

Whistleblower exposes: ICE abuses detainees

As we go to press, a Sept. 21 press release from Georgia Detention Watch announced that Cipriano Chavez-Alvarez, 61, is the third detainee at the Stewart Detention Center located in Lumpkin, Ga., to die of COVID-19.

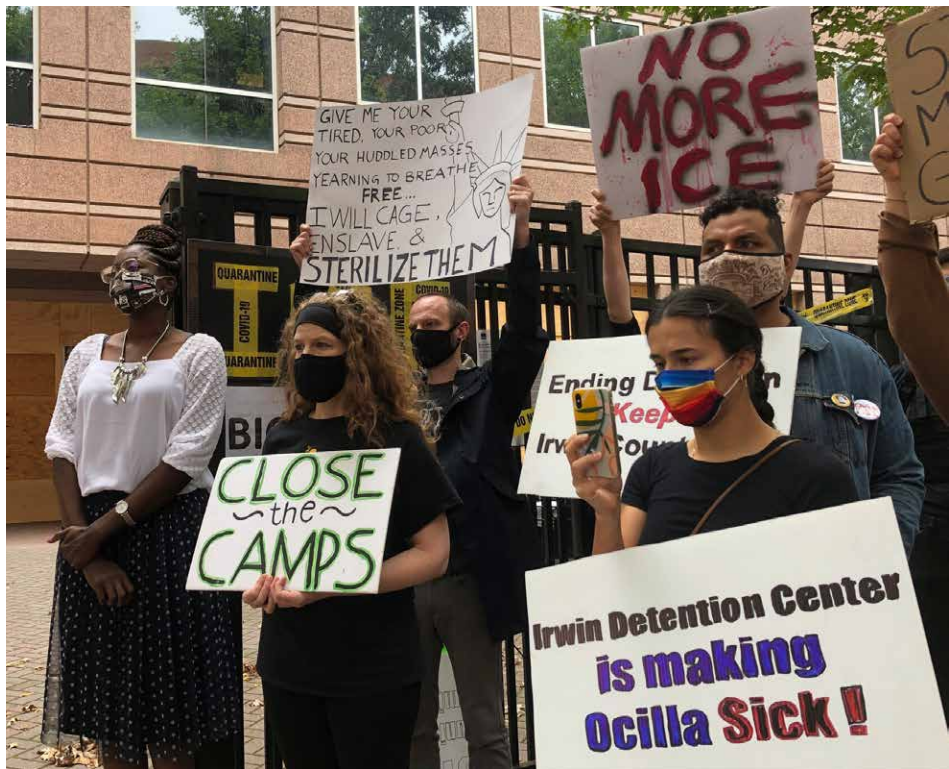
By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

Sept. 20 — In the days since whistleblower Dawn Wooten detailed serious charges against the LaSalle Corrections-owned and operated detention center in Ocilla, Ga., there has been an explosion of media exposés, Congressional action and grassroots activism.

Wooten, a Black nurse at the Irwin County Detention Center, listed a number of medical neglect issues, particularly a lack of COVID-19 precautions, and an abnormal number of hysterectomies and other procedures performed by an outside doctor on women detainees. She said her outspoken attempts to rectify the conditions caused her to be demoted to an “on call” status, creating a financial hardship for the mother of five children. Nevertheless, she stated emphatically that she had no regrets for “doing the right thing.”

A Sept. 15 press conference, hosted by Georgia Detention Watch (GDW) in front of the Atlanta ICE Field Office, came a day after the filing of a 27-page federal complaint with the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General. Every major news media in the U.S. and many around the world reported on the unsettling allegations made by the veteran nurse.

GDW, national immigrant rights groups and women’s health and reproductive rights organizations quickly consulted with each other to formulate plans to mobilize public opinion to close Irwin down. Their petition is available at



Press conference on ICE abuse, Ocilla, Ga., Sept. 15. Whistleblower Dawn Wooten on left.

tinyurl.com/y4gn6bmm.

In response to the misogynist, dismissive response by ICE to the charges, GDW held a “Believe Women” rally at the Field Office on Sept. 18. On Sept. 19, Somos South Georgia organized a protest in front of the Irwin County Detention Center in Ocilla, a small town about 200 miles south of Atlanta. Marchers with banners, signs, flags and drums led the way with dozens of decorated cars and trucks filled with defenders of immigrants rights following. The sound of honking horns reached the ears of the detainees throughout the facility.

More injustice comes to light

More information has emerged about the medical malpractice with at least 17 women now identified as having had

unwanted, life-altering procedures.

The case of Pauline Binan illustrates the unconscionable power of ICE to deprive immigrants of justice. Pauline, now 30, came to the U.S. from Cameroon as a two-year-old child. She lived in Baltimore with her now 11-year-old daughter and other relatives. ICE took her into custody in 2017.

Despite the efforts of her family to get her released, after two years Binan was still in detention and suffering from irregular periods and vaginal bleeding. She was taken to the office of Dr. Mahendra Amin in Ocilla, who has a contract with LaSalle Corrections to provide gynecological care to detainees. She was diagnosed with a cyst, as were many other women detainees according to the federal complaint.

In Binan’s case, she was told she would

have a D&C procedure to remove the cyst. However, what happened instead was that a fallopian tube was removed, rendering her unable to conceive naturally. She insists she did not consent to such a drastic procedure. Moreover, she says she was given no pain pills or medical supplies to change her dressing back at Irwin!

Despite having an appeal of her deportation before the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta, ICE transferred Binan to a Texas facility. On Sept. 16, two days after the federal complaint was filed and one day after the press conference — where Dawn Wooten explained that the women at Irwin called Dr. Amin “the uterus collector” — Binan was put on a commercial flight to Cameroon.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas and Rep. Pramila Jayapal of Washington intervened and forced ICE agents to take her off the plane, moments before the doors were closed. Her lawyer called this precipitous action an attempt to remove a potential witness.

On Sep. 19, Binan was finally released from detention and is home in Baltimore to await the disposition of her appeal. This is a significant victory.

There is a call for Congressional hearings to investigate all the charges. This would be an opportunity for immigrant detainees and Dawn Wooten to tell their stories before a national audience.

Heroic whistleblower Dawn Wooten and the brave detainees at Irwin County Detention Center have supplied the movement with new ammunition to bring down the for-profit prison corporations and repressive government agencies like ICE.

The writer is founder of Georgia Detention Watch and a steering committee member representing the International Action Center.

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SEIU Local 73 on strike, Chicago, Sept. 18. Read more on page 4.



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Drop the charges against anti-racist organizers! Justice for Elijah McClain!

Workers World Party urgently endorses the call for solidarity with six anti-racist activists in Colorado who were arrested after leading mass mobilizations against the racist police murder of Elijah McClain. Four of those arrested are members of the Party for Socialism and Liberation in the Denver area. We want to express our utmost solidarity with all those arrested and salute their work in building this movement.

The trumped-up charges — including kidnapping, inciting a riot, theft, and “attempt to influence a public service” — are completely unfounded and outrageous and must be dropped immediately.

This coordinated state repression is a clear sign that the police felt threatened by the fact that PSL and other organizers have revealed enormous and unending injustice



Anti-fascists say: ‘Proud Boys, out of Philly!’

The fascist Proud Boys group posted notices on social media “calling all patriots” to Philadelphia’s Clark Park at 1:00 pm Sept. 19. By 2:00 pm, none of them were visible. Over 500 progressive activists did show up, who would have told the missing brownshirts in no uncertain terms that they were not welcome in Philly.

— Photo and caption by Joe Piette



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

carried out by the Aurora Police Department—in particular, the murder of Elijah McClain, a 23-year-old unarmed massage therapist and violinist whose only crime was walking while Black.

This repression in Colorado is part of the alarmingly expanding state repression being carried out against anti-racist movements, coordinated at the very top by the U.S. president and his attorney general. Yet it is also part of a long history of targeting socialist, communist, anarchist and progressive organizers carried out by the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, and state and local police.

The ruling class is getting increasingly desperate in its attempts to crush the Black Lives Matter uprising. The use of chemical weapons, police kidnappings of activists, neofascist paramilitary attacks, criminalizing “Antifa,” and requiring massive bail bonds to release incarcerated activists all show that the state is at war with our movements. The growth of revolutionary, multinational socialist organizations threatens every aspect of the U.S. empire and its billionaire ruling class.

With an election coming and no end in sight for the misery of the working class and all the oppressed, we need to protect and defend each and every revolutionary organization from state repression. Workers World Party believes that an injury to one organization is an injury to our entire class. We will continue to build solidarity with PSL and all forces within this uprising.

No amount of repression can stop a mass movement of the working class fighting for justice. In the words of Black Panther Party leader Huey P. Newton: “You can jail a Revolutionary, but you can’t jail the Revolution.”

We urge all organizations and individuals to:
Sign the petition to drop all the charges!
(www.pslweb.org/dropthecharges)

In Unity and Solidarity,
Workers World Party. □

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

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Permanent residency for TPS holders won't come from the courts

By G. Lechat

Coordinated, coast-to-coast press conferences were staged by Temporary Protected Status activists on Sept. 15 after the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Trump's 2018 termination of TPS. In several cities, im/migrant families with decades of legal residency and U.S.-born children reacted to the disappointing decision on their 2018 lawsuit, *Ramos v. Nielsen*.

This ruling came just as TPS recipients, who in January are set to lose their legal work authorization, drivers' licenses (in most states) and protection from deportation, were preparing a second cross-country publicity tour. Boston SEIU 32-BJ member Julio Perez will drive "La Libertad," the brightly decorated National TPS Alliance bus, across the country from Sept. 21 until mid-November, when it will depart Los Angeles for San Francisco.

The Court of Appeals decision diverged from the Supreme Court's June finding that Trump acted unconstitutionally when he terminated Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. It was hoped that the SCOTUS DACA ruling would lead to a positive decision for TPS-holders in the lower court. The death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on Friday heaped additional uncertainty on recipients.

Ginsburg's replacement is likely to be even less friendly to im/migrants, although her own record was also mixed. Days after the DACA ruling she joined right-wingers to "hand Trump a victory on a signature issue" that enabled the deportation of rejected asylum applicants without a

hearing (NPR June 25). Residency will be won in the streets!

Actions hit reactionary ruling

In **San Francisco**, where the Ninth Circuit is located, a press conference and rally organized by local supporters of the National TPS Alliance were held outside the old federal building on Sept. 15th. "Ramos" plaintiffs and their supporters spoke out in support of the TPS program.

Cristina, a plaintiff and TPS holder who arrived from El Salvador in 2001, stated on behalf of the 400,000 TPS holders in this country: "Yes, it was very hurtful yesterday. I will continue to fight, my family will continue to fight and all the TPS families will continue to fight." Cristina's two children, who are also plaintiffs, made brief statements.

