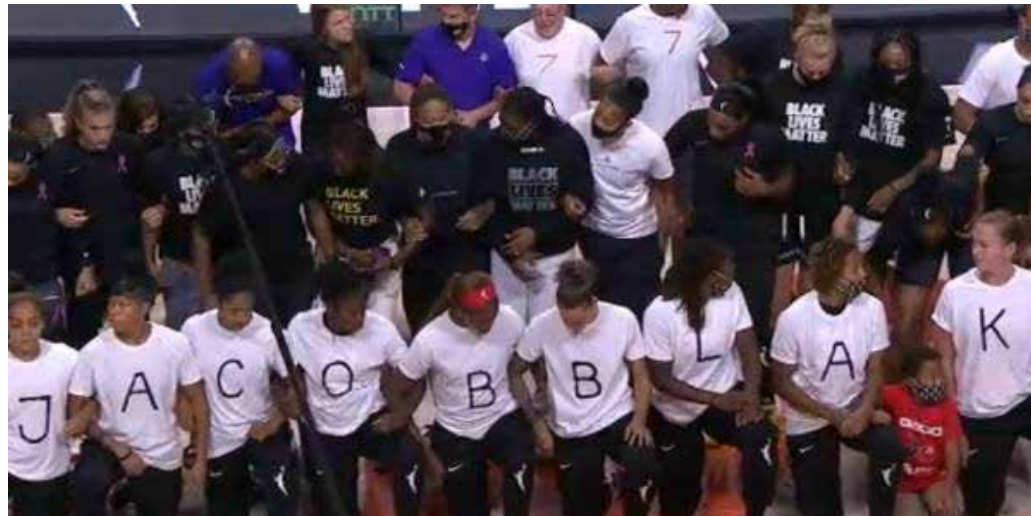


NBA players ignite Sports-wide strike vs. police terror



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

Anti-racist solidarity Kenosha’s labor history

By Martha Grevatt

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 to win higher wages and a seniority system,

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 Hudson in 1954 to form the American Motors Corporation (AMC). Local 72 in Kenosha remained a militant thorn in the side of management and solidarized itself with the emerging Civil Rights Movement.

The local actively opposed school segregation and racism in Woolworth’s stores in

By Monica Moorehead

Kenosha, Wis., 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-racists who were protesting 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 wild-cat 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 fathers to 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

Continued on page 7

Capitalism’s Gulf nightmare	3
U.S. TikTok ban	5
‘I want change!’	6
Voices from Kenosha	6, 7
Raleigh solidarity with Jacob Blake	7
What to do about November	8
Editorial Are athletes workers?	10
Editorial Behind the crisis	10



Harvard divestment

Release Calif. prisoners!

Justice for John Neville!

Abolitionist demands

4

‘Break the City Line’ education divide in Philadelphia

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Inspired by their collective experiences during June protests for justice 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 marks a stark contrast between predominantly white, middle-class and wealthy residents in suburbs like Ardmore, Lower Merion and Bala Cynwyd, and predominantly Black West Philadelphia, where residents tend to be middle- to lower-income.

On Aug. 30 an estimated 150 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 less than \$14,400 a year is spent per Philadelphia student. The annual average household income in Lower Merion is \$131,000, compared to under \$35,000 in the neighborhoods surrounding Overbrook High.

The march, which included Lower Merion High School seniors affiliated with the group “I Will 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 across 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 inequity. 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



Saudia Durrant with the Philadelphia Student Union addresses demonstrators on Aug. 30.

media posts circulated there. One particularly disturbing and offensive post included two white students pretending to reenact Floyd’s murder.

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

Kisara Freeman, 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 McGinty, 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.” □

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD this week

♦ In the U.S.	
Sports-wide protest vs. police terror	1
Kenosha’s labor history	1
‘Break the City Line’ education divide in Philly.	2
‘Another Gulf is Possible’	3
Trump’s COVID-19 Rx: Less science, more politics	3
COVID and wildfires call for mass prisoner releases	4
Justice for John Neville	4
Harvard students demand divestment from prisons	4
What’s behind the U.S. ban on TikTok?	5
San Francisco school bus drivers protest cutbacks.	5
Sister of Jacob Blake says “I want change!”	6
Kenosha speaks: Keep it in the streets!.	6
Raleigh protest in solidarity with Jacob Blake.	7
Voice from Kenosha: Electoral politics not enough	7
The RNC and DNC are over: Now what?	8
♦ Around the world	
British soldier arrested protesting war on Yemen	8
On socialist Vietnam’s response to COVID-19	9
Martinique: Struggle against poisoning and police	11
India: Aftermath of racist, anti-immigrant laws	11
♦ Editorial	
Athletes are workers.	10
Behind the crisis	10
♦ Noticias en Español	
Sobre Kamala Harris	12
Manifestantes de BLM protestan asesinato.	12

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

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. □

If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact: 212.627.2994

National Office
147 W. 24th St., 2nd floor
New York, NY 10011
212.627.2994
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta
PO Box 18123
Atlanta, GA 30316
404.627.0185
atlanta@workers.org

Austin
austin@workers.org

Bay Area
P.O. Box 22947
Oakland, CA 94609
510.394.2207
bayarea@workers.org

Boston
284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
617.522.6626
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
335 Richmond Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14222
716.883.2534
buffalo@workers.org

Cleveland
216.738.0320
cleveland@workers.org

Dallas
dallas@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
804 Old Fayetteville St.
Durham, NC 27701
919.322.9 970
durham@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 3454
Houston, TX 77253-3454
713.503.2633
houston@workers.org

Pensacola, Fla.
pensacola@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 34249
Philadelphia, PA 19101
610.931.2615
phila@workers.org

Portland, Ore.
portland@workers.org

Salt Lake City
801.750.0248
slc@workers.org

San Antonio
sanantonio@workers.org

West Virginia
WestVirginia@workers.org

Workers World
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
New York, NY 10011
Phone: 212.627.2994
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org



Vol. 62, No. 36 • Sept. 3, 2020
Closing date: Sept. 2, 2020
Editor: Deirdre Griswold
Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, Martha Grevatt, Monica Moorehead, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt
Web Editors: ABear, Harvey Markowitz, Janet Mayes
Prisoners Page Editors: Mirinda Crissman, Ted Kelly
Production & Design Editors: Gery Armsby, Mirinda Crissman, Sasha Mazumder, Scott Williams
Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy Colligan, Sue Davis, S. Hedgecoke
Contributing Editors: LeiLani Dowell, G. Dunkel, K. Durkin, Sara Flounders, Teresa Gutierrez, Joshua Hanks, Makasi Motema, Gloria Rubac
Mundo Obrero: Teresa Gutierrez, Carlos Vargas
Supporter Program: Coordinator Sue Davis
Copyright © 2020 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.
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. Subscriptions: One year: \$36; institutions: \$50. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.
A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org.
Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl. New York, N.Y. 10011.

