-19 and the extreme heat. It really exacerbates the respiratory system and also the immune system, making us more prone to be affected by COVID-19.” (Detroit News, Aug. 28)

Capitalism is the climate crisis

Poor communities of color always disproportionately bear the brunt of capitalist-in-duced climate crisis. This is compounded under COVID conditions, which confirms the truth of Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s definition that racism is the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death.

The production of oil under capitalism is disproportionately exposing people of color and poor folks to premature and unnatural death. Yet under capitalism, enough resources are being produced that could provide for everyone facing hardship now.

These resources are being hoarded by a few at the expense of the workers who produce this wealth — with the heaviest toll falling on the most oppressed members of our class. Oil companies must pay climate refugees and the world reparations!

Groups on the Gulf Coast have been doing work for decades in the fight against climate crisis and pollution. For guidance and leadership and to build solidarity in these struggles, communities can look to organizations like the Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Service (TEJAS), grassroots collabora-tive Another Gulf is Possible and Native groups like the Carrizo Comanche Tribe of Texas.

Another Gulf is Possible “believes in the power of civil disobedience and direct action through a decolonized, anti-racist and abolitionist framework to directly challenge our elected decision makers and corporate control. [The women of color-led collaborative] utilizes the transformative nature of art and media to inspire and catalyze change.”

More than ever, the survival of working and oppressed people is a life-and-death struggle that depends on the ability to build power in solidarity — and in the words of LGBTQ+ activist and writer Leslie Feinberg — “become the best fighters against each other’s oppressions. The workers’ struggle against climate crisis, COVID, capitalism, imperialism and patriarchal violence has no borders. Workers of the world and oppressed people unite!”

Trump’s COVID-19 Rx: Less science, more politics

By Betsey Piette

On the eve of the Republican National Convention, on Aug. 23, Trump took to the airwaves to announce that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration had approved an emergency use authorization for convalescent plasma for COVID-19 treatment. The previous day, Trump had accused the FDA of delaying the rollout of vaccines and therapeutic treatments for “political reasons.”

Many scientists and health experts questioned the reversal of the FDA’s previous position, which was that more testing was needed on the impact of the plasma treatment. Even Stephen Hahn, head of the FDA, acknowledged that he had overstated its benefits. Since Aug. 23, doctors in the U.S. have reported cases of COVID-19 reinfection — calling into question the value of plasma treatment.

On Aug. 24, the first night of the RNC, with much fanfare, the Environmental Protection Agency gave emergency approval for the use of the disinfectant SurfaceWize by the airline industry and to two Texas cities. The EPA agency called it a “major game changer.”

Yet health and chemical safety experts caution that many may do little to demobilize, when many are without work or much — if any — income, resulted in conditions ripe for transmission of the virus.

“Emergency” declarations by the FDA and EPA were clearly politically designed to convince voters to ignore Trump’s abysmal record on COVID-19. Meanwhile, the number of COVID deaths in the U.S. surpassed 6 mil-lion, and over 186,000 people have died. (worldometers.info, Aug. 29)

This stunning CDC reversal comes just as more schools are reopening, many with in-person instruction which potentially risks the exposure of millions of children, young adults, and education and other school workers.

Recent studies show that while young people are less likely to exhibit COVID-19 symptoms, they may carry higher viral loads and are more likely than adults to transmit the disease to others. CDC data has linked 40% of COVID-19 infections to individuals who test positive yet show no symptoms.

While the Trump administration’s testing coordinator Admiral Brett Giroir, Assistant Secretary for Health, denied any intervention from Trump in the CDC reversal, it is undeniable that with only 61 days left before the Nov. 3 election, this move benefits Trump.

In June, Trump falsely claimed that testing was the cause of a recent surge of cases in the U.S. At a controversial rally in Tulsa, Okla., he told supporters: “When you do testing to that extent, you’re going to find more people; you’re going to find more cases. So I said to my people, ‘Slow the testing down, please.’” (nation.com, June 20)
COVID and wildfires fuel call for mass prisoner releases

By Judy Greenspan
Sacramento, Calif.

Spiking COVID-19 levels in California state prisons, coupled with raging wildfires and dangerously poor air quality, have fueled a statewide movement demanding the mass release of prisoners.

On Aug. 30, a boisterous and angry coalition of prisoners’ family members, former prisoners and prisoners’ rights activists protested outside the homes of California Department of Corrections (CDC) Secretary Ralph Diaz and Gov. Gavin Newsom, who both reside in Sacramento, the state capital. The demonstration, organized by No Justice: Under Capitalism, included a large number of spouses and other relatives of prisoners who are part of We Are Their Voices.

Reported COVID-19 infections of California state prisoners have reached 10,656, with 57 reported deaths. Gov. Newsom has refused to order mass releases of prisoners, for whom COVID could be a death sentence. California prisons are filled with the elderly and people with life-threatening and chronic illnesses.

Many wildfires in the vicinity of prisons, including the California Medical Facility at Vacaville, California State Prison-Solano, continue to spew clouds of ash and dust. While area residents have been evacuated, the CDC has yet to evacuate any of the prisons.

Outside Secretary Diaz’s house, family members spoke about their loved ones in prison. Their message was simple: “Let them go! We will take care of them.” One of the excuses given by prison administrators to justify their inaction has been to say that the prisoners have nowhere to go. If today’s demonstration showed any indication, many of the prisoners have loving family members who want them returned to the community so they can provide them with care.

Later at Gov. Newsom’s house, protesters demanded the governor come out and speak with them. Newsom, who was known to be home at the time of the protest, was nowhere to be seen. The coalition promised to return until the prison system acts to save the lives of California prisoners.

Justice for John Neville!

By calvin deutschbein

On Aug. 21, the newly formed Triad Abolition Project began the 58th consecutive day of direct action against Forsyth County’s jail in Winston-Salem, N.C. The Project was formed earlier this year to demand justice in the case of John Neville, who was murdered by jailers in December 2019. The county sheriff kept the news from the public for months.

Neville’s autopsy found that he died of cardiac arrest and a brain injury caused by a lack of oxygen. Video obtained by the Project shows Neville saying over 200 times that he could not breathe. Following the protests outside the jail, five guards and a jail nurse were charged with felony manslaughter.

The jailers are exempt from state regulations barring what they call “prone restraint,” which is more accurately described as hog-tying because it is so frequently deadly. This is not the first death by hog-tying in Forsyth County; also within the N.C. Triad area, Marcus Smith was murdered by Greensboro police officers using the same technique in 2018.

“Facedown restraint, called prone restraint, is lethal and must be prohibited in all N.C. jails,” said Susan Pollitt, attorney at Disability Rights North Carolina.

While the Project has forced the district attorney to charge those responsible for Neville’s death, neither the sheriff nor the DA have made policy changes. Both the sheriff and local police got increased funding in 2020 in the midst of national economic collapse and the shuttering of many social programs.