TPS Committee East Bay activist Rosa Carranza said, "We need to fight [for] all the undocumented workers who are working right now without any protection — they are human beings as well. The fight is not just for the TPS workers, the fight is for the minorities who are under attack under this racist administration." She reminded everyone that "We are not giving up the

fight, we are going to fight to the end ... and we are going to build a common front with any cause that has been attacked by this administration."

In **Las Vegas** activists are having fundraising yard sales ahead of La Libertad's arrival on Sept. 27. Now, with 4,000 Nevadans at risk of deportation, TPS Committee and Arriba Las Vegas Workers Center activists are not giving up. Pablo Deras wrote on the committee's Facebook page that "we are and always have been essential, and we will continue to fight for our right to stay here permanently." More supporters are needed to prevail against legal setbacks, especially in the COVID-19 era.

In **Houston**, the Central American Resource Center (CRECEN) held a vigil Sept. 17 in solidarity with TPS recipients in light of the Ninth Circuit ruling. More than 100 people, including many families, were out on that balmy evening to demand that TPS be saved from the Trump administration's attack and that there be permanent residency and legalization for all. How can this government call anyone "illegal," especially those with



Boston

WW PHOTO: G. LECHAT

Indigenous heritage, when the land was stolen in the first place?

More than half of the 50,000 TPS holders in Texas reside in the Houston area. (Houston Public Media, Feb. 13, 2019) Those with TPS are not the only ones affected by this decision. According to a Center for American Progress report on TPS holders in Texas, some 53,800 U.S.-born children in Texas have parents from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti who have TPS.

Houstonians are highly affected by the recent court ruling, and they will continue to fight for their neighbors. "La Libertad" will arrive in Dallas on Oct. 10, then spend the 11th and 12th in Houston before departing for New Orleans.

Eastern states also mobilize

The Georgia im/migrant community was hit with news this week that women held by ICE at the Irwin County Detention Center in Ocilla, Ga., have been subjected to medical abuse and forced sterilization. Teofilo Martinez answers the Georgia TPS Committee phone six to seven times a week when reporters call, because he was the first TPS holder in the state to organize and has built an activist core in one year.

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Raleigh, N.C.

PHOTO: GREGORIO CRUZ-LATO



San Francisco

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Buffalo Detention Center Im/migrants work under slave labor conditions

By Tom Allia
Buffalo, N.Y.

Incarcerated im/migrants are suffering new punishments at the Buffalo Detention Center in Batavia, N.Y., where they are being detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) of the Department of Homeland Security. In early April, BDC made national headlines with one of the highest rates of COVID-19 infection of any prison in the country. The center operated without social distancing, masks or new cleaning procedures until mid-April.

A lawsuit filed in March against BDC and the state of New York has progressed. A federal judge has ordered the center and state courts to reverse the burden of proof for determining holding of arrestees and to offer bond more frequently and at lower costs. (tinyurl.com/y4t525z9)

A similar federal court order was made in a lawsuit against the state of Massachusetts earlier this year, which is still pending.

Persons named specifically in the New York lawsuit include immigration Judges Philip Montante and Mary Baumgarten. Both have denied bond to more than 95% of all arrestees who have appeared before them. The Batavia immigration court, which processes people from all over New York state, ranks third nationally for bond refusal, offering bond to only 20.9% of arrestees. The national median is 35%. Bond, if even offered, is more expensive in Batavia, with a median of \$14,000 as opposed to the national median of \$9,000.

A second development is a new lawsuit filed by Dalila Yeend and Bounam Phimasone, both former detainees at the Buffalo Detention Center. They are joined by the Worker Justice Center of New York (WJCNY). The suit confronts Akima Global Services, the owners of BDC, over labor violations and low pay. (tinyurl.com/yvt27lyb)

Most detainees — 90% of them — are civilly detained, meaning there is no conviction against most of them. One of the plaintiffs of the suit, Yeend, was detained for not having a driver's license on her person. She has legal residency in the U.S., but when she was detained, she was held for 2 1/2 months.

The Buffalo Detention Center pays all working detainees \$1 a day, regardless of hours worked, which can be as long as 12 hours. BDC does not offer hazard pay, and many of the workers are responsible for wards of people infected with COVID-19. (thebatavian.com, Sept. 4)

The main focus of this lawsuit is not the unreasonable conditions of Yeend's initial arrest and time spent in detention, however, but BDC violations of labor law. WJCNY Legal Director Rob McCreanor states, "This is a private company that is contracting with the federal government and is making a lot of money off that contract. That is in part due to the free labor that they are getting from immigrants in civil detentions [who] aren't prisoners serving terms for crimes — they are immigrants who are detained waiting a resolution for a civil immigration matter. It's a gross violation of their rights." (wjcny.org, Sept. 4)

Work at BDC is coerced in a parallel to forced slave labor. Detainees who do not work are frequently placed in solitary confinement, or partial solitary, meaning less than 23 hours alone. And they are placed in solitary without reading material or any other means to occupy themselves.

Work is doubly coercive because BDC allocates detainees the bare minimum of needed items including hygiene products and vitamins, while their needs are more pressing during the pandemic. Detainees are restricted to an expensive private commissary to meet their basic needs. A small shampoo at the commissary is \$5. Food from the vending machines can be \$5-\$10. Deodorant is \$10.

Phone calls start at \$3 and increase per minute. The phone is of critical importance, because detainees need to be able to communicate with lawyers for court cases and with their families if they are offered release. If they cannot communicate due to lack of funds, their cases or release may be seriously delayed.

Detainees who are released from BDC are taken to a Citgo station at the New York State Thruway exit for Batavia. This is technically a bus stop for Greyhound Bus Lines, but released detainees are not usually given any cash to buy tickets. While detainees are legally owed the means to transport themselves home, for someone to admit they do not have means for transport often results in a longer stay.

Detainees are typically dropped off late in the morning, after the two morning buses have passed, so they have to wait almost all day for the next bus. But people waiting for the bus are not permitted to wait inside the gas station, and there is no bus shelter. This becomes a very dangerous situation during inclement weather, especially in the brutally cold upstate New York winters.

Local activist groups including Justice for Migrant Families and local churches try to meet detainees at the bus stop. They offer backpacks with basic supplies and sanitary products, as well as rides to where released people need to go. But the groups do not have the resources to maintain a constant presence at the bus stop.

When the Investigative Post, a Buffalo based nonprofit, wrote an April exposé on the practice of abandoning former detainees, ICE denied everything in the article — but did not provide any evidence to refute the dire facts. □



After years of protesting jailing of im/migrants in central and upstate N.Y., people are arrested at a "Close the Camps" demonstration, Buffalo, N.Y., July 2019.

Health care workers win for all workers

by calvin deutschbein

National Nurses United called it the “largest hospital union victory in the South since 1975.” On Sept. 16, in a National Labor Relations Board election, RNs voted by more than 70% to unionize Mission Hospital in Asheville, N.C. — one of the most anti-worker states in the U.S.

NNU is a militantly anti-racist union engaged in working class struggle around the U.S., but especially in the South, including workplaces in North Carolina, Florida and Texas. NNU fights to orient health care workers in the quantitatively most productive sector of the U.S. economy toward aligning with working class and oppressed people, rather than with capitalist interests. NNU has been on the front lines against the COVID-19 pandemic from the outset.

“Throughout the entire campaign, we’ve been acutely aware that this fight isn’t just for us and our working conditions — this is about the health and well-being of our community,” said Kelly Graham, palliative care RN, in an NNU press release. On Sept. 16, Graham and the NNU won for their community.

Southern unionism

The significance of this victory as the largest Southern union win since 1975 is related to events in North Carolina in 1979, when rank-and-file workers and the Communist Workers Party were

organizing textile mills in Greensboro.

On Nov. 3 that year, the Ku Klux Klan killed CWP organizers and allies Dr. James Waller and Dr. Michael Nathan — two medical doctors, William Evan Sampson, Cesar Cauce and Sandra Neely Smith, a nurse and former student body president of Bennett College, which is one of only two historically Black colleges for women. Involved in the murders were members of the American Nazi Party and various federal and local law enforcement agencies.

The impact of these murders was, and still is, incalculable in North Carolina. Every day of struggle for Black liberation and worker power in the state since then has taken place in the context of the horrific attack.

The successful union drive in Asheville over 40 years later testifies both to the power of solidarity and to the harsh conditions for workers in North Carolina and throughout the South.

A victory against systemic white supremacy

White supremacy pervades every aspect of life in the U.S., but rarely is it more obvious than in corporate medicine, where racial disparities in outcomes are often worse than in education or even in the so-called justice system. Throughout North Carolina, Black, Indigenous and/or Latinx people have lower life expectancies and birth weights, higher COVID-19 infection rates and death rates, and higher

rates of poverty as a result of medical expenses, compared to workers who are not nationally oppressed.

HCA Healthcare, the largest U.S. for-profit health care company, owns Mission Hospital in Asheville and waged a vicious anti-union campaign against NNU. But HCA’s program of white supremacist health care was defeated. Its stock prices have been falling since the results of the union vote were announced.

Asheville is a concrete win especially for Black working class patients served by Mission Health. Unionized health care provides better outcomes for all patients, and especially reduces racial disparities, which are often largest in the South. (tinyurl.com/y2r7774q)

A union is the most powerful tool available to empower workers of all nationalities to recognize their shared interests with the communities they serve and oppose white supremacy advanced by bosses and shareholders.

Expanding health care access

The Southern Workers Medicare for All Campaign, launched by NNU and sibling radical unions UE (United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers) and International Longshore Association Local 1422, has built a powerful movement



PHOTO: NATIONAL NURSES ORGANIZING COMMITTEE/NATIONAL NURSES UNITED
Asheville, N.C., nurses vote ‘Yes’ to unionize, in landslide vote for National Nurses United.

throughout the South. NNU has shown the power to make demands of HCA and others who prevent equitable provision of health care. (tinyurl.com/y2noo6fa)

There is profound power in recognition by NNU that health care is a service provided by workers, for workers, and that reactionary governments and private industries only serve to harm workers and to bankroll billionaires.

The victory in Asheville shifts the balance of power closer to justice.

On Sept 13, the Southern Workers Assembly heard from Mission Valley nurses and other health care workers during the “Safe Jobs Save Lives” webinar. These workers are engaged in many different fights to demand safety for workers and patients, as well as to dismantle the broken U.S. for-profit health care system and replace it with Medicare for All. View the webinar at tinyurl.com/y5uffz9c.

Illinois Striking health workers say: ‘We want R-E-S-P-E-C-T and a contract!’

By Kathy Durkin

Solidarity was on display when striking nurses and service workers rallied together outside the Thompson Center in Chicago on Sept. 18 to demand Gov. J.B. Pritzker support them in contract talks with the University of Illinois-Chicago and UI Hospital and Health Sciences System. Labor union and community supporters turned out in unity with the strikers at the over 1,000-strong demonstration.