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-induced climate crisis. Most of the people residing 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 travel during the COVID pandemic, when many are without work or much — if any — income, resulted in conditions ripe for transmission of the virus.

Petrochemicals and pandemic

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 resource 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-based 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.” (Democracy Now, Aug. 28)

Capitalism is the climate crisis

Poor communities of color always disproportionately bear the brunt of capitalist-induced 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



‘Nightmare Reality’
ARTWORK: CHRISTOPHER HURON

Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Service (TEJAS), grassroots collaborative Another Gulf is Possible and Native groups like the Carrizo Comecrudo 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 LGBTQ2S+ activist and writer Leslie Feinberg — become the best fighters against each other’s oppressions. The workers’ struggle against climate crisis, COVID, capitalism, imperialism and patriarchy 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 SurfaceWise2 by the airline industry and two Texas sports clinics. The agency called it a “major game changer.”

Yet health and chemical safety experts charge the disinfectant may do little to protect against an airborne virus, but could be harmful to passengers and airline workers when used in enclosed spaces. When sprayed, it emits potentially hazardous vapors that could linger without proper ventilation.

Jennifer Sass, a senior scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council, stated that Dallas-based Allied BioScience, which

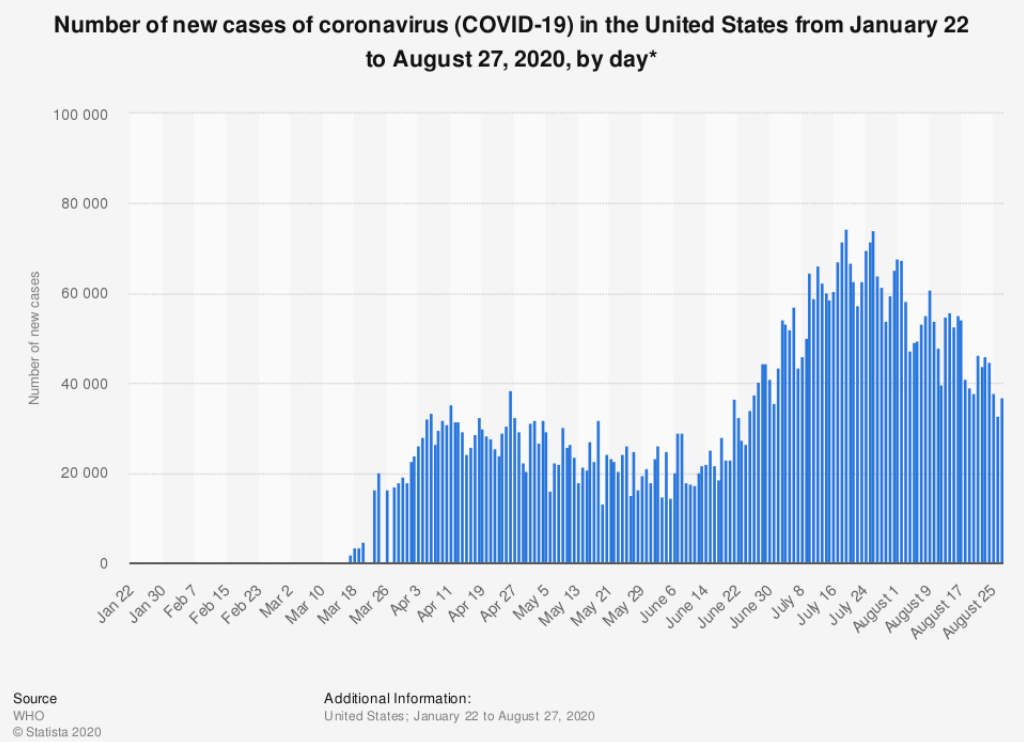
produced the cleanser, acknowledged concerns about prolonged skin and eye contact. However, the company did not list any tests performed about chronic or long-term effects. Sass also voiced concerns that SurfaceWise2’s data sheet states it is toxic to aquatic organisms and kills microbes, including beneficial ones.

The “Material Safety Data Sheet” for SurfaceWise2 claims that the percentages of active ingredients are a “trade secret.” But it states that one symptom of exposure might be irritation, which could cause inflamed airways and increased risk of infection by viruses.

CDC abruptly changes position on testing

These “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 cases in the U.S. has surpassed 6 million, and over 186,000 people have died. (worldometers.info, Aug. 29)

But just in case people questioned the validity of these declarations, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also buckled to Trump’s pressure and abruptly changed its COVID-19 testing guidelines on Aug. 26. After weeks of encouraging people to get tested if they have been exposed to the virus, the CDC now claims public testing might not be necessary unless people show symptoms of the disease.



Graph shows number of new COVID-19 cases in the U.S. by day.

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.’” (nbcnews.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 10,565, 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 and 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, angry family members spoke about their loved ones in prison. Their message was strong and simple: “Let them go! We will take care of them.” One of the



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Demonstrators speak out at house of CDC Secretary Diaz on Aug. 30.

excuses given by prison administrators to justify their inaction has been to say that the prisoners have nowhere to go. If today’s demonstrations were 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 38th consecutive day of direct action against Forsyth County’s killer 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.



Aug. 5 protest after video of John Neville’s death is made public, Greensboro, N.C.

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 20 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.

The 38-day encampment in Winston-Salem went up following a successful encampment action at the governor’s mansion in Raleigh in early July, which ended when the governor vetoed a bill to prevent the publicizing of autopsy reports from in-custody deaths such as Neville’s. Dozens of demonstrators with the Project face charges for participating in the action. Currently the Project’s demands of the Sheriff and District Attorney are:

1. Respond to all questions: “Why are you covering up a murder?”
2. Ban the use of the prone restraint (hog-tie) on any civilian, incarcerated or not, sick or not. Make relevant policy changes in the Forsyth County Department of Corrections (FCDC) around protocol for inmates in medical distress.
3. Notify the public of any death involving an officer or deputy immediately. Make relevant policy changes around transparency and accountability in deaths of citizens in custody of the county (including in FCDC and other guardianship situations).
4. Dismiss all charges against arrested, peaceful protesters. □

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 the notorious prison profiteers GEO Group and Core Civic. The website of the campaign, which was formed in 2018, says, “Our demands are simple. The Harvard Management Company must divest all of Harvard’s holdings in companies that profit from the prison-industrial complex and reinvest in communities disproportionately affected by mass incarceration.” Additionally, the campaign demands the university publicly disclose all its endowment holdings for transparency and accountability, re-invest in communities and people affected by the prison-industrial complex, and launch initiatives on decarceration and ways to end structural reliance on prisons and police. Amanda Chen, an HPDC organizer, arrived at Harvard Law School as a committed prison abolitionist. “I was so disillusioned by the very narrow and traditional curriculum at Harvard Law School,” she told Workers World

in a recent interview. “A friend invited me to a meeting of the Harvard Prison Divestment Campaign, and immediately I knew I was surrounded by amazing, hardworking, dedicated prison abolitionists, who shared the same vision of the world that I want. A vision of the world that does not include fixing all of our problems using weapons, tasers, guns, violence and cages. A world where all of our problems are addressed at their root with love, compassion, care, community services and, ultimately, a non-violent philosophy.” Originally unsure about the efficacy of protests, she found the demonstrations she attended against the prison apparatus to be inspiring — and effective. “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. □



Harvard Prison Divestment Campaign rally on March 1, 2019.