Prison-industrial complex

Harvard students demand divestment

By Ted Kelly

A student-led organization called the Harvard Prison Divestment Campaign is fighting to dismantle the prison-industrial complex, starting with their own school’s administration. Research has exposed that portions of Harvard University’s $39 billion endowment are invested in companies that profit from the prison-industrial complex.

Students have called on Harvard to divest from private prison facilities. They have organized rallies and met with administrators but have been met with resistance. A recent interview with the Harvard Divest Campaign’s lead organizer, Amanda Chen, revealed her disappointment with the university’s response.

Harvard students are demanding divestment from companies that profit from the prison-industrial complex. Chen said, “We are at a turning point in history,” and that the university’s response was not enough.

The campaign is currently focusing on JP Morgan Chase, a company that has invested in private prison facilities.

“People always ask me, ‘Do you really think you can get Harvard University, the university with the largest endowment in the world, to divest from prisons just because you ask them to?’ And to them I say, ‘No one ever thought that a group of activists could get Harvard to divest from South African apartheid. That took 10 years. And you know what? Nine and a half years in, I bet some people were thinking, ‘Wow, this hasn’t been going well for a really long time. Maybe we should give up.’ But they didn’t. And they won!’”

Chen also cited the recent successful push to get Jamie Dimon of JP Morgan Chase to divest his holdings in private prison facilities.

“We are at a turning point in history,” Chen said, in reference to the world-historic uprisings against the police after the murder of George Floyd.
What’s behind the U.S. ban on TikTok?

By Ben Carroll

With more than 100 million monthly users in the U.S., TikTok has quickly become a wildly popular, short-video social media app. Owned by Chinese company ByteDance Ltd., TikTok is the most popular social media app worldwide, according to usage statistics compiled in January of this year. (bootsuiter.com, May 7)

Teenage users of the app— colloquially referred to as “TikTok teens” — are credited with using TikTok to thwart a June 20 reelection rally of President Donald Trump in Tulsa, Okla., by reserves a huge number of tickets under fake names. Leading up to the planned rally, Trump and his campaign team bragged about over-filling the arena where the event was planned. Instead, they were met with a venue that was less than half-filled. The crowds they anticipated never materialized.

Trump issued an executive order Aug. 6 that will efectively ban TikTok and WeChat, another Chinese-owned messaging and social media app, from operating in the U.S. by mid-September. The reason for this drastic move is allegedly “to protect national security.” This is related to accusations around data security and privacy. In reality, the U.S. government’s action is an escalation of Washington’s ongoing efforts to undermine China, particularly in the growing battle around the development and ownership of technology.

China’s rising tech development threatens U.S. profits

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg attended a private dinner in October 2019 at the White House with Trump, White House adviser Jared Kushner and billionaire tech investor Peter Thiel, who is also on Facebook’s board. The dinner was part of a concerted effort by Zuckerberg and his company to get an audience with some of the most aggressively anti-China members of Congress.

Of course, this event was a bipartisan affair, meant to stoke concern about TikTok and particular in the rising threat posed to U.S. technological corporations’ global market share. (Wall Street Journal, Aug. 23)

Parroting the racist and growing anti-communist rhetoric coming from the top levels of both U.S. capitalist political parties, while at the meeting between Zuckerberg and Trump, Facebook representative Andy Stone told the Wall Street Journal, “As Chinese companies and influence have been growing, so has the risk of a global internet based on their values, as opposed to ours.”

Facebook was also one of the companies to found a new organization called American Edge—a supergroup composed of many major players in the U.S. tech industry — to lobby and run public relations campaigns around their interests. These interests include reducing regulations and scrutiny of the industry, as well as unifying efforts by the tech industry to take on growing Chinese technologi- cal innovation and dominance.

In American Edge’s founding statement entitled “Who We Are,” posted on its website, China is the only country other than the U.S., that is mentioned by name. The corporate coalition cites the following fact as being a major impetus for its formation: “9 of the top 20 technology companies are now based in China rather than the U.S.”

It is curious that Facebook, among other U.S. tech giants and politicians, would cite concerns over data security and allegations of censorship in their opposition to TikTok and other Chinese-owned apps. After all, Facebook abruptly removed the pages of It’s Going Down, Crimethinc and other prominent anti-fascist and anarchist pages without any warning on Aug. 19.

The tech company has a long, well-documented history of removing left-wing political pages and suppressing posts in news feeds.

In 2018, the personal information of millions of Facebook users was accessed without their knowledge by the political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica. This is only one of countless leaks of users’ personal information. In addition, these corporations show their allegiance to U.S. governmental police agencies by complying with their requests for such information.

SF School bus drivers
‘Don’t throw us under the bus!’

By Dave Welsh

For 50 years, the San Francisco school bus drivers union has led the fight for fair — and unionized — transportation of children to and from school. Now the school district and its bus contractor First Student are threatening to lay off 260 drivers and strip them of their health care and other benefits.

“The fight is on,” said Sharon Chappell, president of their union, SMART Local 1741. “We won’t let them tear up our union contract and put our children in harm’s way,” she told a powerful demonstration at San Francisco City Hall on Aug. 20, which included a strong showing of over three-quarters of the entire membership of the school bus drivers’ local. (tinyurl.com/5yf06evp)

Also speaking were Susan Solomon, president of United Educators of San Francisco, the teachers’ local, and Alida Fisher, parent of a child with disabili- ties. Fisher spoke with feeling about the caring and sensitivity of the school bus drivers toward the children who were in their charge. The unionized drivers are required to conform to stringent requirements for licensing of drivers and for special outfitting of the buses to ensure that the children’s safety is protected. The San Francisco Unified School District has awarded a partial contract to a nonunion ride-share company called Zum to take over the transportation of some children to and from their schools. The driv- ers and their union are saying: “No way!”

For years, the San Francisco school bus drivers union has been competing with Trump about who can take the most aggressive stance against China — in the interest of preserving the dominance of U.S. imperialism as it continues to decline.

Facing a multitude of severe problems — a deepening economic crisis, a pandemic, a growing movement in the streets against racist police murders and an emerg- ing political fight around the 2020 presidential elec- tions — Washington’s escalating attacks on China show the desperation of a capitalist system that is losing its legitimacy on every level. This environment can present many opportunities, alongside many threats, as these crises intensify.

U.S. companies line up like pigs at the trough

Following Trump’s executive order banning TikTok, U.S. technology corporations have been circling like vultures to get their hands on U.S.-based operations of the app, which could be put up for sale before the mid-September deadline banning it.

At the head of this ravenous pack are Microsoft and Walmart, which submitted a joint bid. Oracle is trying to buy the company. Twitter and other companies have expressed interest in purchasing TikTok.

There is certainly a lot of money to be made by whichever U.S. corporation buys the app, should such a sale eventually take place. On Aug. 29, China formally asserted its right to be involved in the negotiations taking place concerning TikTok’s operations in the U.S., in an effort to protect other more sensitive technologies that were developed by the app.