A confluence of factors pushed these workers to strike: Antilabor edicts by the Trump administration, anti-union rulings by the Supreme Court, COVID-19, and management’s intransigence during negotiations in denying higher wages, safety measures and sufficient staff in the midst of a viral pandemic.

Considered “essential workers,” the strikers are on the front lines dealing with COVID-19. Many are working without proper protective equipment, risking their own and family members’ health and

lives. High on their list of demands is that management prioritize the protection of all employees from this contagious disease. As of Sept. 16, 270 UIC workers have been infected, and four have died due to lack of PPE.

Over 800 nurses, represented by the Illinois Nurses Association, struck for seven days beginning Sept. 12, demanding adequate staff and PPE. Antilabor UIC officials got a court injunction to prevent 500 other nurses from striking, and they brought in strikebreakers. Negotiations continue.

Then, over 4,000 members of Service Employees Local 73 — technical, clerical, maintenance, engineering and professional employees — struck on Sept. 14. They work at the Chicago hospital and clinics and medical schools in Peoria, Rockford and Urbana, Ill. Black and Latinx strikers are leading the way at UIC.

After being without a contract for 15 months, 94% of the UIC unionized workforce voted to strike. Bosses ignored their calls for safe working conditions, provision

of PPE and disinfectants, more staff, a \$15 hourly minimum wage and yearly cost-of-living increases. SEIU Local 73 filed charges of unfair labor practices against UIC during contract talks. When management would not move, workers launched an “unfair labor practice” strike.

Alicia Uwumoragie, Physical Therapy Specialist at UI Health, explained, “We continue to face disrespect at the bargaining table. That’s reflected in UIC being unable to promise masks and other safety equipment and conditions that we’ve long needed. Some of our brothers and sisters have died on the front line. They have given their lives for their jobs. And for what? So UIC can ignore our calls for justice?” (seiu73.org, Sept. 3)

Lavitta Stewart, Program Service Aide at UI Health, emphasized, “We are done with their lack of empathy and lack of respect. Workers shouldn’t be making \$10-\$12 an hour. Workers shouldn’t be worried about



PHOTO: SEIU LOCAL 73 FACEBOOK
#Strike for our Lives demonstration in Chicago on Sept. 18 by nurses and other hospital workers.

contracting a virus that UIC has let run rampant amongst the workplace.”

The SEIU Local 73 Bargaining Committee Sept. 14 statement stresses that UIC has the funds to pay agency employees and strikebreakers and to erect a new building, but not to pay their employees salaries they deserve!

Strikers are determined to stay on the picket lines for as long as they must to get a decent contract, which recognizes and provides for their economic, health and safety needs — and treats them with respect. □

Permanent residency for TPS holders won’t come from the courts

Continued from page 3

“Organizing in Georgia is very hard. It is a red state, people are scared,” Martinez, who is Honduran, explained to Workers World. When the #Journey4JusticeII stops in **Atlanta** on Oct. 18-19, activists will target Republican Senators Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue. Among them may be a caravan including the Honduran Garifuna musicians, who have been a feature of national mobilizations.

In **Raleigh**, Gregorio Cruz-Lazo told Workers World that, on behalf of 2,000 North Carolinian recipients, the press conference was an opportunity “to express disagreement with the recent terrible court ruling against TPS holders.” The Charlotte and Raleigh-Durham communities also

organized a major caravan to draw attention to TPS during the Republican National Convention in August. La Libertad is due in North Carolina on Oct. 25-26.

There were also mobilizations in **New York City**, where it is estimated that 70,000 recipients live in the tristate area. Three days before the death of Justice Ginsburg, **Washington, D.C.** TPS-holders demonstrated in front of the Supreme Court, then in anticipation of a “Ramos” appeal being taken up by the highest court.

Massachusetts and Connecticut TPS-holders from El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti and Sudan gathered in **Boston**. Union members comprised almost a third of the crowd. Roxana Rivera, Vice President of the 175,000-member Service Employees

32BJ, spoke along with steward Doris Reina-Landaverde, a national TPS activist and custodian at Harvard University. Reina-Landaverde mobilized the largest labor contingent, the multi-union Harvard TPS Coalition, including SEIU, UNITE HERE Local 26 and AFSCME Local 3650 members. The primarily Haitian Boston School Bus Drivers Union (Steel Workers Local 8751) also provided amplification to uplift the voices of impacted families. Youth activists and DACA recipients spoke of struggling for permanent residency for their parents. “La Libertad” will make five New England stops, Nov. 1-6.

Messaging at the events reflected recognition of the all-out xenophobic assault on im/migrant communities through the attacks on TPS and DACA. The Trump

administration has pursued an anti-Black, anti-im/migrant and anti-labor far-right agenda for Wall Street and the ruling class.

However, as Boston labor leader Ed Childs, from UNITE HERE Local 26 and Harvard TPS Coalition, explained to Workers World, “We are sitting on the treasure chest of labor. Through unions or workers’ assemblies we see in the South, we could become powerful enough to beat this. May Day is not the only day we can come out, and union support is needed to win #ResidencyNow.”

G. Lechat is active with Boston FIRE, Harvard TPS Coalition and AFSCME Local 3650. Judy Greenspan (Bay Area) and Mirinda Crissman (Houston) contributed to this article.



Abolitionist Demands for prisons during COVID-19

Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party

@pscwwp

1

RELEASE THEM ALL!

The Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party calls for immediate and mass releases of prisoners due to the inability to social distance. This must include the release of those workers sentenced to life in prison and life without parole (LWOP). We emphasize the immediate release of elder and immunocompromised prisoners. Those released should be assigned to a job or guaranteed income, housing, medical care and healthy food.

2

FREE ACCESS TO PHONE CALLS, MAIL AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

Prisoners, family and community have the right to communicate with each other. The state has used the pandemic to isolate incarcerated workers from their communities and their class.

3

END PRE-TRIAL DETENTION

We call for the immediate release of the thousands of workers currently being held in prisons, jails and detention centers across the country without having been convicted of a crime. We demand a complete moratorium of any prisoner transfers, especially without a conviction.

4

FREE NON-COERCIVE COVID TESTING, ACCESS TO CDC APPROVED HAND SANITIZER, PPE, AND HYGIENE ITEMS

5

ALL PRISONERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID MUST BE IMMEDIATELY TRANSFERRED TO NON-PRISON HOSPITALS

No punishment for those who test positive. No more de facto executions by COVID-19!

6

STOP ALL PRISON TRANSFERS, CELL EXTRACTIONS AND SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

Transfers spread COVID19. Cell extractions and solitary confinement are tools of retaliation against prisoner organizers. Solitary confinement is torture.

7

HUMANE AND LIVABLE CONDITION FOR ALL

Including consistent showers and air conditioning in every cell and facility. A shocking number of prison facilities across the United States have no air conditioning in any spaces where prisoners are confined. Permanent lockdown in prisons has meant prisoners must choose between shower, exercise, fresh air, and speaking to their families.

8

HEALTHY AND FREE MEALS FOR ALL

The shocking decline of quality and portions of food in prisons is causing an entirely new public health crisis in prisons. Prisoners are being forced to eat expired, rotten, and otherwise unhealthy food in order for contractors to cut corners and collect more profits.

9

WORK FURLOUGH WITH FULL PAY

No prisoners should be forced to work for slave wages, especially during a pandemic. All prisoners should receive full wages during this requisite work stoppage and have access to commissary supplies free of charge. Prisoners should be paid the same minimum wage as workers on the other side of the walls.

10

ALLOW THE FORMATION OF PRISONER UNIONS

Incarcerated workers must have the right to organize unions and political organizations without fear of reprisals to address the threats unique to their facilities. For these demands to be effective in transitioning to full abolition, prisoners must be able to organize, politically and for self-defense. Organize for abolition!

Michigan prisoners rebel!

By Ted Kelly

Prisoners in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan rose up and took control of their housing unit for over five hours on Sunday night, Sept. 13. In a display of commendable organization and militancy, over 40 incarcerated workers rebelled after a guard at the Chippewa Correctional Facility used a Taser weapon on their fellow prisoner, causing them to lose consciousness.

While the injured prisoner was being taken away, prisoners seized on the opportunity to force staff out of the housing block. Guards were forced to abandon the unit. The facility’s administration even had

to admit that the prisoners’ seizure of power was so swift that no guards were even injured in the takeover.

The Chippewa facility has a capacity of over 2,000 prisoners. Like so many weapons of genocide and dislocation in the U.S. empire, this concentration camp is named after the Indigenous people of this continent. “Chippewa” is an anglicization of Ojibwe, the name of one of the bands of Anishinabe people, who are native to Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. Anishinabe, Dakota and Menominee peoples all called the Upper Peninsula home long before Europeans arrived in North America. (tinyurl.com/yyxkguw5) □

COVID cases, deaths double in prisons

By Mirinda Crissman

Since Workers World last reported on COVID behind bars in June, case numbers and deaths have more than doubled.

Current numbers show at least 125,730 cases of COVID-19 have been reported among prisoners in the U.S. The data suggest that these numbers are most likely underreported.

Texas prisons lead in numbers of cases with 21,562, followed by Florida with 15,983 and the Federal Bureau of Prisons with 14,215. California, Ohio, Arkansas and Michigan are close behind with 12,125, 6,112, 5,834 and 5,423 cases, respectively.

And a total of 1,066 prisoner deaths from the virus

have been reported, with Texas leading with 155 deaths. The federal BOP follows with the death of 129 prisoners. Among prison staff, 27,632 cases and 77 deaths have been reported. (The Marshall Project, Sept. 15)

Prisons have functioned as concentration camps for the poor and oppressed since their inception, and COVID is only speeding this process up.

Prison Policy Initiative gave examples of 14 large-scale mass releases of prisoners throughout the 20th century and has demonstrated that decarceration actually led to a decrease in crime. (Prison Policy Initiative, April 9)

Workers World Party joins many abolitionists in our call for mass releases now. Tear down the walls, and free them all for public health! □

Stop forced sterilizations! Shut down all detention centers!

The Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party commends the heroic action of Dawn Wooten, a licensed practical nurse, for exposing forced sterilizations at the Irwin County, Georgia ICE (Immigration & Customs Enforcement) Detention Center operated by LaSalle Corrections, a private for-profit prison.

Project South, one of the advocacy groups involved in gathering the facts, states that there was an “inordinate rate at which women in ICDC were subjected to hysterectomies.” (projectsouth.org)

One woman reported to Project South that she was not properly anesthetized. In addition, “many of the immigrant women who underwent the procedure were reportedly confused when asked to explain why they had surgery.”

This is in direct violation of a patient’s right to informed consent. The American Medical Association describes an informed consent as “fundamental in both ethics and the law.” The medical staff is responsible for relating the details of a procedure — including risks, side effects and expected outcomes — in a manner which takes into account the patient’s level of understanding and preferred method of learning. The burden of obtaining an informed consent lies with the physician performing the procedure.