What's behind the U.S. ban on TikTok?

By Ben Carroll

With more than 100 million monthly users in the U.S., nearly 70% of whom are ages 13-24, TikTok has quickly become a wildly popular, short-video social media app. Owned by Chinese corporation ByteDance Ltd., TikTok is the sixth most popular social media app worldwide, according to usage statistics compiled in January of this year. (hootsuite.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 reserving a huge number of tickets under fake names. Leading up to the planned rally, Trump and his campaign team bragged about overfilling 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 effectively 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 in particular and 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, when asked about 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 technological innovation and dominance.

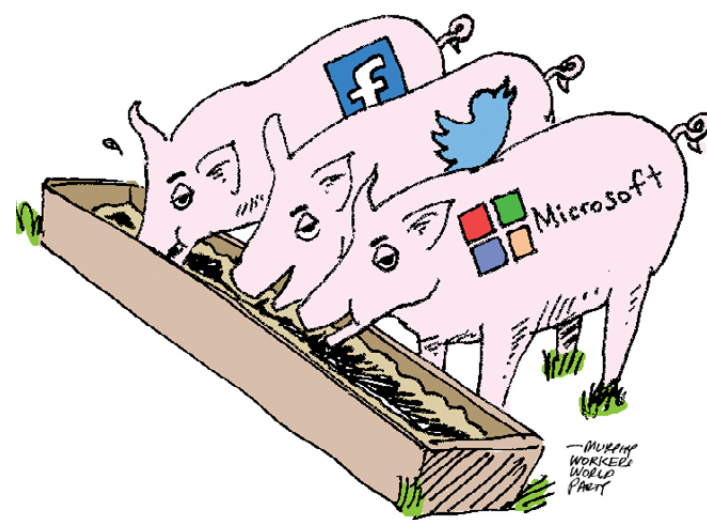
In American Edge’s founding statement entitled “Who We Are,” posted on its website, China is the only country other than the U.S. that is mentioned by name. The corporate coalition cites the following fact as being a major impetus for its formation: “9 of the top 20 technology companies are now based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

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.

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.



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 largest 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 widening conflict instigated by the U.S. against China.

By every measure China is surpassing the U.S. in technological 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 superior 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.

Faced by a multitude of severe problems — a deepening economic crisis, a pandemic, a growing movement in the streets against racist police murders and an emerging political fight around the 2020 presidential elections — 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. □

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 safe — 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 Chappill, 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/y56r6r9w)

Also speaking were Susan Solomon, president of United Educators of San Francisco, the teachers’ local, and Alida Fisher, parent of a child with disabilities. 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 drivers and their union are saying: “No way!” □



PHOTO: SANTOS NIETO

San Francisco school bus drivers march to the school board to demand health care for all.

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 was shackled to the bed until a public outcry stopped that cruel act.

Widham’s eloquent speech, which went viral, touched millions of people who are 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 life matters.



Letetra Widham, sister of Jacob Blake, speaks on Aug. 25 at press conference in Kenosha, Wis.

“So many people have reached out to me, telling me they’re sorry this happened to my family. Don’t be 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,” naming three of the many African Americans killed by police bullets or while in police custody — Philando Castile, Michael 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 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 1963 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 countrywide 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 struggle together and vowed to keep up the fight for “the justice we deserve.”

Philonise Floyd, George Floyd’s brother, marched for “George, Breonna, Ahmaud, Jacob, Pamela Turner, Michael Brown and Trayvon.” Jacob Blake Sr.

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 brutality is the largest killer of Black people.

Ahmaud 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.

Jose Acevedo honored his son, Joel Acevado, choke hold victim. Eric Garner Jr., Leslie McSpadden, 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.

Sources: *The Guardian*, Aug. 25, *New York Times*, Aug. 29, *people.com*, Aug. 26, *WJLA*, Aug. 28 and *WUSA*, Aug. 28

Kenosha speaks: Keep it in the streets!

By Adelana Adelana

This article is an edited version of a talk by Adelana Akindes during the Aug. 30 United National Antiwar Coalition Webinar: “After the DNC & RNC — We Can’t Breathe! Keep it in the Streets — Against Racism, Evictions and War.” Akindes 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. 26 for 24 hours.

We’d been building for a year for the March on the DNC, which was held Aug. 20. Our goals were to defeat Trump and send a message to the politicians of both parties that our movements are going to grow and challenge their power.

Following the lynching of 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 warlike 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 others were walking to join the march, bringing protective gear and medical supplies, when three unmarked vehicles swooped in out of nowhere. The feds 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.

Even with 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



Adelana Akindes speaking during Aug. 30 UNAC webinar.

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 1965 to support voting rights. Around that time, Local 72 was the largest local in the UAW, with 14,300 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 to keep the plant open at least 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. Local 72 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 presence in Kenosha.

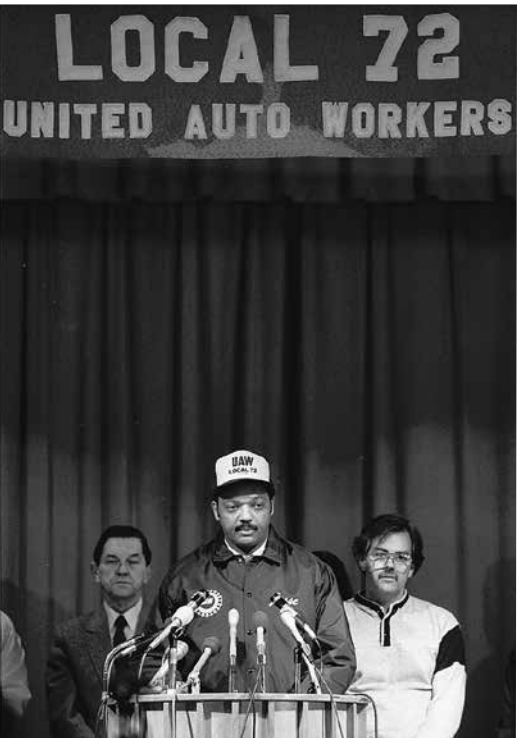
Plant closings are devastating, not only to workers and their families, but to the

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 including 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. ☐

Rev. Jesse Jackson at rally in Kenosha to stop closing of Chrysler Assembly Plant, 1988.