Similar to the campaign now being waged against TikTok, Huawei is another Chinese technology company that has been aggressively attacked by the U.S. and its imperialist allies in the last two years. Huawei recently overtook Samsung as the world’s largest smartphone producer. Huawei is currently the world’s larg- est manufacturer of telecom equipment, such as chips, and is a global leader in the development of 5G wireless technology.

U.S. ups anti-China attacks

The expansion and profitability of U.S. technological corporations are certainly key aspects of the attacks on TikTok. However, this is only one part of the latest wid- ening conflict instigated by the U.S. against China.

By every measure China is surpassing the U.S. in tech- nological innovation, owed in large part to the social organization of Chinese society, which encourages and fosters such developments. China’s achievements threaten the long-term viability of the position which U.S. corporations have enjoyed for decades in reaping the benefits of technological developments.

U.S. imperialism depends on its reliable partnerships with U.S.-based technological corporations, in order to develop new means to advance and protect its global imperialist interests. That those technologies can be developed elsewhere, and which in many cases are super- ior to those developed in the U.S., is a major threat.

The Trump administration has ramped-up open attacks on China with the imposition of tariffs and other means, but taking aim at China is a bipartisan project. Democratic Party presidential candidate Joe Biden has been competing with Trump about who can take the most aggressive stance against China — in the interest of preserving the dominance of U.S. imperialism as it continues to decline.

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Kenosha speaks: Keep it in the streets!

By Adelana Adelana

This article is an edited version of a talk by Adelana Akindex at the Aug. 30 National Antiwar Coalition Webinar: “After the DNC & RNC — We Can't Breathe! Keep it in the Streets — Against Racism, Evictions and War.” Akindex is a leader with the Coalition to March on the DNC and Students for a Democratic Society in Kenosha, Wis.

I’ve been attending the Kenosha uprising since the shooting of Jacob Blake Aug. 23 and was actually abducted by the feds on Aug. 29.

We’d been building for a year to the March on the DNC, which was held Aug. 20. Our goals were to defeat Trump and send him to see the truth. We organized two parties that our movements are going to put the people over the profits.

For years, I’ve marched for George Floyd, and in solidarity with the March on RNC in Jacksonville, Fla., we put “We can’t breathe” at the forefront of our march. Families of victims of police crimes across Wisconsin shared their heartbreaking stories at a rally. Even during the pandemic, we were able to gather hundreds of people to listen to the stories and be in solidarity.

We marched through downtown, stopping at symbolic locations — the police station and Homeland Security. Just three days later, Jacob Blake was shot in the back seven times by Kenosha police. We all felt anger and devastation.

We were called to act, to march, speak, mobilize and organize. We faced warfare conditions with the deployment of the National Guard and constant use of tear gas, rubber bullets and flash bombs.

On Wednesday night, me and two other friends were walking to join the march, bringing protective gear and medical supplies, when three unmarked vehicles swooped in out of nowhere. The State and local officers arrested us for a curfew violation.

We were given disproportionate treatment. We were demonized. We were given orange suits. I spent 24 hours in jail with no phone call.

Contrast this with Kyle Rittenhouse who murdered people, yet was able to walk through the crowd after killing them. These experiences have deepened our understanding of the inherent injustices woven into the system.

We know that the biggest systemic changes and advancements have happened through protests: the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, fighting apartheid in South Africa, on strike for workers’ rights, revolutions in South America and Cuba. So we recognize that the way to move forward is through protest, and that’s what’s happening in Kenosha today.

At the National Guard and the military coming in and trying to silence us, locking us up and trying to instill fear in us, we’re still coming out. Even though it’s been a scary experience, it gives us a glimpse of how power operates. My message is keep it in the streets, keep going, keep marching, keep organizing.

Join an organization. If it wasn’t for SDS, I probably wouldn’t have gotten out as soon as I did. We had thousands of calls coming in.

Power to the people!

Kenosha’s labor history

Continued from page 1

the South and sent members to the region in 1966 to support voting rights. Around that time, Local 72 was the largest local in the UAW, with 14,500 working at the assembly plant and other nearby AMC plants.

When Chrysler bought out AMC in 1987, there were still over 8,000 workers at Kenosha Assembly. CEO Lee Iacocca initially promised members Local 72 would remain, at least for five years, but in 1988 he reversed course and announced the plant would be closing.

Speakers at labor-community rallies to stop the closing included the Rev. Jesse Jackson, then seeking the Democratic Party’s presidential nomination, who endorsed Jackson, drawing the ire of the UAW’s International Executive Board, which had endorsed Michael Dukakis in advance of the party’s convention.

After Chrysler closed Kenosha Assembly in 1989, Local 72 continued to represent Kenosha Engine, which was adding more production lines. President Rudy Kuzel supported the election of an out gay man for steward and in the 1990s backed the campaign to win contract language banning discrimination for sexual orientation — which the UAW finally won at the Big Three automakers in 1999.

In 2009, Chrysler declared bankruptcy and announced the closing of six plants, including Kenosha Engine, one of the last former AMC plants still in operation. In 2010 the company, now owned by Fiat, closed the plant, ending over a century of auto industry in Kenosha.

Plant closings are devastating, not only to workers and their families, but to the cities and counties that surround them. The bosses at Chrysler — now FCA — have yet to be brought to justice for their crimes against numerous communities in Kenosha.

In this climate of impunity for the bosses and the well-to-do, Jacob Blake, a Black person who had committed no crime, was shot in the back seven times by a cop and then handcuffed to his hospital bed. The ensuing wave of protests has shown, however, that the militant, anti-racist tradition of UAW Local 72 is alive and well in the streets of Kenosha today.

Letetra Widham, sister of Jacob Blake, says ‘I want change!’

By Kathy Durkin

Letetra Widham declared, “I don’t want your pity. I want change!” The sister of Jacob Blake gave an impassioned talk at an Aug. 25 press conference in Kenosha, Wis., the city where police shot her brother two days earlier. This horrific act set off protests there demanding “Justice for Jacob Blake!”

Blake, a 29-year-old African American, lies paralyzed in a hospital bed after being shot in the back seven times by a white police officer. Three of his six children watched this brutal attack. Outrageously, Blake’s father was handcuffed to the bed until a public outcry stopped that cruel act.

Widham’s eloquent speech, which went viral, described the family as so angered by endless racist police violence, including those who have taken to the streets to demand an end to this terror against the Black community and to systemic racism, while calling for justice for its victims.

“I am my brother’s keeper,” stressed Widham. “When you say the name Jacob Blake, make sure you say father; make sure you say cousin; make sure you say son; make sure you say uncle; but most importantly, make sure you say human. Let it marinate in your mind — a human life. We’re human, and his lives matter.”

We can’t part the parties that our movements are going to march on the DNC and Students for a Democratic Society in March on the DNC and Students for a Democratic Society in Kenosha, Wis.

“Many people have reached out to me, telling me they’re sorry this happened to my family. Don’t feel sorry, because this has been happening to my family for a long time, longer than I can account for. It happened to Emmett Till. Emmett Till is my family,” she said, referring to the 14-year-old African American murdered by Klansmen in 1955 in Mississippi. “It happened to Philando, Mike Brown and Sandra Bland.”