Ms. Wooten, who is African American, took a courageous stand when she blew the whistle on abuse she witnessed against migrants at this facility. Wooten told the press she was demoted and reprimanded because of her speaking out. Women who complained about their treatment were put into

isolation at the detention center.

These hysterectomies are racist in character, and they constitute a war on a woman’s and a gender-oppressed person’s right to control their own bodies.

This attack also exposes the state violence in the forms of ICE and the Border Patrol; unimaginable terror is carried out on a daily basis against migrants and refugees, who have been forced to come to the U.S. due to imperialist plunder and exploitation in their homelands.

Detention centers are nothing more than concentration camps for women, children, the poor and people of color. What happened in Georgia is genocidal in nature. It is another example of the inhumane violations the U.S. government continues to subject Indigenous, Black and Brown people, here and abroad.

We call for the medical license of the doctor who performed the surgeries to be immediately revoked and his practice to be shuttered. An independent criminal investigation must be conducted, and abuses prosecuted. We demand compensation and freedom for all victims.

Our committee is in solidarity with Dawn Wooten. Her bold actions exemplify Black, Brown and Indigenous unity. All retaliation against Ms. Wooten must cease.

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency and the Department of Homeland Security should be abolished now.

Abolish ICE! Abolish prisons! Tear down the walls! □

@PSCWWP



TEAR DOWN THE WALLS



Defend BLM activist lawyers!

By Noor Jehan Bano

A surveillance camera outside this city’s 88th Precinct in New York captured footage on May 30 of a Molotov cocktail setting an abandoned, badly damaged, and heavily spray-painted police car on fire. That same night, police kidnapped and caged Urooj Rahman and Colinford Mattis, charging them with taking part in the incident.

The charges that punishment bureaucrats attached to Mattis and Rahman for their purported role in setting an abandoned cop car on fire carry an incredible mandatory minimum sentence of 45 years to a maximum of life in prison. (Buzzfeed, Sept. 16)

At the bail hearing for Rahman and Mattis, these bureaucrats relentlessly tried to keep them confined to cages until their trial. However, after being held captive for weeks, both were released and placed under house arrest.

Along with the state, some South Asian community members have also engaged in acts of violence against these political prisoners by guilting and shaming them for their alleged involvement in harming state property.

On a South Asian-centered online forum, one person wrote that because Mattis and Rahman are “educated people but they committed a serious crime. . . it’s important that the court makes an example out of them and gives them a long



Colinford Mattis and Urooj Rahman

sentence.” This person added that they “don’t have much sympathy for people who seek to wreak havoc.” Another wrote that “the most surprising part [about this story] is that they’re both lawyers and children of immigrants. They should’ve 100% known better.”

This illustrates the major dilemma for some South Asian communities when discussing profound acts of protest: We continue to rely on our proximity to power for security, rather than engaging in deep solidarity with those whose actions mold our path towards liberation.

Instead of vilifying Mattis and Rahman, it is crucial that we actively assess how their actions have challenged

respectability politics, loosened the racial wedge separating South Asian and Black communities, and contributed to building class consciousness.

Mattis is of Jamaican descent, while Rahman and her family migrated from Pakistan to the United States. Both were raised in im/migrant communities, attended law school, and practiced as attorneys prior to the May 30 incident. Since the arrests of Rahman and Mattis, news outlets have paid exceptionally close attention to their occupation, publishing headlines with phrases like “two promising lawyers” (CNN, June 18), “Molotov-tossing attorney” (weekly Blitz, Aug. 21), and “bomb-throwing lawyers” (New York

Post, June 23).

In the United States, lawyers are often the gatekeepers protecting the ruling class’s authority, which, in turn, puts them in a position of power. Moreover, news outlets carefully choose words that reflect a principle central to migrant communities: “Do not bite the hand that feeds you.” Mattis and Rahman’s alleged act against this principle demonstrates that the worth of an oppressed community member is solely based on their commitment to serve the oppressor.

The value attached to a person from a minority community is also reflected in how communities of color are pitted against one another. South Asians are considered “model minorities,” hard-working, intellectual, and law-abiding people. In turn, those who are not model minorities are stereotyped to possess opposite attributes.

This toxic dichotomy has perpetuated anti-Black racism in South Asian communities and created barriers for communities of color. The courts demonstrated, however, that one’s “model minority” status does not ensure protection against state harm, thus weakening these divisions and strengthening our need to build class consciousness.

The current uprising has sparked an international call to end white supremacist violence against all communities of color. For those of South Asian descent, how do we intend to answer? □

As seen from Portugal Trump vs. Biden: How to halt the decline of imperial power

By Manuel Raposo

A Portuguese Marxist analyst looks at the Trump vs. Biden election, assessing its possible impact on U.S. foreign policy. This article was first published Sept. 1 on the jornalmudardevida.net website, which is edited by Raposo. Translation by John Catalinotto.

The confrontation between Trump and Biden, regarding the upcoming U.S. presidential elections, has been presented in the Portuguese media and in Europe as a decisive dispute between tyranny and democracy, between barbarism and civilization, between the threats of war and peace, between chaos and order in the world.

All these and so many other loosely defined opposites arise more from vested interests trying to score propaganda points than from any real political analysis of what is at stake. They therefore distort reality, namely by emphasizing the idea that there is a crucial difference between the U.S. ruling factions that line up behind the Republican or Democratic party.

We know what Trump has done and we can imagine what his plans are for a second term; but we do not know, in this distorted discussion, the real goals of the ruling-class group and its political agents who promote Joe Biden. When you see a chorus of reactionaries and war criminals lining up behind the Democratic candidate (some of them last-minute deserters from the Republican ranks), you have to ask what you can expect if Biden wins on Nov. 3.

Trump’s ignorance and bad manners have made him an easy target for criticism, at least for European leaders. Above all, he has become politically undesirable because he has treated the European Union with hostility and has harmed the interests of the Old Continent’s ruling

classes. They would, of course, prefer a return to yesterday’s [pre-Trump] understandings and to the “predictability” of a United States foreign policy negotiated in international organizations and through their own channels. That’s despite the kick in the ass the U.S. gave the European leaders when George W. Bush unilaterally decided to wage war on Iraq in 2003, against a good section of the interests of European capitalism.

But European ruling class preferences, which derive from their own needs, are far from what is necessary for the European working classes and peoples. Of course, Trump will not be “their” [the workers’] candidate for all that is known of him and his cronies, be they American or European. In this circumstance, and especially since they have no influence on the vote, the European workers and peoples should understand as clearly as possible what is at stake and distance themselves from what their dominant classes are selling them as if it were of interest “to

everyone” and “to the world.”

We have already highlighted in another text some of the realities that determine the recent political trajectory of the USA, beyond Trump’s idiosyncratic offenses. One is the evident decline of U.S. hegemony (economic, political, military, moral), which Washington achieved after 1945 and projected after 1990 following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Another is the crisis affecting the entire capitalist world as a result of the decreed “advantages-for-all” of globalization having visibly come to an end (without, of course, it having been “for all”) and posing now, among the great powers, the vital question of who tops whom?

As a result, a third reality at present is the need for U.S. imperialism to pull down the pillars of the world order that it itself created (while it was rising), because it has now lost its competitive capacity and this world order keeps the U.S. wrapped in a straitjacket. American imperialism, in fact, assesses that it no longer benefits from that order in competition with its opponents.

That is the source of fascist nationalism, of economic protectionism, of the breakdown of treaties and alliances that had seemed eternal, in the search for new partners.

It is these facts that will inevitably determine the conduct of the United States, whether Trump or Biden is holding the reins of power.

It is impossible to know in advance the methods or concrete measures of the next U.S. president. It is known that Trump, if re-elected, will feel empowered and free to continue on the path he has taken over the last four years.

But it is also clear that Biden will be unable to return the U.S. to how it was in 2016. If, as he announces, he intends to “unite the Americans,” he will have to accept a good part of the reactionary and nationalist demands (especially from the middle classes torn apart by the economic crisis) that brought Trump to power, since it is not in the plans of the Democrats to take a left turn — not even as Bernie Sanders announced — to respond to the real needs of the people.

And if Biden wants to rebuild U.S. hegemony in the world, he will have to set in motion, not a path of partnership among equals, but a policy of increased economic, diplomatic and military toughness. This policy will force potential allies, particularly in Europe, to align with the U.S. against Washington’s main rivals, i.e., China and Russia — not forgetting U.S. imperialism’s conflict with the “pariah states” like Iran, Cuba, North Korea, Syria or Venezuela.

In other words, the divisions that now appear between the ruling political factions in the United States — sharpened, let’s not forget, by the needs of the electoral campaign — are driven by a single, common purpose: how to halt the decline of U.S. imperial power. □



Rally for ‘democratic socialist’ Bernie Sanders drew thousands of young and oppressed workers at Queensbridge Park, New York City, Oct. 19, 2019.

Susan Abulhawa: ‘Palestine is the test’

The following is a lightly edited transcript of a Sept. 19 talk by Palestinian novelist and Workers World Party member Susan Abulhawa during a “Free Palestine! No Normalization with Colonization or Occupation!” webinar sponsored by WWP.

We’ve known for years that the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia and other Gulf nations had cooperation behind closed doors with Israel. It was an open secret. Over the last couple of years there have been campaigns, some subversive, to prepare the Arab public for this moment.

For example, every year during Ramadan there is a series — basically a soap opera — that captures the imagination of the Arab world. You have 300 million people sitting down after breaking the fast to watch the Ramadan series. It’s wildly popular.

This year’s series, called “Um Haroun,” basically hinted at and supported rapprochement with Israel. It also denigrated Palestinians in a lot of ways. It pushed this propaganda myth that we Palestinians “sold our country” or “ran like cowards.” This is the kind of stuff that gets pushed in popular media in the Arab world by state actors who control the media to a large extent.

A lot of us were watching this on the sidelines and understood this moment was going to arrive. It didn’t make it any less painful. In some ways it’s good for things to be out in the open. This normalization agreement is really going to polarize the Middle East in ways we haven’t seen before.

Why are Arab nations doing this? The UAE has been saying they’re helping Palestinians, that it will take annexation off the table, while prior to that Israel was about to annex the Jordan Valley. But Netanyahu immediately showed that to be a lie. Literally that day or the next day, Netanyahu said annexation is not off the table but on a temporary hold. Israel right



Susan Abulhawa

away stabbed them in the back. They did the same thing a couple of days later. A weapons contract for F-35 military jets was part of this UAE deal with Israel. Even though this deal was supposedly brokered by the U.S. and the UAE was supposed to get F-35 jets, Israel turned around and blocked that. There were reports that the UAE is hugely dismayed, but they didn’t do anything about it.