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 apparatus. 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 had barricades placed in front 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 elected not to designate the Raleigh police killing of Keith Collins in January as a wrongful death. (tinyurl.com/y5w2ye5l) To the people of Raleigh — Black Lives Matter,



Thousands gather before the so-called Wake County Justice Center.

WW PHOTO: DURHAM BUREAU

but to corporate media, as USA Today so aptly stated in early June, “Buildings matter, too.”

In protest, crowds gathered at the Wake County Justice Center and marched to different sites of the white power structure throughout the city. First, to the N.C. State Capitol, where they had torn down Confederate monuments on Juneteenth. Then, to the Governor’s Mansion, where after a week-long continuous demonstration earlier this year, the governor was forced to veto legislation that covered up

in-custody deaths in county jails.

Marchers then went to the Department of Public Instruction to draw together the many movements across the state, including efforts by the Wake County Black Student Coalition to end police in Raleigh schools.

“You get rid of fascism; colonialism is still here,” said a speaker, addressing the crowd. “You get rid of fascism — colonialism is still going to be a factor for African people, for brown people and for Indigenous people.”

The crowd called out various local officials, including the district attorney, and chanted “We see you. We love you” to people held inside the center before continuing the march.

Around 10 p.m., the mayor declared a curfew, opening the way for a planned police attack. Demonstrators began to reposition and set fire to barricades to protect the march from attempted flanks by police officers on golf carts, which were used by the riot cops and SWAT teams to try to get in position around the march.

For the most part, the police were unsuccessful and only able to effect a number of obviously illegal arrests late in the evening, including arrests of legal observers. Police also tried but failed to arrest journalists, despite journalists being designated as exempt from the curfew.

Months into the protests, they have continued to grow louder, larger and more radical in Raleigh and throughout North Carolina and increasingly hardened against policing.

“Into the streets to defund the police, no justice no peace!” □

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 it in the Streets—Against Racism, Evictions 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 march on his rally in Oshkosh, as well as Milwaukee.

Our second point is to demand that Democrats take action against police violence 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 organized 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 focusing on electoral politics, 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 possibly 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 government 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 and the two other SDSers, they attempted to arrest us for just demanding their release.

We very clearly see the direction that this is going. Trump has been rallying 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, rallying around electoral politics is not nearly enough to be addressing this terrible, terrible 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 hold 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 imperative for the Wisconsin State Legislature to reconvene after months of inaction and take up meaningful measures to address issues of police accountability, brutality and criminal justice reform. We encourage all citizens to educate themselves, take peaceful and responsible action, and remember to vote on Nov. 3.” (nba.com)

Several years ago, Milwaukee police brutalized Brown. He has a lawsuit pending against the cops.

All the teams 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 live set 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



Sterling Brown and George Hill read statement on behalf of Milwaukee Bucks team, Aug. 26.

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 games 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 postponed their Aug. 26 games to express their solidarity with the NBA boycott 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, including 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. 26: 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 vs. Atlanta United FC.

Tennis player Naomi Osaka, a two-time Grand Slam winner, refused to play her semifinal tennis 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 stomach.” (tennis365.com, Aug. 27) Osaka is of Haitian and Japanese heritage.

National Football League teams including the Detroit Lions, the Washington football team, Indianapolis Colts and seven others turned their practice sessions into press conferences and discussions to protest police brutality and systemic racism.

College football 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 postponed 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 social change in the United States and around the world. □

The RNC and DNC are over

Now what to do about November?

By Teresa Gutierrez

The Democratic and Republican national conventions have come and gone. If someone asks who cares, the answers would be diverse and interesting. Do these conventions matter? Does the 2020 presidential election matter? One could easily answer no; they really do not matter.

However, what does matter is that almost 1,000 people are dying from COVID-19 every single day in the U.S. What does matter is that climate change is wrecking the planet, and raging fires are again displacing people in California.

What does matter are the ultra-crises of unemployment, evictions, health care and education which are pummeling the working class.

What matters is that the basic democratic right to vote is in danger, trivializing the blood shed to obtain it. Oppressed people, notably the Black community and women, fought and died to gain voting rights.

What matters, too—and is the most traumatic—is the brutality of racist police terror that continues unabated and plagues so many Black communities. Just as palpable is the situation of migrants being held in detention cages or being stateless.

So if the question is what to do about all this, what is the answer?

Dog whistles become sirens

In the Trump era, the word racism has become outdated. It is open white supremacy that is defining the agenda.

Trump was elected on an anti-Mexican, anti-immigrant agenda. That agenda resulted in sheer horror. For example, hundreds, if not thousands of children of migrants who were stolen from their parents, are missing.

Just recently, 39 missing migrant children were “found” in Georgia, reported CNN on Aug. 29. Their captors were charged with sex trafficking, kidnapping and more.

During the summer, migrant advocates exposed the mistreatment of detainees at the Adelanto ICE Center in California, which was “disinfecting the facility by spraying hazardous chemicals in poorly ventilated areas, causing people to develop bloody noses, burning eyes and coughing fits, which could further spread the coronavirus.” (Desert Sun, June 27)

Now Trump has shamelessly turned his attention to the struggle of Black people for liberation, by targeting the Black Lives Matter movement. If politicians in the past used “dog whistles” to reach their racist base, Trump employed a siren. This is why the Republican convention matters.



Protesters risked arrests to challenge the RNC in Charlotte, N.C.

The Trump campaign invited the McCloskeys to speak at the RNC. This is a call to war against the Black Lives Matter movement. Patricia and Mark McCloskey pointed a gun at BLM protesters as they marched past their St. Louis, Mo., home on June 28. During the convention, these fascists declared that Democrats “want to abolish the suburbs altogether, by ending single-family home zoning.” (CNN, Aug. 25)

The McCloskeys’ appearance was just one of many such calls to arms during the Republican convention. The RNC was really a rally convened specifically to attack the Black Lives Matter movement, which has brought millions of protesters into the streets from Minneapolis to Portland, Ore., and from Kenosha, Wis., to Washington, D.C. All RNC speakers decried and vilified this massive movement, by using words such as “anarchy,” “anger” and so on.

The BLM movement, which erupted following the horrific police murders of George Floyd, in particular, and Breonna Taylor, is righteous. However, it scares the ruling class — and not just the Republicans, but Democrats as well. This movement is Black-led, but it has solid support from Brown and white people.