“This is not new,” said Widham. “I’m not sad. I’m not sorry. I’m angry. And I’m tired. I stopped crying years ago. I am numb. I have been watching police murder people that look like me for years. I’m also a Black history minor, so not only have I been watching this for the 30 years I’ve been on this planet, but I’ve been watching this for years before we were even alive.”

Jacob Blake Sr., told reporters, “They shot my son seven times like he didn’t matter. But my son matters. He’s a human being, and he matters.”

D.C. theme: ‘Get your knee off our necks!’

On Aug. 28, the 57th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, thousands rallied at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. The day’s theme refers to the police killing by choke hold of George Floyd in Minneapolis, which sparked the worldwide Black Lives Matter-led multinational movement of millions of people.

Key to the day’s program was the inclusion of family members of Black and Latinx victims of racist police or vigilante violence. Speakers stressed the need to mobilize and organize. We faced warlike police. We all felt anger and devastation. Letetra Widham spoke of “two systems of justice in the United States — a white system and a Black system.” Letetra Widham spoke powerfully against “genocide.”

Alyssa Findley, Botham Jean’s sister, who came in solidarity with families of police victims, emphasized police brutal- ity is the largest killer of Black people.

Ahmad Arbery’s parents, Wanda Cooper-Jones and Marcus Arbery, addressed the crowd. Everyone chanted “Say her name, Breonna Taylor,” while her mother, Tamika Palmer, spoke.

Sybrina Fulton, Trayvon Martin’s mother, called for constant reaffirmation of “Black Lives Matter.” Maria Hamilton and Wanda Johnson, mothers of Dontre Hamilton and Oscar Grant, encouraged more mobilizing.

Joe Acedovo honored his son, Joel Acevado, choke hold victim. Eric Garner Jr., Leslie McPadden, mother of Michael Brown, and relatives of other victims of police terror attended. Civil rights and faith-based leaders and politicians also came and spoke.

Raleigh protest in solidarity with Jacob Blake and Kenosha

By Calvin Deutschbein
Durham, N.C.

On Aug. 28, in solidarity with Jacob Blake and Kenosha, thousands flooded the streets in downtown Raleigh to demand police abolition, the abolition of capitalism and decolonization.

Raleigh capitalists could scarcely hide their zeal to wield their oppressive appa-

ratuses. By the beginning of the march at 7 p.m., most businesses and government buildings downtown had boarded up their windows, and most government buildings placed out helpful and opaque signs to create choke points for concentrated police violence.

Dutifully following the direction of their masters, many corporate media news outlets breathlessly spoke of the possibility of property damage. What media narratives missed was earlier in the day when Wake County District Attorney Lorrin Freeman had not to designate the Raleigh police killing of Keith Collins in January as a wrong-

ful death. (tinyurl.com/y5w2ye5l) To the people of Raleigh — Black Lives Matter, we've had three primary focuses of our work. The first is to effectively crack down on labor rights, goading fascists to continue oppressing people in the streets. We've marched on Trump in Green Bay; we've marched on his rally in Oshkosh, as well as Milwaukee.

Our second focus is to demand that Democrats take action against police vio-

lence and arrest killer cops. Our third focus is to make sure that people keep it in the streets. So from that, I'm going to transition to what's happening in Kenosha.

Kenosha is my hometown. I've lived there for 22 years and actually orga-

nized in Kenosha for a time. The issue in Kenosha is that a lot of organizations primarily focus on electoral politics. The left-wing organizations primarily exist around electoral politics. Kenosha could be seen as a microcosm of what we see across the country. In Kenosha, with their only focus on electoral poli-

tics, you see this explosion — because people aren't getting their demands met, and people aren't seeing justice. People are still seeing violence and seeing killer cops. What's happening in Kenosha is what's happening in a lot of small cities. And a lot of these smaller cities are left behind. It's really important to keep it in the streets in the small towns and cities and rural areas — anywhere that we can possi-

bly be. Otherwise, we're just going to keep seeing these uprisings and people getting killed. We want to get to a point where we're able to stabilize and have a govern-

ment that works for the people. I've been out quite a few nights in Kenosha since its uprising happened.

We've seen militias out in the suburbs. People just out supposedly "defending their neighborhoods" aren't bothered by the police at all. On the other hand, when we were waiting outside [the jail for] Adelana's release, a ton of 2ndSDers, they attempted to arrest us for just demanding their release.

We very clearly see the direction that the police are going. And so it's not surprising to see them putting his brown shirts for a while now, but we're starting to see those contradictions hashed out in real time. Final message is that everyone keep it in the streets — because as we've seen in Kenosha, rally-

ing around electoral politics is not nearly enough to be addressing this terrible, ter-

rible issue that's happening around the country and around the world.

Voice from Kenosha: Electoral politics not nearly enough

By Omar Flores

This article is an edited version of a talk by Omar Flores during the Aug. 30 UNAC Webinar: “After the DNC & RNC — We Can't Breathe! Keep the pressure on, Agitate Against Racism and War.” Flores is with the Milwaukee Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression.

Today I’m speaking on behalf of the Coalition to March on the DNC.

We’ve had three primary focuses of our march, and the first is to defeat the number one enemy of all working people, Donald Trump, here and abroad.

We saw some other work that he tried to do in Venezuela and failed. This is what makes him the enemy of working people: effectively cracking down on labor rights, goading fascists to continue oppressing people in the streets. We've marched on Trump in Green Bay; we've marched on his rally in Oshkosh, as well as Milwaukee.

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rible issue that’s happening around the country and around the world.

NBA players ignite sports-wide strike vs. police terror

Continued from page 1

other accountable. We told ourselves to that standard, and in this moment, we are demanding the same from our lawmakers and law enforcement.

“We are calling for justice for Jacob Blake and demand the officers be held accountable. For this to occur, it is imper-

ative that the United States government continue to reevaluate after months of inaction and take up meaningful measures to address issues of police accountability, brutality and criminal justice reform. We encour-

age all citizens to educate themselves, take peaceful and responsible action, and remember to vote on Nov. 3.” (nba.com)

Several NBA players and Milwaukee police bruntzeled Brown. He has a lawsuit pend-

ing against the cops.

As millions of people in Orlando met late on Aug. 26 and again the next day. They decided to resume the playoff season either Aug. 28 or 29. All games scheduled for Aug. 27 were postponed.

NBA champion, and now popular sports commentator, Kenny “The Jet” Smith, walked off the list of TNT’s “Inside the NBA” program on Aug. 26 in support of the NBA boycott.

Women’s NBA acts

Once the NBA teams carried out their one-day strike, six WNBA teams took

action. Scheduled to play regular season games on Aug. 26, they planned varied protests.

On the basketball court, the Washington Mystic team wore Jacob Blake warm-up shirts with seven bullet holes drawn on the back. At the last minute, they decided not to play. The WNBA’s Atlanta Dream, Connecticut Sun, Los Angeles Sparks, Minnesota Lynx and Phoenix Mercury also boycotted their games. No WNBA teams were played on Aug. 27.