Israel has no friends. Israel cannot be trusted. The United States is supposed to be its closest ally, but just last year so-called “stingray” cellphone spy equipment was found placed around the White House to intercept White House calls. Everybody knew it, but nothing happened to Israel.

Likewise, during the Obama administration, Netanyahu came here to undermine the foreign policy of a sitting president on U.S. soil when he addressed a joint session of Congress and went on U.S. news shows to undermine the Iran deal. That’s what Israel does to the United States! So it’s a matter of time until things come to a head. Whatever business deals, whatever military deals come of this new normalization agreement, it’s going to be for the benefit of Israel. It’s never a two-way street with Israel and they’re very good at entangling people in their own laws.

And Israeli society is going to freak out if they see a lot more Arabs coming to Jerusalem at al-Aqsa, especially if they’re arriving in traditional Arab dress, because Israeli racism is frankly medieval. I predict that’s going to be an issue. And likewise whatever business deal is going to be a siphoning of resources to Israel, because that’s what they do.

So I’ve been talking about what’s going to happen to these newlyweds on their honeymoon. I think it’s going to end in divorce, frankly.

Solidarity is the key

As far as the Palestinians are concerned, it’s definitely a dark time for us. But it’s also replete with hope and inspiration and ideas of a new generation and this growing international solidarity. I do believe that ultimately the kind of internationalism that is occurring among like-minded struggles for

social justice, climate justice, economic justice, political justice -- this arena is what occupies the minds and the passions of the masses.

Israel has no standing in this arena. I do believe that we will prevail. No matter how dark it looks for us, history has shown us time and time again how quickly the powerful can fall, the swiftness of it. People and regimes we think are immensely powerful have crumbled numerous times overnight. So I am not despairing.

I am counting on the kind of solidarity that we can foster among the masses by educating people. By pushing for socialism, pushing anti-colonial ideals, pushing for justice. Because on the international arena the question of Palestine is at the heart of every social justice movement. Because if we fall, other people will fall. Palestine is the test of how we can succeed and how we can push forward. □



WWW PHOTO: JIM MCMAHAN

Pro-Palestine rally held in summer 2020 at a Seattle police station to expose the collusion between U.S. cops and repressive Israeli settler forces.

Surviving a pandemic under siege

By Betsey Piette

During a Sept. 18 “Free Palestine” webinar, Palestinian writers and activists Susan Abulhawa and Khaled Barakat were asked to comment on the spread of COVID-19 in occupied Palestine, and what it means to have access to health care under foreign occupation. The following is an edited version of their replies.

Susan Abulhawa began by raising Israel’s destruction of at least three Palestinian COVID-19 testing centers. “They came in and demolished them. The Palestinian health care sector was stretched

thin, especially in Gaza by the ongoing siege, the restrictions on fuel and electricity, the persistent bombing and destruction of infrastructure, including hospitals.

“In Gaza the authorities actually had done a really good job so far of containing things, but there are some signs now of infections beyond the isolation zone. It is a bit scary because Gaza is the most densely populated spot on the earth.

“On average, Gazans get six hours of electricity a day. It comes on or goes off with no schedule. The lack of sufficient medical infrastructure, and a broken-down sanitation infrastructure, compound this threat. Water in Gaza is

undrinkable now.

“Israel does not allow Palestinians to leave, even for medical care. People are in desperate need of medical attention outside of Gaza, whether for certain kinds of surgery that is not available, cancer treatment, etc. Very cynically Israel tries to coerce these people into becoming informants, to sabotage the resistance.

“No matter how battered Gaza is, there is still resistance. Palestinians are not going to give up. Our resistance is something that Israel and the world can count on. We are not going to go away. Whether we are inside Palestine, exiled outside or in refugee camps, we have a one-track mind — and it is to Palestine.

“This may seem off the topic of COVID, but not really. Palestinian society has mechanisms to care for one another that developed over decades of occupation. They were honed during the height of uprisings where people had to depend on each other, to educate each other’s children, make sure everyone was fed, and to just show up for people. Those kinds of social networks and infrastructure are in place to help us get through whatever we need to.”

Khaled Barkat responded: “When the epidemic started there were many popular jokes by our people in Gaza that ‘We’re lucky to be under siege and no COVID-19 will come near us.’ Now Gaza is absolutely facing a greater challenge, especially in

the last two months. There have been a lot of efforts by people to combat COVID-19 while living under total siege.

“In the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and Syria, people already were suffering from lack of medical services before COVID-19, so you can imagine how the situation is now. When the Palestinian Authority counts the Palestinians who are affected by this, they count the people in the West Bank, but leave the rest of the Palestinians not counted, as if they are not Palestinians, or not important. This is not just political — it is real and connected very much to the health and well-being of our people.

“Israel has released all the Israeli criminals who are in jail, saying they need to be sent home because of the pandemic, but they also assure the Israeli public that no Palestinian prisoner will be released due to COVID-19.”

Note: Early in the pandemic, Johns Hopkins University’s tracking system for COVID-19 failed to list data for Palestinians, instead merging it with cases from Israel. Coming under fire, Johns Hopkins eventually listed data from the West Bank and Gaza as “occupied Palestinian territories.” (Ali Abunimah Rights and Accountability, March 27, 2020).



Mother and her children in Gaza.

PHOTO: MOHAMMED AL QDEEH

Rebellion on the farm

Washington’s Latin American cronies complain

By Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein

The web magazine lapluma.net published this article by its author, a Venezuelan analyst, on Sept. 3. The article refers to George Orwell’s novel, “Animal Farm,” which pro-imperialist intellectuals have used for reactionary purposes in the past. In this case the author highlights the role of Latin American bourgeois leaders who have served Washington while in office and now complain about Washington’s attempt to seize direct imperialist control of international agencies. U.S. imperialism had used these agencies for indirect control of the Western Hemisphere. Now Trump has appointed a rabid anti-Cuban from his White House to head the Inter-American Development Bank. Translation by Workers World managing editor John Catalinotto.

In his eagerness to destroy the multilateral system, Donald Trump goes beyond the control of those institutions created by the United States to maintain its imperial domination. This is particularly evident in Latin America and the Caribbean where, not content with all the excesses that such institutions enact with the support of the hegemonic power, he arms and disarms them at will.

The most palpable case was when, confronted with the impotence and failure of the OAS in its attempt to overthrow the government of Venezuela, [Washington] called its cronies together to the Peruvian capital [Lima], where they grabbed the baton to try to achieve what the OAS had failed to do. In the end, it all ended in one more farce presided over by the CIA director, who now serves as secretary of state [Mike Pompeo].

It has become more evident than ever that U.S. foreign policy cannot be advanced through diplomatic channels that normally use negotiation and dialogue. Its will can only be imposed through domination, force, threats and extortion. Of course, in Latin America and the Caribbean this approach has succeeded because the right-wing elites there freely submit to threats and extortion and to accepting force regardless of their national interests and sovereignty — if this submission is necessary to defend their own narrow interests.

But now the imperial lust for domination goes much deeper. It has shifted to subjugating its own cronies, who emit weak whines of complaint that only serve to express the collapse of the Pan American and imperialist system. The imperialist master’s own action affirmed this, as soon as it verified the uselessness of structures it set up originally to sustain its neocolonial rule, by making obscure and self-serving use of international law.

These structures no longer serve Washington’s goals: They have been unable to bring Cuba to its knees; they have been unable to overthrow the governments of Venezuela and Nicaragua; they have been unable to build majorities to support U.S. domination. So, Washington has understood that such structures have become obsolete and it has decided to intervene directly, despite the protests of some who were previously its agents.

Inter-American Development Bank

A scenario portraying these agents’ rebellion is developing in the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Trump decided to violate a verbal agreement by which the president of that organization would always be a Latin American. Since the IDB’s foundation, this agreement had allowed the financial entity to maintain its façade as an autonomous institution.

However, the U.S. president has now decided to impose his own candidate. The nominee is Mauricio Claver-Carone, a disciple of Senator Marco Rubio, who had already been placed in the White House as one of the members of the Cuban-American terrorist ultra-right in Trump’s government.

In this case he occupies the position of Special Assistant to the President and Director of Western Hemisphere Affairs of the U.S. National Security Council, which directs all the anti-Cuban and anti-Venezuelan fury of the U.S. state apparatus. In return, Rubio must provide Florida’s votes for Trump’s reelection.

This decision landed like a bomb in Washington’s subject countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The truth is that Trump has violated no written law, but only a verbal agreement made nearly 60 years ago. However, even a group of former Latin American presidents, who during their time in office upheld their country’s perennial subordination to the United States, claim now that Trump’s decision is “a very serious violation of the fundamental political agreement with

which [the IDB] was born.”

In a letter made public on Aug. 26, Fernando Henrique Cardoso [Brazil], Felipe González [Spain], Ricardo Lagos [Chile], Julio María Sanguinetti [Uruguay], Juan Manuel Santos [Colombia], and Ernesto Zedillo [Mexico] expressed their opinion that such an act “breaks the logic and wisdom of that foundational political agreement.” They claim that there has been no discussion on the subject, describe the measure as a “major break” and ask for more reflection “because that nomination constitutes a serious lack of respect for the rules of hemispheric and international coexistence and is certainly a serious attack on Latin American dignity.”

The former presidents recognize that the United States has the votes of Brazil, Colombia and [Venezuela’s Juan] Guaidó (whom the IDB has transformed into a country) and that it would be enough to add “one or two additional countries” for the Trump candidate to achieve his “reprehensible purpose.”

In this unusual statement, sounding like children who cry when someone takes their toys away from them, these ex-presidents — who while they held the presidency of their countries never made any statement in defense of respect for the dignity of the peoples of our region and in rejection of the permanent aggression of the United States against Latin America — now, when they have no power whatsoever, warn that: “Because of its form and substance, this would be an arbitrary imposition, which we have no doubt would have very negative consequences for the future of the institution and the future of the relationship between the United States and Latin America. The damage to the IDB would be irreparable.”

Finally, they assured that the election of the next president of the IDB, scheduled for this September, lacks legitimacy and should be considered null and void. They therefore call on the member countries of the IDB to realize that the new president of the organization would be appointed by an “act lacking historical and political legitimacy.”

The problem is that Claver-Carone says he already has the 15 votes needed for his election, including those of some of the countries from which these former presidents come. Their current rulers have preferred to opt for their loyalty to the imperial master to the detriment of the defense of the national interests that their retired colleagues claim to represent.

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

In another area, also within the Pan American system — this time using the Uruguayan Luis Almagro — the United States has decided to to intervene in the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

At the request of Argentina (during Mauricio Macri’s presidency), Colombia, Paraguay, Brazil and Chile disapproved of the fact that the head of this body [Paulo Abrão] exceeded his functions, [which are normally] to persecute governments fought by the United States. Instead, he ordered the IACHR to investigate those countries who have imperial backing to commit all kinds of human rights abuses.