The BLM movement is calling for everything from “defunding the police” to “abolishing the police” in the struggle for real social change. It is taking place during one of the worst ever economic crises. Band-Aids will not suffice. Democratic platitudes will not suffice either. This is why the Democrats also fear this movement.

‘Anybody but Trump’ line refuted by many

The debate among many people within the activist community is what to do about the November election. Hardly

anyone is enthused about Biden. Many are just settling with the “anybody but Trump” line.

But it is a new day, when so many are not falling behind this false line.

It is notable that the Democratic Socialists of America, a body that is radical but falls short of genuine Marxist-Leninist revolutionary ideology — especially on U.S. imperialism and racism — is not getting out the vote for Joe Biden.

DSA wrote on May 12: “Following the withdrawal of Bernie Sanders from the . . . race, our country has lost the only viable . . . candidate advocating the comprehensive reform we need to address this pandemic head-on. [Biden’s] . . . differences with Sanders and the broader left could not be starker, as was recently made clear when he committed to vetoing Medicare for All. Biden’s recent, disgraceful embrace of anti-Chinese xenophobia and credible allegations against him, are dangerous examples of how corporate Democrats continue to fail at stopping the ugly advance of far-right politics, racism, and misogyny.” (dsausa.org)

Indeed. The fact that DSA is not pushing Biden is a step forward. Any position that undermines 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 unable 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, ultraconservative, 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 richest president in history has gotten financial support from nearly one-in-10 U.S. billionaires.”

The Biden campaign reports its financial resources amount to \$699 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 not 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. □

British soldier arrested for protesting war on Yemen

By Michael Kramer

Aug. 30 — Lance Corporal Ahmed Al-Babati, an active duty British 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. (see video: streamable.com/3fe6si)

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/gknjh8)

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/y38d7x89)

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)



Lance Corporal Ahmed Al-Babati protests war on Yemen outside British prime minister's residence.

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 lead the way.” The presentation began with a lively pop music video, part of Vietnam’s national public health campaign, “Vietnam, dare to win, dare to beat the coronavirus!” viewable at youtu.be/Owcdxs_7dWw.

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 the new strain of COVID-19 started on July 1. Even with this second wave, as of today, 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 long-term illness from Agent Orange toxins [from the 1955-1975 U.S. war on the country].

The Ministry of Health gives instant reporting at ncov.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 0.299 per million of the population. The United States is a country of 331 million people where there have been more than 183,650 deaths, which is 554.83 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 also the second-largest hot spot for Agent Orange/dioxin in the land and water.

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 defeat COVID-19 with a priority on saving lives. Early on the Prime Minister of Vietnam declared that the entire country would focus all of its human potential and economic and technological capacity on ending the pandemic.

It was designated a campaign like the campaigns Vietnam fought to win national liberation. The slogan was “Vietnam, dare to win, dare to beat the coronavirus.” Preserving human life and health was the highest focus rather than Vietnam’s economic growth! Reopening the economy was only done when it was deemed safe for workers and their communities.

Socialist values against the pandemic

Vietnam is a socialist-oriented market economy. To deal with COVID-19, the Communist Party in Vietnam applied socialist values and strategy to overcome the weaknesses of the market economy.

The Party and the government did a materialist analysis of COVID-19 — of where and to whom it was being transmitted and how it could be fought. They took into account the real conditions in Vietnam.

As a mid-level developing socialist country, Vietnam could not rely on an abundant supply of high-tech medical equipment but could rely on a public health system that had been built up for many years to serve the people. While Vietnam’s hospital system varies in quality, its preventive health and public health planning and response is impressive, with a serious investment in public health infrastructure such as emergency



operations centers. Vietnam had also learned from its experience in earlier 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 neighborhoods with a high incidence, residents were placed under strict quarantines. People were asked to stay in their homes to avoid further transmission and were provided with food, medicine and medical care. People coming from overseas underwent a mandatory two-week quarantine in hotels or other centers where they were provided with free food, lodging and medical treatment.

Everyone had access to treatment whatever their financial status. Masks and PPE were widely available to medical people, to essential workers and to ordinary 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 using a community model that extended 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 everything from PPE to medical equipment. Science and technology experts played a role by 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 voluntary and popular.

Information and cultural workers were mobilized to educate, update, inspire and mobilize the people to fight COVID-19. Colorful banners on the streets, announcements on TV, and daily briefings by the prime minister and city leaders conveyed a clear, practical, consistent and compassionate message.

The government through its ministries, particularly the Ministry of Health, mobilized broader networks to disseminate instantaneous information through central online platforms. Together with health workers, young artists produced a popular song showing people how to wash their hands properly, which was widely circulated on Vietnamese media and internationally. 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!

This is the human protagonist in socialism, and it is what made all the difference in Vietnam’s ability to do so well in fighting COVID-19. Exemplars in Global Health described this approach as “a strong whole-of-society approach [that] engages multi-sectoral stakeholders in decision-making process and activate[s] cohesive participation of appropriate measures.” (ourworldindata.org/COVID-19-exemplar-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 mobilized 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 organize their members in the public health campaign.

The neighborhood block associations played a complementary role to that of the party and the mass organizations. 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 collectively oriented communities, curbing any self-centered or selfish behavior. There were no armed protests against the quarantine in Vietnam as there were here in the U.S.

Socialist analysis

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

Criticism/self-criticism is practiced to strengthen people’s work, using their strength to overcome their weaknesses. This allowed Vietnam to identify complacency 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 than the United States. In Vietnam, people’s level of confidence in the Communist Party and the government has been strengthened by the achievements 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 do what 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 went into effect in the U.S. — when “The right of citizens . . . to vote shall not be denied or abridged . . . on account of sex.”

But, truth be told, for decades it was only white women who had this right — until the 1965 Voting Rights Act was passed, under pressure from the historic 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 internment in 1952; and people whose primary language was not English — including many Latinx and Asian immigrants — 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

states 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 to help WW promote revolutionary change. Members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give to friends — all for a donation of \$75. Or \$100, \$300, or more if you can! Donations can be made annually or monthly to reach the \$75 a year supporter minimum.

Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 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 father, 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.

NBA officials, 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 make tremendous profits off the players through TV revenue, ticket and vendors’

sales and more.

And just like other workers, NBA players are bound by collective bargaining agreements. Led by the NBA Players Association, the players fight to get a larger share of the profits from the bosses. These huge profits that the bosses enjoy come from surplus value – the stolen wealth produced by the labor of the players, whose fans will buy expensive tickets in order to see them perform.

Many NBA players expressed how much they felt empowered by carrying out this powerful work stoppage. Anthony Davis with the Los Angeles Lakers stated that if the owners don’t live up to any of their promises, the players will again refuse to play.