In a statement representing the WNBA players’ union, Atlanta Dream forward Elizabeth Williams said: “What we have seen over the last few months, and most recently with the brutal police shooting of Jacob Blake, is overwhelming. And while we hurt for Jacob and his community, we also have an opportunity to keep the focus on the issues and demand change.”

Espn.com, Aug. 26

The WNBA players, along with the NBA players, have given extra attention to demanding justice for Breonna Taylor, the 26-year-old Black woman and EMT whom Kentucky police fatally shot multiple times this past March in her own home. No police officer has been charged with her murder.

Baseball, soccer, tennis, hockey, football players

Six Major League Baseball teams post-

poned their Aug. 26 games to express their solidarity with the NBA boy-

cott and the struggle for social justice: The Milwaukee Brewers, Los Angeles Dodgers, San Francisco Giants, San Diego Padres, Seattle Mariners and Cincinnati Reds. Several more MLB teams, includ-

ing the Minnesota Twins, Detroit Tigers, Oakland Athletics, Philadelphia Phillies, Texas Rangers and Washington Nationals postponed their games scheduled for Aug. 27 in protest of police brutality.

The MLB action is significant. Only a small number of African American players are in the MLB. Historically the MLB has taken little to no progressive stances against racism since Jackie Robinson broke baseball’s color line in 1947.

In solidarity with Black Lives Matter, 10 Major League Soccer teams cancelled five matches on Aug. 16: FC Dallas vs. Colorado Rapids, Real Salt Lake vs. LAFC, San Jose Earthquakes vs. Portland Timbers, LA Galaxy vs. Seattle Sounders FC and Inter Miami CF. Athlete Tennis player Naomi Osaka, a two-time Grand Slam winner, refused to play her second-round match in the Western & Southern Open on Aug. 27. Osaka tweeted, “Before I am an athlete, I am a Black woman. Watching the continued genocide of Black people at the hands of the police is honestly making me sick to my stom-

ach.” (tennis365, Aug. 27) Osaka is of Haitian and Japanese heritage.

National football teams includ-

ing the Detroit Lions, the Washington football team, Indianapolis Colts and seven others turned their practice ses-

sions into press conferences and discus-

sions to protest police brutality and systemic racism.

Colin Kaepernick’s players walked off their respective practice fields to march on their campuses in solidarity with Black Lives Matter at Ole Miss, Oklahoma University and University of Kansas on Aug. 27.

The National Hockey League post-

poned all its games for Aug. 27 and 28. Whatever happens going forward, the NBA players’ two-day strike has made an indelible and historic impact, bringing a whole new awareness to the struggle for justice in the United States and around the world.
The Democratic and Republican national conventions are over. Is it too late to stop the Republican Party, because both parties are beholden to the billionaires.

What really matters is the class struggle! Nonetheless, the rise of anti-scientific, ultra-conservative, far-right forces in the Republican Party must be challenged.

QAnon has taken hold of new politicians, including Marjorie Taylor Greene, who won a House primary runoff election in Georgia. (New York Times, Aug. 11)

This is dangerous if we are to stop the COVID-19 pandemic, which has not only been aggravated by Trump, but is today being denied almost altogether.

What if Trump is reelected? Will another Trump administration quickly call for opening up the economy, the schools, bars and beaches, ushering in a new wave of coronavirus deaths?

The New York Times of Aug. 5 wrote that the rich, if they inherited in history has gotten financial support from nearly one-in-ten U.S. billionaires.

The Biden campaign reports its financial fundraisers are at $600 million. The Trump campaign states it has $1.21 billion! (NPR, Aug. 21)

If one asks who the billionaires want to be president, and if one believes that it is the rich who really pick the president, then one would conclude that Trump will win.

And if the electoral college continues to represent the racist and class interests, as it was established to do, then no matter who gets the most votes in November, Trump will be reelected.

That is why the real question right now is what to do on Nov. 3, but what to do on Nov. 4?

Who will really fight for the working class? Who can stop the ultraright from marching in Portland and Kenosha with their Confederate flags and AK-47s?

Key is which forces will defend the Black Lives Matter movement and build class unity toward realizing its full potential — a chance to demand reparations for the horrors of slavery — and maybe flourish, not to simply help build a new, just society for Black people, but for all oppressed and working people.

The Brown and white youth fighting alongside their African American sisters, brothers and people of all genders know what is truly at stake. The Democrats are clueless and gutless. The Republicans are white-supremacist terrorists.

The only solution is the people fighting for their own class interests.

The RNC and DNC are over
Now what to do about November?

By Teresa Gutierrez

The Democratic Party, which is attempting to fight hard for their constituents, mostly color in the “Squad,” who are attempting to fight for real social change. It is taking a step forward. Any position that under mines the hold which the Democrats have on the progressive movement is a step forward. DSA joins a long list of progressives and activists who are just not going there.

The Democrats are completely incapable of stopping the “far-right politics, racism and misogyny” that are thriving under the capitalist system today. Just look at how the Democratic Party leaders treat Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and the other women of color in the “ Squad,” who are attempting to fight hard for their constituents, mostly people of color. Republicans who spoke at the Democratic National Convention were given 1,000 times more time for their remarks than Ocasio-Cortez.

The Democrats are beholden to the billionaires.

The Republicans must be challenged. The Trump administration quickly call for opening up the economy, the schools, bars and beaches, ushering in a new wave of coronavirus deaths?

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The only solution is the people fighting for their own class interests.

British soldier arrested for protesting war on Yemen

By Michael Kramer

Aug. 30 — Lance Corporal Ahmed Al-Babati, a British serving soldier since 2017 and member of the 14th Signal Regiment, was arrested Aug. 24 in London while protesting the British government’s support for Saudi Arabia and its criminal war against Yemen.

The arrest took place outside the official residence of the British Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street. Al-Babati was taken into custody by both the Royal Military Police and London Metropolitan Police. (streamable.com/gkanj8)

In a video posted online, Lance Corporal Al-Babati explained the reasons he took action: “It is clear that this government has blood on their hands; so with that being said, I refuse to continue my military service until the arms trade with Saudi Arabia has been put to an end. It is reported that a child dies every ten minutes in Yemen. So I’ll be standing outside 10 Downing Street blowing a whistle every ten minutes, so they can hear every time a child dies, due to a war they continue to arm and support.” (streamable.com/gkanj8)

Veterans For Peace U.K. issued a strong statement in support and solidarity with Lance Corporal Al-Babati which concludes, “As fellow serving and former soldiers, we have the power to provide direct support for Al-Babati and to explain and publicize the atrocities that he has exposed.” (tinyurl.com/y39g7289)

British and U.S. arms manufacturers BAE Systems, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon Technologies, to name a few, have had billions of dollars in sales to Saudi Arabia since the war began in 2015.