These countries want to assert their autonomy as nations above the IACHR, which was generating an insubordination that Washington didn’t want and cannot accept because it risked the collapse of the imperial system. At the same time, a contradiction emerged from the fact that these countries are loyal supporters of U.S. foreign policy.

In spite of having been unanimously elected to a new term as the general secretary of the IACHR, the Brazilian Paulo Abrão has been dismissed by Almagro. The OAS secretary general’s illegal decision to dismiss, taken without consultation, was made under the pretext that there are administrative complaints against Abrão. As is usual when one has the backing of Washington, Almagro presented no evidence. Nor did it matter that the IACHR should be autonomous in the appointment of its leaders.

Using a convoluted method based on allegations presented by the Colombian Neida Perez, whom Almagro appointed as “ombudsman” in order to have another instrument to attack Venezuela, the secretary general extended Pérez’s mediation functions to include investigative tasks that she does not have and which are illegal.

In the view of the IACHR, Almagro’s actions constitute “a frank disregard for its independence and autonomy.” Even the vice-president of the IACHR, Antonia Urrejola from Chile, stated that this is not a question of reputation or defending Paulo Abrão in particular, but rather a debate that goes much deeper and defines the independence and autonomy of the IACHR.

For his part, in an interview with University of Chile Radio, the Mexican commissioner of the IACHR, Joel Hernández, said that Almagro’s decision leaves this institution “without options” and in a situation “that seems to be one of no return.”

The IACHR situation is another expression of the crisis affecting the Pan-American system stemming from the Monroe Doctrine [that declares the U.S. is the deciding country in the Western Hemisphere]. Almagro’s decision generates a great contradiction because, on the one hand, it ignores the legal fact that this body is autonomous from the OAS, while on the other hand, it highlights its de facto subordination to the State Department, like all regional bodies that were born under the anti-communist influence of the years of [U.S.-USSR] bipolarity after World War II.

Hernández affirms that Almagro’s decision is unprecedented and would break a tradition of more than 20 years in which “the Commission elects and the OAS designates,” which means nothing to Almagro in his desire to exhibit his servile disposition to Washington.

According to the award-winning Colombian journalist Gonzalo Guillén, in an article published in the newspaper “La Nueva Prensa” of Bogotá last Aug. 31, Almagro’s performance is based on his corrupt character that led him to pay an “unseemly price” to obtain all the votes he needed to be re-elected as secretary general of the OAS.

The journalist Guillén writes that in addition to the perks of the secretary general position, Almagro needs to hold on to it because he is politically dead in his country Uruguay, since the left considers him a traitor and the right has no confidence in him.

It is in this context that — according to Guillén’s reasoning — Almagro received the support of some countries which in return asked for Abrão’s head. Guillén also asserts that one of those countries is Colombia “through its questioned ambassador to the OAS, the obscure former prosecutor Alejandro Ordóñez (who is a neo-Nazi — misogynist, racist, corrupt, and homophobic).”

An unworthy rebellion

Recalling George Orwell’s novel that gives the title to this article, it seems that the measures implemented by Trump in his “back yard” have gone so far that they have generated a “rebellion on the farm” in which animals fight to obtain what they believe is a better government that is not very different from the one that exists. As in the novel, groups and factions deep into corruption, petty interests, and the pursuit of profit compete for the construction of a new form of power and domination that could be worse than the one before it.

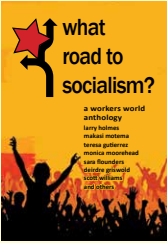
As in Orwell’s novel, one could say that “Napoleon” Trump is unleashing his dogs at all the Latin American “Snowballs” who are horrified at the prospect of having to flee the farm. Napoleon, the head of the pigs that took over, is becoming the sole leader, ignoring the other pigs of the Lima Group that have accompanied him until now, and that like the men displaced from the farm, may be victims of the dogs called Pompeo, Almagro, Rubio and others. The fear of these pigs — who, when in power, behaved just like Napoleon — is that the facts indicate that they could also be devoured by the dogs unleashed by the leader while pursuing his goals. □

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U.S. plays paper tiger in tech cold war against TikTok

By Joshua Hanks

TikTok, the wildly popular social media app owned by the Chinese company ByteDance, has become one of the primary battlefields in the U.S. cold war against China. Huawei, ZTE, and other Chinese tech companies have also been targets of sanctions and punitive measures meted out by the U.S. in the past. Recently, the U.S. has tightened the screws in its maximum pressure campaign against China.

The Commerce Department announced suddenly on Sept. 18 that TikTok’s operations in the U.S. would face more severe restrictions, beginning the following Sunday. TikTok would be removed from app stores so that no new users could download it, and any new updates would be blocked for existing users. The goal of the U.S. is to completely transfer ownership of the app from its Chinese owner to U.S.-based companies such as Microsoft or Oracle.

According to the U.S., this must be done because the app is a “threat to national security,” a charge thrown out perennially to justify such disastrous, unjust measures as the Iraq War, torture, border militarization and the Patriot Act. In the post-9/11 world, “defending national security” has become an all-encompassing project of the state, which marshals vast resources and people in its efforts to secure the domestic and global dominance of the U.S. ruling class.

So what possible threats could a social media app filled with creative, entertaining short videos present?

Most downloaded app

With pandemic lockdowns driving people indoors across the world, many have found needed distraction and a welcome laugh in the app’s endless stream of videos, produced by big-name celebrities, friends, and random users alike.

TikTok registered a 58% increase in downloads in the first quarter of 2020 over the previous quarter — the largest-ever increase for any app in a single quarter. It doubled its number of downloads in a little over a year. For five consecutive quarters it was the Apple store’s most downloaded app, until Zoom finally broke its streak in the second quarter of this year.

The Trump administration claims that the app is an open door for the Communist Party of China to engage

in surveillance, espionage, and interference within the U.S. and its allies. Administration officials and corporate media have referred to Chinese “tentacles” in regard to TikTok — a racist old trope from the days of the Chinese Exclusion Act, which banned immigration from China. That era also witnessed massacres and mass violence against Chinese people in the U.S., many of whom were highly exploited workers who built the first railroads in the rugged terrain of the West.

The Trump administration has never offered public evidence for its claims of “back doors” in TikTok’s source code that would allow Beijing direct access to users’ data. The app gathers less data than Facebook, Instagram, and Google, which collectively have more users. Amazon recently added to its board the former chief of the National Security Agency, Gen. Keith Alexander. Gen. Alexander oversaw the NSA when Edward Snowden blew the whistle on its vast, intrusive surveillance programs that target both the U.S. public and other countries, including such allies as Germany.

Amazon is far from alone in having a revolving door relationship with the state’s surveillance and military apparatus. Facebook’s chief security officer, Max Kelley, left the company in 2010 to work for the NSA. A 2016 report from the Tech Transparency Project found that seven former national security and intelligence officials and 18 Pentagon officials moved to Google, while three Google executives moved to the Department of Defense.

Look for who profits

The real motive behind the U.S. trying to forcibly hand over TikTok to U.S. companies is to enrich investors, who stand to benefit tremendously from a deal that gives them commanding ownership. While the U.S. accuses China of stealing its technology, this is exactly what the U.S. is guilty of doing in trying to steal TikTok. The Trump administration claims that the Chinese government unfairly manipulates its economy to give its firms, many of which are state-owned, a competitive advantage over U.S. companies. Yet now the U.S. government is intervening heavily in order to hand TikTok over to U.S. profiteers.

The U.S. privately owned tech firms will not allow a global competitor to exist, much in the same way that the military-industrial complex won’t allow a challenger to U.S. global military power. It isn’t enough for the U.S.

to be a superpower — it must be the sole superpower. Yet the “full spectrum dominance” desired by the U.S. ruling class isn’t a reality. Other countries, such as China, stand up to U.S. imperialism.

A day after the Commerce Department announced it would ban the downloading of TikTok, a quick reversal happened. Trump announced a potential new deal in the works that “will have nothing to do with China” and would transfer ownership of the app completely to Walmart and Oracle. But the deal reportedly gives Walmart and Oracle only a 20% stake, with ByteDance having a controlling share while maintaining ownership of algorithms and keeping control over its key assets.

TikTok was not removed from app stores as announced. Instead, a ten-day extension was announced by the Commerce Department. China’s Global Times reported on Sept. 20 that Oracle will have access to TikTok’s source code and updates to ensure no back doors exist in the app. However, “the new deal reported by the U.S. media is still one imposed on TikTok forcefully without international law or general business rules as the basis.”

The involvement of the Chinese government may have been a key factor in shaping the current deal. If the ban had gone through, China would retaliate by revising its “unreliable entity list” to include U.S. tech companies, thereby opening the legal mechanisms for Beijing to target them. The current deal, with its one-fifth ownership share allotted to U.S. firms, was likely just enough to keep investors satisfied.

The case of TikTok shows that U.S. hegemony is not inevitable and can be combated. While U.S. imperialism desires total control of the world order, it does not always get its way. ByteDance’s hard approach shows that Chinese companies won’t fold under the maximum pressure campaign by the U.S.

In his 1956 piece “U.S. Imperialism Is a Paper Tiger,” the Chinese revolutionary leader Mao Zedong wrote: “Only when imperialism is eliminated can peace prevail. The day will come when the paper tigers will be wiped out. But they won’t become extinct of their own accord, they need to be battered by the wind and the rain.

“... At present, the United States is powerful, but when looked at in a broader perspective, as a whole and from a long-term viewpoint, it has no popular support, its policies are disliked by the people, because it oppresses and exploits them. For this reason, the tiger is doomed.” □

WW MOVIE REVIEW

‘Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution’

By Jean Bowdish

This year the award-winning movie “Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution” was released and can now be viewed on Netflix’s streaming service. The movie follows Jimmy LeBrecht, a camper, who co-wrote and co-directed the movie, and Judy Heumann, a camp counselor who went on to co-found Disabled in Action.

Crip Camp was the campers’ name for Camp Jened, which opened in the 1950s. In 1970, LeBrecht went to camp, where, for a brief period, he lived in an environment geared entirely to people with disabilities. Because everyone needed some kind of assistance, no one’s personal needs stood out as “different.”

LeBrecht said, “When we were there, there was no outside world.” The movie underscores the impact of what it means to be part of a community.

After camp and college, Heumann and LeBrecht ended up in Berkeley, Calif., where they connected with the activism surrounding the Center for Independent Living. For people with disabilities, independent living means having autonomy, self-respect and the accessibility, support and programs necessary to provide equal opportunities in all aspects of life.

The movie shifts to focus on the nearly monthlong sit-in at the federal offices of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (now Health and Human Services) in San Francisco to demand enforcement of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The legislation prohibited discrimination against people with disabilities. This meant making buildings, workplaces, cities and public transportation accessible.