These players did not strike for any economic gains that are covered under the current CBA. They struck because they, like millions of others, are sick and tired of seeing unarmed Black and Brown men, women and others being maimed or killed by the police. They are sick and tired of the police not being held accountable for their deadly actions, with no charges or arrests.

So many of these players have experienced police harassment and abuse just for being young and Black, so they can relate to the George Floyds, Breonna Taylors and Jacob Blakes of the world.

And these players made the decision to collectively continue to resume the playoffs, not only to coronate a new NBA champion but to continue to speak out from this global platform on the need to carry forth the fight, inside and outside the bubble, for social justice and equality. These players’ actions will continue to inspire all workers to use their power to struggle for the same demands and beyond. □

Behind the crisis

The crisis that surrounds the shooting of Jacob Blake in Wisconsin cannot be separated from the growing sense of catastrophe that permeates U.S. politics.

On Aug. 23, Blake was shot seven times by a white cop in Kenosha, Wis., as this Black father was trying to get into his own car. His three small sons were in the back seat and were traumatized spectators to the shooting that has left their father paralyzed.

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 and correctly seen as an attack on whatever gains have been made by the movements against racism, sexism and anti-LGBTQ2S+ bigotry in recent years.

Emboldened by the reactionary in the White House, right-wingers and neofascists 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 protesters defend themselves.

All of this is playing out against a background of growing economic crisis, in which a cyclical downturn of the capitalist economy, occurring in the midst of long-term systemic decline, is being turbocharged by the spread of the coronavirus. This growing economic insecurity inflames 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 bankers 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 at rates far greater 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 565 per million 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 565!

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 fightback 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.

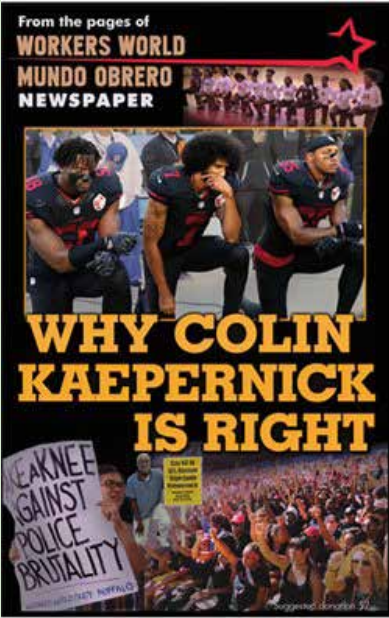
This is a time that calls for heroic action by those who despise everything that the racist reactionaries running the show are doing. And many young heroes are stepping up to the plate. In the months ahead, the struggle can only grow against not only the vicious Trump administration and the racist violence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

Why Colin Kaepernick is Right

A 2017 pamphlet of articles from Workers World newspaper. With articles from Monica Moorehead, Minnie Bruce Pratt and guest author Michael Bennett.

includes:

- Kaepernick: ‘This generation’s Muhammad Ali’
- Editorial Why is Colin Kaepernick unemployed?
- The political rebellion of Colin Kaepernick
- Kaepernick ‘effect’ grows with every police atrocity
- Sparked by Kaepernick – Sports protests pummel racism
- The intersection between sports and fighting police violence
- Athletes repudiate NFL’s trip to Israel
- Desatada por Kaepernick – protestas deportivas golpean el racismo



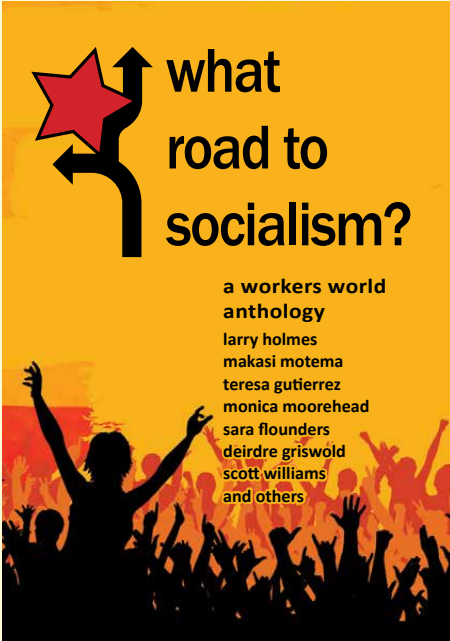
Download free PDF format.
Visit workers.org/books to get your copy.

What Road to Socialism?

A new Workers World anthology, confronting the burning questions and key contradictions during this deadly pandemic and global capitalist meltdown.

Topics include:

- COVID-19 and the deepening crisis of capitalism
- 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?



Download free ebook or PDF formats.
Also available in paperback.
Visit workers.org/books to get your copy.

Martinique: Struggle against environmental poisoning and police violence

By G. Dunkel

For centuries, imperialists have conspired and competed to exploit the islands of the Caribbean, both for what their soils could produce and for their strategic positions. Early in the 17th century, colonizers began to decimate the islands' original Indigenous peoples. Then colonizers kidnapped millions of people, mostly from Africa, and forced them with whips and chains to work to produce sugar, tobacco and indigo.

The major 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, their rule was constantly shaken by the people's mass revolts and revolutions. 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.

Martinique had at least 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 enslavers, the plantation owners called *békés*, remained the ruling bourgeoisie in Martinique from that time until today. When the export of bananas to France became a major part of Martinican agriculture in the 1930s, the *békés* soon controlled 80 percent of the trade.

Spreading poison

Chlordecone is a pesticide that controls a beetle that destroys banana plants. Its use was banned in the U.S. in the 1960s 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 Atlas, "around 300 tones [sp] of active substance were used between 1972 and 1993 on 12,400 hectares and 6,570 hectares of banana plantations in Martinique and Guadeloupe respectively." The atlas reports that "92% of people tested in Martinique have chlordecone in their body and 19%

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/y52rxhk9) 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 Zéro Poison. ZCZP asserted that genocide by poisoning was taking place and demanded reparations and justice.

ZCZP organized a boycott of a supermarket in the *békés*-owned Océanis 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.

When the activists went on trial in Fort-de-France on Jan. 13, an Océanis 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



In Martinique, at a rally for anti-colonial, pro-environment activists, protesters' signs ask when will ruling class landlords — the *békés* — be tried.

militants on July 16 — Denzel Guillaume, Frédéric Maupéu and Esaïe Maxime. A 22-year old student and music teacher, Kéziah Nuissier, was also arrested and badly beaten by the cops. The beating, caught on a video by a neighbor shocked at the police brutality, went viral internationally.

These four militants went on trial Aug. 27, with Nuissier'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/yy9uljp7)

A Jan. 13 Support Committee has been formed for the four defendants, who are under legal threat because of their exemplary struggle against environmental poisoning, police violence and political repression. For more information, contact: komit 13janvie2020@gmail.com. □

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 fueled 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 expression of discontent against the CAA and NRC by supporting communal violence against India's oppressed communities and kidnapping and caging community organizers.