Kramer is a member of Veterans For Peace/ Chapter 021 (Northern New Jersey)
On socialist Vietnam’s response to COVID-19

By Dr. Ngo Thanh Nhan and Merle Ratner

This slightly edited co-written article was presented as a talk by Dr. Ngo Thanh Nhan on Aug. 20 to a Workers World Party webinar on “COVID can be defeated: Cuba, China, Venezuela & Vietnam.” The talk was the first in a series of webinars that began with a lively pop music video, part of Vietnam’s national public health campaign, “Before the first wave, win, to beat the coronavirus!” viewable at youtube.com/Oducx_d7Vu.

Tonight, I’d like to talk about Vietnam’s experience in combating COVID-19. The first case in Vietnam was on Jan. 23. Between then and early July there were about 200 cases of infection – and no deaths. The second wave of COVID-19 started on July 1. Even with this second wave, as of Aug. 20, Vietnam has recorded only 1,034 cases with 29 deaths. Many of those who died had terminal illness and some cases were related to stories of people who had ingested Orange toxins [from the 1955-1975 U.S. war on the country].

The Ministry of Health gives instant reporting at now.moh.gov.vn where data is submitted directly from local hospitals across the country. Vietnam is a country of more than 97 million people, so 29 deaths is 0.29% per million of the population. The United States has a population of 330 million, but there where have been more than 185,690 deaths, which is 55.43% per million— or 1,855.82 times proportionally bigger. The second wave of COVID-19 is centered in Da Nang, the third-largest city in Vietnam, and a major tourist destination and transit city for foreign workers. Da Nang is very close to the port city of Da Nang as there were here in the United States.

How did Vietnam, a developing country still dealing with the impact of United States chemical warfare, manage to achieve such impressive results? First and foremost is the dedication to Vietnamese people. The Party and the government did a consistent and compassionate message. There were no armed protests against the quarantine – or in fact, against any level of self-decoration or selfish behavior. There were no armed protests against the quarantine in Vietnam as there were here in the United States. In Vietnam, people’s level of confidence in the Communist Party and the government has been strengthened by the formality of the campaigns Vietnam fought to win against the pandemic, SARS and avian influenza pandemics. Vietnam decided to focus on stopping the outbreak before it spread widely, using contact and community tracing, testing where available, and a massive public education and outreach program. In the areas where COVID-19 had spread, Vietnam shut down non-essential businesses and schools. In neighbor- hoods by a high disinfection residents were placed under strict quarantines. People were asked to stay at their homes to avoid further transmission and were provided food, medical supplies and medi- cal care. People coming from overseas underwent a mandatory two-week quar- antine in hotels or other centers where they were provided with free food, lodging and medical treatment. Everyone had access to treatment whatever their financial situation. Masks and PPE were widely available to medical people, to essential workers and to ordi- nary people.

Science, cultural work, centralized planning applied

Vietnam utilized the latest science to study the strains of COVID-19 from the first to the second wave. Early on they developed a comprehensive system of contact tracing. They developed a contact tracing system that reached down to the grassroots level, the urban neighborhoods and rural hamlets. Leaders told the truth to the people, early and often, about the science of COVID-19 and what people could do to prevent exposure.

Vietnam was very quickly able to get factories to pivot to producing every- thing from PPE to medical equipment. Science and technology experts played a role in inventing phone applications that allowed people to see if people were infected with COVID-19 within a certain radius. Signing up for these apps was volun- tary and popular.

Information and cultural work

were mobilized to educate, update, inspire and mobilize the people to fight COVID-19. Colorful banners on the streets, announcements on TV, and daily updates by the ministry of health mobilized broader networks to dissemi- nate instantaneous information through virtual online media. Together with health workers, young artists produced a popular song showing people how to wash their hands properly, which was widely cir- culated on Vietnamese media and trans- nationally. This consistent information and cultural work prevented the spreading of misinformation and rumors.

People’s power democracy

Everything we’ve just described has been covered by the international press. What has not been a focus, and what is, in fact, most crucial to Vietnam’s success, is people’s power and socialist democracy in Vietnam.

Vietnam is the human protagonist in social- ialism, and it is what made all the differ- ence in Vietnam’s ability to do so well in fighting COVID-19. Exemplars in Global Socialism described this approach as “a strong whole-of-society approach [that] engages multi-sectoral stakeholders in decision-making process and activate[s] cohesiveness, participation, appropriateness measures.” (ourworldindata.org/ COVID-19-vietnam)

The campaign against COVID-19 was carried out by the Communist Party, the mass organizations and the whole people. With the Party playing the leading role in setting the policy and strategy, it mobi- lized Party members from the grassroots to the provinces to the national level to develop, explain and implement the COVID-19 strategy.

Mass organizations involved are the Vietnam Fatherland Front, Vietnam Women’s Union, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, the Vietnam Farmers Union, the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor and the Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange / dioxin.

Many other mass organizations, including the army, leapt into action to mobilize their members in the public health campaign.

The neighborhood block associations played a complementary role to that of the government and the Vietnam Communist Party. These block organizations constitute the smallest unit of community organization and exist in many streets in cities and the countryside across Vietnam.

Neighbors helped their neighbors to identify symptoms of COVID-19 and to access medical care. They helped enforce mask wearing and other quarantine rules by exerting social pressure in their collec- tively oriented communities, curbing any self-centered or selfish behavior. There were no armed protests against the quar- antine in Vietnam as there were here in the United States.

Socialist analysis

One of the hallmarks of a socialist soci- ety is the ability to do analysis of time, place and condition, and develop strategy and tactics to meet the changing needs of the people at that time. This goes together with regular assessments of what was success- ful and what was not, drawing lessons for improvement.

Criticism/self-criticism is practiced to strengthen people’s work, using their strengths against weaknesses. This allowed Vietnam to identify compla- cency after the first wave of the virus as a problem and to take corrective measures to stem the second wave with popular mobilization.

Vietnam’s response to COVID-19 has an internationalist focus as well. Cuba and Vietnam have a particularly strong cooperation. Cuba sent Vietnam a team of medical experts and thousands of vials of an antiviral drug, Interferon alfa-2b, to fight against COVID-19. Vietnam recently donated three tons of medical equipment to Cuba, including rapid test kits, masks and protective suits along with 5,000 tons of rice. Vietnam also helped other countries suffering from the pandemic, even sending donations of PPE to Europe and the U.S.

You can see how differently socialist Vietnam manages the COVID-19 crisis that the United States and other countries face. People’s level of confidence in the Communist Party and the government has been strengthened by the formality of the campaign to defeat COVID-19. People feel a strong sense of pride, as the country has come together to support everyone, and to help a few other countries have been able to do.

Dr. Ngo Thanh Nhan is with the Việt Solidarity & Action Network, Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign, and also Việt Solidarity and Action Network for Black Lives Matter, Mekong-NYC. They ask readers to note that the views expressed here are their personal opinions.

Speak truth to power! Build Workers World!

August 26 is the 100th anniversary of the day that the 19th Amendment— the right of citizens . . . to vote shall not be denied or abridged . . . on account of sex.”