After four years of government inaction, demonstrations were held across the country on April 5, 1977, to demand full enforcement of Section 504. Several sit-ins were held at federal HEW offices. Three hundred disabled people occupied the department’s headquarters for over a day in Washington, D.C. People sat in for at



Bradley Lomax with other demonstrators inside the San Francisco Federal Building in April 1977.

PHOTO: GLENN LOMAX

least four days in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Seattle.

History made in San Francisco

Five hundred people rallied outside the San Francisco Federal Building, and Heumann led 150 activists into the HEW offices. The spontaneous 28-day occupation was able to survive by support from disabled people and organizations, particularly the Oakland Black Panther Party — which provided hot meals every day. The Black Panther newspaper became the source of information about the sit-in.

Bradley Lomax, who coordinated a Black Panther Party program with the Center for Independent Living, participated in the sit-in, along with his care assistant Chuck Jackson.

Kitty Cone, a lesbian organizer in the Center for Independent Living Community Affairs Department, brought in allies. Susan Schweik explains in “Lomax’s Matrix: Disability, Solidarity and the Black Power of 504,” that Cone “included the Butterfly Brigade, ‘a group of gay

men who patrolled city streets on the lookout for gay violence,’ who smuggled walkie-talkies into the occupied building; Glide Church; local and national labor organizations; members of Delancey Street, the famous grassroots rehab program for substance abusers and former felons, who brought breakfast into the building each day; the Chicano group Mission Rebels, who also provided food...” (Disability Studies Quarterly, Vol. 31, No. 1 (2011))

504 sit-ins proved activism brings changes

A contingent of the 504 protesters was sent from San Francisco to Washington to confront HEW Secretary Joseph Califano, calling on him to enforce the regulations. Included in the group were Lomax, Jackson and Heumann. Soon afterwards, Califano conceded and agreed to the demands.

When Heumann moved to New York City, she helped to found Disabled In Action and played a large role in pushing through the Americans with Disabilities Act, which was finally signed in 1990.

That too required mass action and dramatic efforts. In a demonstration organized by Disabled in Action on March 12, 1990, dozens of disabled people crawled up the stone steps of the inaccessible Capitol Building in Washington, D.C., to emphasize the lack of access that still existed nearly 20 years after the 504 sit-ins.

Even now, nearly 50 years later, the most minimal of implementation has been done. Living with disabilities remains a constant struggle.

“Crip Camp” takes you inside the lives of several other campers and counselors as well. It is a movie that gives strength and brings joy, even with its limitation of reinforcing the false image of the disability rights movement being a white-led struggle.

Bowdish is a member of the Disability Rights Caucus of Workers World Party.

Ginsburg’s legacy and the Supreme Court

Many people are mourning the death of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, some with expressions of fear that the loss of her vote on SCOTUS will mean the loss of women’s legal right of access to abortion.

Ginsburg was a historic figure in the fight for equal rights for women in education, employment and health care. Her many contributions include her successful argument as a lawyer before the Supreme Court in the 1971 *Reed vs. Reed* case. That resulted in a groundbreaking SCOTUS decision that “equal protection” in the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution also includes equal status for women under the law.

But to accurately assess the political impact of Ginsburg’s loss, it’s necessary to reflect on the function of the Supreme Court in a capitalist “democracy.” Within the three branches of the U.S. government — legislative, administrative and judicial — SCOTUS was established as the least democratic of the three, with its lifetime appointees chosen by a Senate composed of multi-millionaires.

Decisions are made by SCOTUS in order to maintain the stability of the U.S. capitalist system over time, during the ups and

downs of presidents and stock markets, as demonstrated by its decisions in favor of enslavers in the 19th century, and big capitalists and bankers in the 20th and 21st.

But mass movements of the people can sometimes hold the power structure to account using legal struggles through SCOTUS, and the people have managed to wring some favorable decisions out of the black-robed justices.

The 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision granting women the right to abortion — made by an all-male, majority Republican-appointed SCOTUS — as well as the appointment of women justices to the centuries-long all-male court — reflect the inexorable pressure of the 1970s mass movement for women’s liberation, with which Ginsburg was aligned.

Inconsistent votes reveal contradictions

However, Ginsburg’s votes while on the Court reflect the contradictions of her participation in this conservative state body.

This spring she agreed in progressive decisions for LGBTQ2S+ employment rights, immigrant rights for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals recipients and the striking down of an anti-abortion Louisiana law. Yet, during the same

period, Ginsburg voted against immigrant rights by approving a speedup in Trump’s deportation of asylum seekers, and against Indigenous rights by approving the Atlantic Coast Pipeline across stretches of West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina.

And while Ginsburg delivered a stinging dissent against the 2013 gutting of the Voting Rights Act — which directly affected Black voters — she also insultingly called the kneeling protests by Black Lives activist and athlete Colin Kaepernick against racist police killings “disrespectful” and “dumb.”

Meanwhile, public protest and direct disruption actions successfully canceled the Atlantic Coast Pipeline in early 2020. And Kaepernick was vindicated this spring as the largest mass demonstrations in U.S. history arose to protest the police murder of George Floyd, and led to Black Lives Matter solidarity strikes by professional athletes in all major sports.

When Palestinian women implored Ginsburg not to accept the Genesis Prize lifetime award in apartheid Israel, she ignored their pleas and traveled to Tel Aviv for the ceremony in 2018.

To make any one person the determining

factor in a struggle for justice is to seriously misunderstand the process by which action toward liberation is accomplished.

Laws put in place by the U.S. owning class are changed only as the result of powerful mass movements — and that includes at the level of the Supreme Court, no matter who has been appointed to the court and by which president.

A bitter battle is now being launched over filling the SCOTUS vacancy left by Ginsburg’s death. But no matter the outcome of that battle, the determining fact in the defense of rights already won will be staunch solidarity between mass movements for justice and liberation.

Fierce action by mass movements — by people fighting for each other’s lives as if for their own — is the only way to defend and advance the rights of the people to universal health care, to guaranteed housing, to jobs and a living income, to reproductive justice and freedom, to an end to prison slavery, to Indigenous sovereignty, to life without the death menace of white supremacy — and more.

We the people — the workers and oppressed people — are the hope in the struggle. We always have been, we always will be. □

Commentary

By Olijimi Alade

With the dire economic circumstances brought on by COVID-19 and the rise in police brutality provoking civil unrest unseen since the 1960s, the Millennial Generation as well as Generation Z are beginning to see the pitfalls of both neo-liberalism and U.S. conservatism.

The Republicans in office are taking notice and are peddling falsehoods in order to stymie any potential movement. They’re taking their usual criticisms of Karl Marx and molding them in a way that would appeal to potential radicals and push them away from Marxism.

Donald Trump and his cabinet are attributing the Communist Party of China’s alleged human rights violations to Marxism, in a rapid attempt at intersectional anti-communism. The irony in the GOP’s attacks against Marxism is that a party dominated by rich old white men is demonizing Marx as a “dead old white man” who is completely irrelevant.

Even though Karl Marx himself had shortcomings — especially in anticipating where in the world the revolutionary movement would develop first — Marxist methods of analysis have led to numerous revolutions and anti-imperialist revolts in the 20th century, and Marxism remains a powerful tool in comprehending the various axes of oppression.

Marxism has gained an unfair reputation over the years as a class reductionist ideology. Twentieth century concepts such as intersectionality are considered more holistic methods of studying various identities and discriminations. While no true revolutionary should neglect societal issues such as racism, patriarchy and anti-LGBTQ2S bigotry, it’s important to realize that all these ills originated from and are reified, made more solid, by the ruling class’ struggle to stay in control.

The concept of race was created by the ruling class to diffuse class solidarity, for instance, between European indentured servants and African slaves with the Bacon Rebellion of 1676. While this was not a progressive rebellion, since it demanded and led to increased theft of Indigenous lands by white settlers in

Is Marxism still relevant?

Jamestown, Va., it nevertheless frightened the slavocracy into reinforcing racism by giving minor advantages to the lower-class whites they exploited. Race and class remain intertwined as People of Color have become the largest bulk of the most exploited and a disproportionately large sector of the proletariat in general.

Imperialism imposes both a class and a racial struggle, as U.S. hegemony is pillaging global south countries of their resources and stymying their collective growth. While patriarchy predates capitalism, there is growing evidence of its relationship with the development of class society. Anthropologists studying hunter-gatherer societies, such as the Kung, observed that there was a high degree of egalitarianism not present in hierarchical class-based societies.

The ancient civilizations which were highly patriarchal, such as Ancient Greece and Rome, had class societies. Many of the most prominent feminists in more recent history such as Sojourner Truth, Alexandra Kollontai and Emma Goldman were simultaneously waging war against the bourgeoisie, demonstrating that gender equality always intersected with the class struggle.

Even today, the class struggle is as relevant as ever to the feminist cause with women and marginalized genders making up a substantial part of the working class. In a similar vein, LGBTQ2S+ oppression stemmed from a cisheteronormative paradigm — a male-dominated heterosexual family — designed to reinforce class oppression; it became a means for the upper class to maintain its wealth and resources.

Both Republicans and liberal Democrats alike have painted Marxist adherents as “crazed dogmatists.” What they fail to realize is that Marxism isn’t a political ideology in the common, traditional sense. It is a scientific method of analysis aimed at the material conditions of a particular time or region, and Marx meant its usage to change as conditions change.

Marxism — a method, not a dogma

Labeling Marxism as Eurocentric stems from the fact that Karl Marx was operating from a Eurocentric point of view in the 19th century, when both capitalist

industry and a severely oppressed proletariat were emerging in Europe. Marxists from all walks of life have critiqued and expanded upon Marx and Engels’ original findings. Vladimir Lenin took Marx’s analysis of capitalism and updated it for the age of imperialism, providing the groundwork for anti-imperialist efforts that continue today.

It was through Lenin’s contributions, in addition to his concept of building a party of committed revolutionary leaders, that the first socialist revolution occurred in Russia, a semifeudal state with a developing capitalist economy. This contradicted Marx’s predictions, which had described industrialized countries such as Britain and Germany as countries with the ideal conditions for a revolution, because capitalism was much further advanced there. Mao Zedong adjusted Marx’s and Lenin’s theories even further and proved that the peasantry can create a revolution as well.

Many things have been written about the personal bigotries of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Marx and Engels have at various times been labeled racist, homophobic and anti-Semitic. While we as revolutionaries should be critical of these egregious views, it is important to remember that Marx and Engels were

China, 1966.

products of their time, and they were not immune to the bigotries of the era.

At a time when homosexuality was considered a mental illness, and the supposed inferiority of Black people was backed by contemporary science, it would be absurd for modern Marxists to hold Marx and Engels to current standards of morality. In spite of those contemporary views, Karl Marx played an integral role in the U.S. abolition movement. Correspondence between Karl Marx and U.S. President Abraham Lincoln played a pivotal role in shaping Lincoln’s views on abolishing slavery. Furthermore, Marx’s Eurocentric views became milder in his later years.