On Dec. 11, India's Parliament passed the CAA, which provides a pathway to citizenship for undocumented religious minorities who migrated to India from Pakistan, Bangladesh, or Afghanistan but excludes Muslim migrants. (CNN, Dec. 17) Prior to the implementation of the CAA, India's Supreme Court mandated that Assam, a province that borders Bangladesh, publish an NRC. (Vox, Sept. 17, 2019) Last year the Indian government, led by the fascist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), announced that it will implement an NRC in every province in order to determine who can and cannot remain in India. (Vox, Sept. 17, 2019)

According to the Minister of Home Affairs, Amit Shah, "Illegal migrants are like termites" and have no right to stay in India. (Live Mint, April 11, 2019) In August of 2019, Assam issued its final NRC report;

2 million people living in this province are now facing the threat of deportation. (Reuters, Sept. 7, 2019) Both the CAA and NRC are inherently anti-im/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 Muslim women led a sit-in at Shaheen Bagh, 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

gradually from neighbouring cities like Chandigarh, Jaipur and Ghaziabad.

"A little later, a formidable Sikh contingent arrived as reinforcement. Then a delegation of Christian nuns came in, giving Shaheen Bagh the look of a miniature India. Some came from Kerala, some from Chhattisgarh, some from Punjab, and the women of Shaheen Bagh accommodated them all. And the protest began showing signs of a movement." (Aug. 25)

Student-led anti-CAA and anti-NRC demonstrations were also underway at JMI's and JNU's campuses. However, those who work in the service of BJP soon exerted efforts to squash the movement at these universities.

In December, Delhi police began attacking JMI's students, firing tear gas into the campus's libraries, mosques and classrooms. Dozens of students were mercilessly beaten, kidnapped and caged by law enforcement officials. (Al Jazeera, Dec. 18) On Jan. 5, students at JNU were attacked by members of a student group closely affiliated with BJP. Right-wing nationalists struck Aishe Ghosh, president of JNU's Students' Union, with an iron bar and cracked her head. (New York Times, Jan. 17)

In February, the state exerted its most desperate attempt to quell the anti-CAA and anti-NRC protests by staging the Delhi Riots, an event that claimed the lives of 53 people and injured 500. An investigation by Amnesty International India reports that Delhi police were "complicit and an active participant" in the Delhi Riots. (Al Jazeera, Aug. 28)

Now, law enforcement officials are



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.

channeling their efforts to oppress the masses by kidnapping and caging prominent student organizers. On Aug. 25 Sharjeel Imam, a PhD candidate at JNU, was charged under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, an anti-terrorism law, for his alleged involvement with the Delhi Riots. However, Imam has been in police custody since Jan. 28, which means he could not have participated in the violence that took place in February. Meeran Haider, a student at JMI, is also facing outrageous charges under the UAPA.

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 with those who refuse to let the CAA and NRC determine whether or not their existence is enough to remain in India.

We are also in deep solidarity with Sharjeel Imam, Meeran Haider, and all political prisoners. It is absolutely vital that their work and dedication to the struggle be central to how we exert our efforts in the current uprising. We must continue to demolish the oppressor's power and build the people's power — tear down the walls, free them all! □

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 with those who refuse to let the CAA and NRC determine whether or not their existence is enough to remain in India.

of the human spirit, the victory of fortitude against adversity. Soon, it became a pilgrimage centre of secular India harping on the notions of a shared past. Muslim women were shortly joined by Hindu sisters; some came in from colonies like Lajpat Nagar and Sarita Vihar, others joined

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 africa-americana en servir como senadora de Estados Unidos, será su compañera de fórmula para las elecciones presidenciales de Estados Unidos del 2020.

Harris es ahora la primera mujer negra, la primera mujer estadounidense del sur de Asia y la primera graduada de un colegio o universidad históricamente negra en unirse a la candidatura presidencial de un partido importante.

Para muchas personas de ascendencia del sur de Asia, la nominación de Harris ha sido recibida con celebración y entusiasmo. En particular, esta decisión monumental ha hecho que algunos sud asiáticos se sientan vistos y representados por primera vez.

Si bien las comunidades de color, en general, pueden compartir su entusiasmo por su nominación, es imperativo que evaluemos críticamente sus puntos de vista a lo largo de su 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 influenciar el levantamiento en curso contra el racismo sistémico?”

Las acciones de Harris como fiscal demostraron su dedicación a la burocracia del castigo y al complejo industrial penitenciario. Como fiscal de distrito en San Francisco, Harris impulsó una legislación que apoyara los secuestros patrocinados por el estado y el encarcelamiento de padres negros pobres cuyos hijos fueron considerados ociosos.

En el 2014, argumentó en contra de la liberación anticipada de los presos, porque muchos de ellos tenían trabajos penitenciarios y las cárceles perderían una

“importante reserva laboral”. (Los Angeles Times, 14 de noviembre de 2014) En particular, ha realizado esfuerzos para defender condenas erróneas y mantener a personas inocentes confinadas en jaulas humanas. (New York Times, 17 de enero de 2019)

Al igual que su colega burócrata castigador, Joe Biden, la postura de Harris “dura con el crimen” fortaleció su capital político y la ayudó a asegurar la nominación del Partido Demócrata para vicepresidente.

Si las acciones de Harris han creado tanto daño en las comunidades de color, ¿por qué tenemos que ser cuidadosos y reflexivos al hablar de su nominación? La respuesta está en su identidad y posición en la sociedad.

Identidad nacional y género

Harris, hija de padre jamaquino y madre india, proviene de un origen migrante. Por lo tanto, su nominación se ve como una postura de oposición a las políticas tóxicas antiinmigrantes propuestas durante la administración Trump y su campaña por la reelección. Esto, en gran parte, es cierto.

Un día después de que Biden anunciara la nominación de Harris, Newsweek publicó un artículo de opinión argumentando que no cumple con el requisito de ciudadanía necesario para desempeñarse como vicepresidenta. (12 de agosto)

Aunque Trump utilizó el mismo discurso antiinmigrante durante la campaña presidencial de Obama, la posición de Harris como mujer de color significa que también tiene que lidiar con una retórica despectiva basada en el género. De hecho, Trump ya ha llamado a Harris “desagradable”, “loca” y “enojada”. (U.S. News, 14 de agosto)

A medida que avanzan las elecciones, Harris se enfrentará a una retórica racista, sexista y xenófoba, similar a la que han experimentado la primera dama Michelle

Obama y la representante Ilhan Omar, demócrata por Minnesota. Por lo tanto, es importante que no reproduzcamos la retórica tóxica lanzada hacia las mujeres negras o cualquier mujer de color. Además, la identidad de Harris como india- americano agrega complejidad al discutir su nominación.