But, truth he told, for decades it was only white women who had this right — until the 1965 Voting Rights Act was passed, under pressure from the histo- ric Civil Rights Movement. What’s not widely known about the struggle for women’s suffrage is that for years thousands of African American women organized and marched in many cities and towns, even as they were held back by Jim Crow laws.

Other women of color were also denied the right to vote. Voting rights were not fully accessible to Indigenous women until 1948; Chinese immigrants only in 1943; Japanese women after integration in 1952; and people whose primary language was not English — including many Hawaiian and Asian immi- grants — not until 1975 after a court battle. Mississippi was the last state to ratify the 19th Amendment — in 1984!

This 100th anniversary occurs when the right to vote is blatantly under attack — by the White House and by closing polling places, shortening voting hours and passing outrageous regulations to suppress votes by people of color.

The best way to celebrate this victory for women is to continue the fight to make Black Lives Matter and eradicate all forms of inequality and injustice, once and for all.

If you want to champion working-class truth, join the Workers World Supporter Program, set up 43 years ago by the original Founding Committee to nourish change. Members receive a year’s sub- scription to WW, a monthly letter about activities and how to help workers to give to friends — all for a donation of $75. Or $100, $300, or more if you can! Donations can be made annually to help the WW reach the $75 a year sup- porter minimum.

Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address in care of the Workers World, 214 W. 24th St., New York, New York 10011. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/ — it’s easy to set up monthly deductions. And know we’re grateful for your help in building Workers World — for today and for the future.
Athletes are workers

The players of the National Basketball Association – the vast majority of them African Americans – carried out a historic three-day wildcat strike on Aug. 26. It was to protest the heinous, horrific shooting of Jacob Blake, a 29-year-old Black man, at the hands of a white police officer in Kenosha, Wis., on Aug. 23. The strike was sparked by the Milwaukee Bucks, who spontaneously refused to play a scheduled playoff game with the Orlando Magic, without consulting the other teams.

Little did any of these players know that this strike, which began in Orlando, Fla., in a confined bubble environment due to COVID-19, would spread across all sports, amateur and professional. These included the Women’s NBA, Major League Baseball, National Football League, National Hockey League, Major League Soccer, World Tennis Association and college football.

The players and owners have had several meetings since the strike began. One of the concessions agreed upon was to turn NBA arenas into polling places on Nov. 3 as a redress for the voter suppression, especially inflicted on people of color, prompted by the racist Trump administration.

The biggest takeaway from this strike is that these workers are making a bold political statement with their actions. At the end of the day, NBA players are workers. Why? Because their skills and talents are reflections of their labor power.

Despite earning salaries ranging from the hundreds of thousands to tens of millions of dollars annually, they are unionized workers whose interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the billionaire team owners. These bosses diametrically opposed to the interests of unionized workers whose interests are millions of dollars annually, they are voting for Trump.

As protests over this cruel, racist atrocity started to spread across the country, the Trump government sent 1,000 members of the National Guard to Wisconsin to “keep the peace.” But the righteous reaction of progressive, anti-racist people was “No justice, no peace!”

Protests erupted everywhere

The thoroughly reactionary Trump administration only fanned the flames of bigotry. Trump’s slogan “Make America Great Again” is widely held not correctly seen as an attack on whatever gains have been made by the movements against racism, sexism and anti-LGBTQI+ bigotry in recent years. 

Emboldened by the reactionary in the White House, right-wingers and neo-fascists have been crawling out of the woodwork. Some have even begun to appear, armed, in places where progressive, anti-racist struggles are blossoming.

One of them, a 17-year-old white supremacist and Trump supporter, actually shot and killed two protesters in Kenosha, wounding a third. Armed right-wing groups, so-called “militias,” are encouraged by the police, who in contrast react violently when progressive protestors defend themselves.

All of this is playing out against a backdrop of growing economic crisis, in which a cyclical downturn of the capitalist economy, occurring in the midst of long-term systemic decline, is being turbo-charged by the spread of the coronavirus. This growing economic insecurity intensifies competition for jobs. Especially in areas where right-wing politics prevail, many whites are constantly being told that those responsible for their insecurity are people of color — rather than the bosses and bank- ers who do the hiring and firing, according to their appetite for profits.

For people of color, it’s a double whammy. “Last hired, first fired” has always led to higher rates of unemployment and poverty in oppressed communities. Now COVID-19 is hitting Black, Brown and Indigenous people far more severely than any other communities.

Capitalism and the virus

The U.S. has registered almost twice as many cases of the coronavirus as any other country in the world. The number of people known to be infected here has now surpassed 6 million, or 656 per mil-

ion inhabitants.

Of the larger countries, only Brazil, Peru and Chile have comparable rates of infection. By contrast, the rate in the People’s Republic of China, where COVID-19 first broke out, is only 3 per million. Three, not 656!

What an indictment of this chaotic system of capitalism, where profits always come first and public health is totally underfunded.

What workers need to know is that only through organization, solidarity and fighting back against the bosses can they win some protection from the ravages of the coronavirus — and of the profit system. As more and more people lose their jobs because of the pandemic, the need for government assistance grows. But only a concerted struggle can force the keepers of the vaults — who are used to handing over public funds to corporate moguls — to redirect that money to meeting people’s needs.

This is a time that calls for heroic action by those who despise everything that the racist reactionaries running the show are doing. And many young hero/ ines are stepping up to the plate. In the months ahead, the struggle can only grow against not only the vicious Trump administration and the racist violence it has spawned, but against the profits-above-all capitalist system itself.
Martinique: Struggle against environmental poisoning and police violence

By G. Dunkel

For centuries, imperialists have competed and cooperated to exploit the islands of the Caribbean, both for what their soils could produce and for their strategic position. By the end of the 19th century, colonizers began to decimate the islands’ original Indigenous peoples. Then colonizers kidnapped millions of people from Africa, and forced them with whips and chains to work to produce sugar, tobacco and indigo.

The Quebec colonizing European powers were France, England and Spain, whose economic position in the Caribbean was seized by the United States after a war in 1898.

While the imperialists extorted vast wealth from the people on the Caribbean islands, they also disrupted and eroded the cultures of the people by the massacre of their populations and relocations. The revolution in Haiti, which declared itself independent in 1804, caused fear and trembling among U.S. enslavers in a historic challenge to French imperialism. When Cuban revolutionaries destroyed the regime of the U.S. puppet Fulgencio Batista in 1959 and began moving the island of Cuba toward socialism, U.S. imperialism was shaken.

The Malaysian state has spent three significant insurrections by enslaved people early in the 19th century. Victor Schoelcher, a prominent French politician, drafted a decree in 1848 abolishing slavery in France and its colonies. The plantation owners in Martinique tried to resist this decree until confronted with very sharp local insurrections. As a result, they gave up and accepted compensation for “the loss of their property.”

The direct descendants of the enslaved, the plantation owners called békés, remained the ruling bourgeoisie in Martinique from that time until today. When the export of bananas to France became an NRC in every province in India. (Live Mint, April 11, 2019) In August like termites” and have no right to stay in India. (Vox, Sept. 17, 2019)

India

Aftermath of racist, anti-immigrant laws’ implementation

By Tania Siddiqi

The Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens have increased tension and hostility among various communities in India. In particular, these racist and anti-immigrant policies have fuelled communal turmoil and expanded state-endorsed police terror on marginalized groups of people.

In response to these acts of horror, minority/oppressed communities have built power in the streets, staged sit-ins, and organized protests at two prominent Muslim-majority universities— Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). The pushback against the state’s genocidal tactics shows promise that a movement is in the making.

The state is attempting to choke any expressions of solidarity against the NRC and NRC are inherently anti-migrant and anti-poor policies that target Muslims, Hindu laborers, tribal community members, and anyone who cannot meet the CAA and NRC’s capricious and cruel criteria.

Since the CAA and NRC’s implementation, minority/oppressed communities have issued a direct and militant response to the government: We reject the CAA and the NRC. Indeed, beginning in December Muslims in Shaheen Bagh, a neighborhood in New Delhi, have held a working-class neighborhood in Delhi, that lasted for more than three months. (Al Jazeera, March 24)

An excerpt from Janta Ka Reporter states that: “To be in Shaheen Bagh was something else. It was magical; it was exhilarating. It was like watching the triumph of children tested exceed the toxic dose.”

A French research center estimates that it will take 200 to 500 years for the chemical to dissipate. (tinyurl.com/yzyuy97p) There is no known decontamination method.

In recent years, there have been marches and protests, mainly in Fort-de-France, Martinique’s capital. Over the chlordecone poisoning of the environment. Most of these were conducted by the umbrella organization Zéro Chlordécone. ZCZP asserted that genocide by poisoning was taking place and demanded reparations and justice.

The activists organized a boycott of a supermarket in the békés-owned Oasean shopping center in Fort-de-France to highlight the landowners’ extensive use of chlordecone. Seven activists were arrested in December and accused of committing acts of violence against the police during the boycott.

As the activists went to trial in Fort-de-France on Jan. 32, an Oceans 7 protest march to the courthouse was attacked by the cops with tear gas, stun grenades and flash bombs. As the police use of excessive force became an issue in the Martinique movement, the cops arrested three militants on July 16—Denzel Guillaume, Frédéric Maupéu and Esaïe Maxime. A four militants went on trial Aug. 27, with Nuisier’s hearing postponed as he was still suffering from the trauma of his arrest. The other three were convicted and sentenced to prison. (tinyurl.com/yzyuy97p)

As a Jan. 17 Situ committee has been formed for the four defendants, who are under legal threat because of their exemplary struggle against environmental poisoning and police violence.

Students try to breach a police barricade in New Delhi during a December 2019 protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens.

As we work towards abolishing police in the United States, we must be in radical solidarity with all who have been harmed at the hands of law enforcement officials around the world. We know that it is right to rebel against the state and we are those with who refuse to let the CAA and NRC determine whether or not their existence is enough to remain in India.

Chlordecone is a pesticide that controls a beetle that destroys banana plants. Its use was banned in the U.S. but it was extensively used in Martinique (and Guadeloupe) until 1993, even after being banned in metropolitan France. The Martinican békés got a dispensation to continue its use.

According to the Environmental Justice Foundation, “Around 1000 to 3000 acres of banana plantation were contaminated by chlordecone use between 1972 and 1993 on 12,400 hectares and 6,570 hectares of banana plantations in Martinique and Guadeloupe.” The “indisputable” fact that “92% of people tested in Martinique have chlordecone in their body and 19% of children tested exceed the toxic dose.”

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Perspectiva de revolucionaria sur asiática sobre Kamala Harris

Por Tania Siddiqi

El presunto candidato presidencial demócrata Joe Biden anunció el 11 de agosto que la senadora de California Kamala Devi Harris, la primera estadounidense del sur de Asia y la segunda mujer africana-americana en servir como senadora de Estados Unidos, será su compañera de fórmula para las elecciones presidenciales de Estados Unidos del 2020. Harris, la actual fiscal general de California, la primera mujer estadounidense del sur de Asia y la primera graduada de un colegio o universidad históricamente negra en unir su nombre a la candidatura presidencial de un partido importante.

Para muchas personas de ascendencia del sur asiático, la nominación de Harris ha sido recibida con celebración y entusiasmo. En particular, esta decisión marcaría el hecho que algunos sud asiáticos se sientan visiblemente representados en el ámbito de la política.

Si bien las comunidades de color, en general, pueden compartir su entusiasmo por su nominación, es imperativo que evitemos un enfoque que simplifica y reduce las experiencias de su larga carrera política, crear un marco sobre cómo discutir la nominación de Harris y consideremos la pregunta mucho más amplia: ¿Cómo funciona la nominación de Harris influir en el levantamiento en curso contra el racismo sistemático?

Las propuestas de Harris como fiscal demostraron su dedicación a la burecracia del castigo y al complejo industrial de la policía. Sus iniciativas demostraron que la policía puede seguir siendo la única alternativa, pero no una solución. Este enfoque ha conducido a una retórica racista, xenófoba y patriarcal que protela los intereses de la clase dominante multimillonaria de Estados Unidos, condenando a una serie de instituciones y políticas raciales de miséria por el dominio de la clase baja, y afirmó que la persona responsable del cargo estaba tratando de reemplazar a Trump con alguien igualmente odioso.

Otra persona en Facebook se refirió a las personas en la foto como “Biden y su B-ch”. Como sudistas, debemos tener en cuenta que el racismo contra los negros está muy presente en nuestra comunidad. Aquí,y en los últimos años, algunas de las víctimas de nuestro racismo fueron perfectamente aceptables lanzar comentarios horrendos a aquellos que no compartan nuestra identidad religiosa, étnica o nacional.

En lugar de utilizar la nominación de Harris para restablecer la raza y la oposición a la policía, como lo hizo su antecesor Michelle Obama y la representante Ilhan Omar, demócrata por Minnesota. Por lo tanto, es importante que no reproduzcamos la retórica tóxica lanzada hacia la mujer negra o cualquier mujer de color. Además, la identidad de Harris como india-american agrega complejidad al discutir su nominación.

Si bien muchos sud asiáticos han mostrado su apoyo a la Senadora Harris, las heridas generacionales no cicatrizados de manifestantes de Black Lives Matter y Partición de la India en 1947 persisten en el subterfinge y para los descendientes de pueblos colonizados.

Si bien Harris se enfrentará a una retórica racista, xenófoba y patriarcal, ha realizado esfuerzos para defender a las personas en la foto como “Biden y su B-ch”. Como sudistas, debemos tener en cuenta que el racismo contra los negros está muy presente en nuestra comunidad. Aquí, y en los últimos años, algunas de las víctimas de nuestro racismo fueron perfectamente aceptables lanzar comentarios horrendos a aquellos que no compartan nuestra identidad religiosa, étnica o nacional.

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