Si bien muchos sud asiáticos han mostrado su apoyo a la Senadora Harris, las heridas generacionales no cicatrizadas derivadas del imperialismo británico y la Partición de la India en 1947 persisten en el subcontinente y para los descendientes de pueblos colonizados.

Mientras yo reunía fuentes para este artículo, encontré una foto de Biden y Harris acompañada de comentarios deshumanizantes en Facebook que atacaban a la supuesta casta de Harris.

Una persona escribió que “[Harris] es un brahmán que se considera a sí misma de la clase superior [sic] de la India, los musulmanes para ellos son más bajos que 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 sudasiáticos, debemos tener en cuenta que el racismo contra los negros está muy presente en nuestras comunidades. Además, algunos de los miembros de nuestra comunidad todavía encuentran perfectamente aceptable lanzar comentarios horribles a aquellos que no comparten nuestra identidad religiosa, étnica o nacional.

En lugar de utilizar la nominación de Harris para restablecer la tensión y la hostilidad que surgieron durante el imperialismo británico, los sudasiáticos deberían centrarse en abordar el racismo y la xenofobia presentes en nuestra comunidad, especialmente durante el levantamiento



Tania Siddiqi

en curso para poner fin a la violencia supremacista blanca contra todas las comunidades de color.

Nominación de Kamala Harris está llena de contradicciones. Sin embargo, todos deben tener en cuenta que Harris es una mujer de color y merece seguridad y protección. Además, debemos considerar qué significa su nominación en el contexto del levantamiento actual. ¿Votar a alguien en La nominación de Kamala Harris está llena de contradicciones.

Sin embargo, todos deben tener en cuenta que Harris es una mujer de color y merece seguridad y protección. Además, debemos considerar qué significa su nominación en el contexto del levantamiento actual. ¿El votar por alguien para el cargo presidencial influyó en la Corte Suprema para mantener las protecciones para los beneficiarios de DACA (Acción Diferida para los Llegados en la Infancia) o extender las garantías laborales a los trabajadores LGBTQ2S + plus?

No, los esfuerzos del pueblo en las calles ejercen presión sobre la corte para que falle a favor del pueblo. Votar por el partido demócrata o republicano no traerá la liberación de nuestra clase. Sabemos que el cambio revolucionario no vendrá de quienes mantienen el sistema actual.

En cambio, nuestra visión colectiva, trabajo y compromiso con la lucha de la clase trabajadora son nuestras herramientas para dismantelar el poder opresor. Nuestro enfoque debe permanecer en la construcción de conciencia de clase para construir un mundo obrero.

Tania Siddiqi es una mujer musulmana de ascendencia del sur de Asia. Sus padres emigraron de Pakistán a los Estados Unidos. Sus abuelos, tanto de su madre como de su padre, emigraron de la India a Pakistán durante la Partición de la India en 1947.

Manifestantes de BLM protestan asesinato

La reciente convención republicana, encabezada por el supremacista blanco en jefe, actual presidente de Estados Unidos y enemigo del pueblo, reunió a sus tropas con tácticas racistas de miedo sobre los “disturbios civiles” de manifestantes de Black Lives Matter y activistas de izquierda.

La convención demócrata ofreció una alternativa, pero no una solución. Este partido nominó a la presidencia de los Estados Unidos a uno de los principales autores de un proyecto de ley duro contra el crimen de 1994 que terminó sentenciando a un número enormemente desproporcionado de personas negras y morenas a la cárcel. Para vicepresidente, los demócratas nominaron a una ex fiscal general de California que se describe a sí misma como “policía superior”.

Mientras tanto, en los pocos días entre las dos convenciones, los policías de la “aplicación de la ley” racista, la estructura policial que protege los intereses de la clase

dominante multimillonaria de Estados Unidos, continuaron disparando a la gente.

El 22 de agosto, la policía mató a tiros a Trayford Pellerin en las calles de Lafayette, Luisiana, en su propio vecindario. Pellerin, un hombre negro, iba a pie. Su familia señaló el contraste entre el destino de su ser querido y el de un hombre blanco arrestado recientemente por la policía de Lafayette sin heridas, a pesar de que estaba armado con una pistola y conducía un automóvil robado.

Al día siguiente en Kenosha, Wisconsin, la policía le disparó a Jacob Blake por la espalda varias veces, también en su propio vecindario. Blake, un afroamericano de 29 años, acababa de intentar romper una pelea local y regresaba a su auto. Sus hijos, de 3, 5 y 8 años, estaban en el automóvil y vieron a la policía disparar contra su padre. Se espera que Blake sobreviva, pero con lesiones físicas desconocidas. Los informes del 25 de agosto dicen que está paralizado de la cintura para abajo.

En respuesta a estos continuos actos de brutalidad policial racista, cientos de manifestantes de Black Lives Matter inmediatamente comenzaron a marchar en Louisiana y Wisconsin.

En Kenosha, Wisconsin, la policía local los inundó con gas lacrimógeno y gas pimienta, y el gobernador desplegó tropas de la Guardia Nacional. En Madison, la capital del estado, se incendió el edificio del Departamento de Correcciones. La gente pintó con aerosol un eslogan contundente en el edificio de Fabricantes y Comercio, que presiona a favor de las grandes empresas: “Has robado más de lo que podríamos ‘saquear’”.

Era la voz de la justa rabia del pueblo ante el interminable asesinato y encarcelamiento racista, la brutalidad policial, la injusticia económica y “legal”.

Esta voz solo se hará más fuerte a medida que las personas enfrenten la crisis de salud pandémica, los desalojos explosivos, un abismo sin trabajo y el hambre. No puede ser sofocado por los programas políticos de ninguno de los

partidos capitalistas existentes en esta llamada “democracia”.

Hace unos meses, estallaron protestas masivas e históricas de Black Lives Matter en todos los rincones de los EE.UU., provocadas por la ejecución deliberada de un policía de 8 minutos y 46 segundos de un hombre afroamericano, George Floyd. Esta inexorable presión de masas impuso un cambio rápido.

El llamado a “¡Desarmar, desfinanciar y abolir la policía!” ahora está penetrando el ADN del movimiento de masas. Es una demanda que absorben sabiamente, como parte de la necesidad de cambios estructurales más grandes que se están volviendo cada vez más necesarios para la supervivencia misma de los trabajadores y los oprimidos.

Como parte de un camino en evolución hacia la revolución socialista, el partido Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero continúa sumando nuestra voz y energía a la demanda: “¡Defiende al pueblo! ¡Arresten a la policía! ¡Desarmar, desfinanciar y abolir a la policía!” □