Marxism, when approached properly, remains a useful tool for 21st revolutionary praxis. Even though reactionary actors will insist otherwise, Marxist theory remains as relevant as ever in the fight against all systems of oppression. □

The ‘populism’ of pandemics

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

Taken from an Sept. 9 audio column from prisonradio.org.

For months now, the nation has been battered by the ravages of COVID-19 — the coronavirus.

With millions of people infected and over 190,000 people now dead, it now turns out that from the very start, the U.S. president knew a great deal about COVID-19.

How?

China’s leader, Xi Jinping, told him everything in February 2020.

For months now, President Trump



called the emerging pandemic a “hoax” and heatedly blamed China and its leader — for not informing Americans about the disease.

He called it ‘Kung Flu’ — remember?

Instead, it burned across the country like wildfire, leaving sickness and death in its wake.

Not since the influenza epidemic of 1918 has the nation seen such loss of life.

And it’s not over; COVID-19 continues to stalk the land, causing death and destruction all over the world.

Sad to say, it ain’t over by a long shot.

Russia vows to defend Belarus’ sovereignty

By Otis Grotewohl

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko met with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sept. 14 in Sochi, Russia, expecting mutual support to respond to NATO threats and ongoing protests against Lukashenko’s reelection.

According to the Belarusian government website, “The leaders of the countries discussed the state and prospects of development of bilateral cooperation in various spheres, the theme of allied relations, considered international problems and the situation in the region, the issues of joint response to emerging challenges.” (president.gov.by, Sept. 14)

The two heads of state have had a rocky relationship over the years, but the recent meeting indicates common interest in a time of crisis. Russia promised in mid-August to provide the Belarusian government with military assistance, following the deployment of NATO tanks and planes. (CNBC, Aug. 16) At the same time, Putin stated he wants the current struggle to be handled internally, if at all possible.

Imperialist powers in the West are sympathetic toward the pro-free market, neoliberal opposition, which refuses to accept the election results of Aug. 9, when Lukashenko won roughly 80% of the popular vote.

Oppositionists often display the white-red-white flag, which was first used by

German occupiers from the Imperial Army during World War I, then by Nazi invaders in World War II and later by capitalist counterrevolutionaries after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The bourgeois media has been busy peddling a demonization campaign against Lukashenko, calling him the “last European dictator,” while strongly praising leaders of the hostile opposition.

What is important for revolutionaries and anti-imperialists to consider is Belarus is the only former Soviet republic able to prohibit corporate investors from stealing its national resources. When imperialists hypocritically label Lukashenko a “dictator,” it has nothing to do with concern for “human rights” and has everything to do with his ability to successfully avoid mass privatization of resources and industry.

Alexander Lukashenko was a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union throughout the 1980s. In the mid-1980s, he was appointed director of the Gorodets state farm in the Shkloŭ district of what was then the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1991, Lukashenko was the only member of Belarus’ parliament to vote against the treaty that dissolved the Soviet Union. (Reuters, Dec. 20, 2010)

Currently, Lukashenko is an “independent,” who does not currently belong to any political party, something extremely uncommon for any political head of state. Nevertheless, he has strong support from

the Communist Party of Belarus.

Lukashenko first ran for president of Belarus in 1994 as a proponent of socialism and supporter of the former USSR. Workers and farmers throughout the country embraced his campaign, and he won the election.

The overthrow of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was an enormous setback for the global working class and oppressed peoples. Most of the former Soviet republics that border Belarus—such as Ukraine, Lithuania and Latvia—became colonies of the imperialist West and joined the NATO military alliance, as did Poland. Lithuania and Latvia even became monarchies.

Belarus, on the contrary, maintained public ownership of most of its industry. Belarus is the only former Soviet republic that still has collective farms and factories.

Because Belarus has resisted a complete counterrevolution, many people believe it is the likely target of another U.S.-NATO sponsored “Maidan coup,” modeled after the 2014 coup in Ukraine. Washington and European NATO powers then helped lead an overthrow of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, even using neo-Nazi terrorists.

Maidan Square in Kiev, Ukraine’s capital, was the site of anti-government protests in 2014. Behind the coup was a fascist alliance of Ukrainian anti-communist nationalists and white supremacists, who favored an alliance with the imperialist European Union and the United States rather than the Eurasian Economic Union, to which Belarus and Russia both belong.

The Communist Party of Ukraine has expressed solidarity with the Belarusian people and their decision to reelect Lukashenko, writing the following on its website on Sept. 2: “Belarus has followed a unique path of sovereign development for the post-Soviet states, based on the fullest possible use of the existing production potential and relying on the Russian market. President Lukashenko intuitively chose the optimal path, avoiding the extremes of shock therapy, Eastern despotism and

colonization by Western capital. He managed to avoid economic catastrophe, systemic corruption, mass capital export and ruin of the country. Thanks to this course, Belarus became the most successful of the former Soviet republics: Real GDP of Belarus for the period 1990-2014 doubled; in Russia—it increased by 25%, in Ukraine it fell by 35% (according to calculations of the World Bank).”

The Western and especially the U.S.-based corporate media have tried to portray the opposition protesters—who are backed by the pro-imperialist National Endowment for Democracy—as “progressive.” They don’t emphasize the opposition leaders’ pro-capitalist orientation.

When Western imperialists conduct a demonization campaign against a government they consider an enemy, they often use “human rights” as justification. U.S. and West European corporate media hypocritically used “women’s rights” as a pretext to criminally bomb Yugoslavia in 1999 and to occupy Afghanistan since 2001. This pretext is repeated today to vilify Lukashenko, since some of the opposition leaders are women.

This campaign omits the following truths: Women in the U.S. are not guaranteed maternity leave, but in Belarus, women are paid 70 days prior to giving birth and 56 days afterwards. Childcare leave can be taken for years following birth. (Reuters, March 6, 2019) Maternity leave and childcare in Belarus are just a couple of the many examples of Soviet-era practices that still exist in that country.

It’s in the United States where access to abortion is under constant attack and women are paid less than men for the same work. Atrocities, like the hysterectomies forced on immigrant women in detention camps, can occur.

Belarus has its fair share of contradictions. But despite suffering a pro-capitalist counterrevolution briefly in the early 1990s, from which it never fully recovered, Belarus has the most centrally planned economy in all the former Soviet republics.

Imperialist hands off Belarus! □

Morales party’s success uproots Bolivia election

By G. Dunkel

Sept. 20 — The international media gave much more than its usual attention to the announcement by Bolivia’s interim president, Jeanine Áñez, that she was withdrawing as a candidate in that country’s upcoming Oct. 18 election.

Áñez maneuvered herself into the position of “interim president” last fall after the army and police backed fascist gangs and forced Evo Morales, Bolivia’s first Indigenous president, to resign. Morales, who leads the Movement for Socialism (MAS), had been president since 2006 and had won worldwide popular support for his anti-imperialist positions.

The U.S. government and the U.S.-puppet Organization of American States backed the coup, charging irregularities in the presidential election that Morales had won.

At that time, Áñez was senator from the northeastern department of Beni in the Amazonian lowlands, known for her right-wing positions and her connection with the pro-fascist ex-president of Colombia, Álvaro Uribe. (See workers.org/2019/11/44451/)

In her televised address to the nation last week, Áñez said she didn’t want to split the vote, as that would let “MAS win the election.”

Evo Morales, now in exile across the border in Argentina, said that Áñez had been planning to renounce her candidacy for a while but had to negotiate with the other right-wing parties to gain impunity — that is, freedom from prosecution for crimes. Morales said Áñez is responsible for “the scandalous corruption cases in the midst of the pandemic, for the massacres in Senkata and Sacaba, and for the strangulation of the economy.”

Senkata and Sacaba are both Indigenous communities. The Bolivian cops shot and killed at least 22 protesters there in November 2019 when the mostly Indigenous population, who were strong supporters of Morales, came out into the streets to protest his forced resignation.

Under “interim President” Áñez, unemployment jumped to 11.8 percent this July from 3.9 percent in 2019. Poverty and extreme poverty, defined as living on less

than \$2 a day, increased drastically while economic growth dropped. Bolivia was slipping back into the neoliberal wilderness that had reigned before Morales took office in 2006. Most of the 65% of Bolivia’s people who are Indigenous were poor at that time. According to the World Bank, under Morales Bolivia had moved from being classified as poor to become a lower middle-income country.

Morales and the current MAS candidate, Luis “Lucho” Arce Catacora, made a point of devoting the government’s income to meet people’s needs. They created steady economic growth and a massive reduction in poverty and inequality, combined with programs making sure the country’s natural gas, oil, and lithium industries operated in ways that benefited the people.

Election polls

Twice, the interim government postponed the elections earlier this year. This time when they tried to call off the election, popular protests and labor strikes were so intense that it now appears the Oct. 18 date may hold.

What’s giving the Bolivian rightists pause are the results of a popular opinion poll conducted by the right-wing think tank “Fundación Jubileo.” The poll found the MAS candidate, Luis Arce, got 40.3 percent. Carlos Mesa, a conservative ex-president representing “Comunidad Ciudadana” got 26.2 percent. The fascist Luis Camacho of “Creemos” came in third with 14.4 percent. Áñez was a distant fourth.

In Bolivia, if in the first round a candidate wins at least 40 percent of the vote, with a lead of at least 10 percent over the next candidate, they win the election. It means that Luis Arce would win the election if the vote turns out to be like the poll.

The United States broke diplomatic relations with Bolivia 11 years ago as part of its diplomatic campaign against Evo Morales. The Trump administration restored them in January of 2020 as a sign it approved of the Áñez regime’s repression and the privatizations that the coup government was promoting.

U.S. foreign policy still aims to keep the MAS and Morales from challenging the reactionaries in Bolivia. □

Lucha contra los derechistas con la acción unida de los trabajadores

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popular durante décadas, que ahora se escucha en algunos mítines de BLM, es “¡La policía y el Klan trabajan de la mano!”

Cómo responder al peligro fascista

¿Cómo responde el movimiento progresista, antirracista y pro-BLM al aumento de la violencia paramilitar, de derecha y pro-Trump? Solo esperar para votar por Joe Biden no es suficiente. Biden tiene su propia historia a favor de la policía.

Es fundamental comprender el papel histórico que desempeñaron los terroristas de derecha durante las crisis capitalistas.

En “El Klan y el gobierno: ¿enemigos o aliados?” (1983), el fallecido fundador y presidente del Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero, Sam Marcy, nos recuerda que “El crecimiento del fascismo en todas partes ha estado ligado firmemente a las grandes empresas; esa es su línea de vida.... Incluso en los llamados mejores tiempos, el gobierno capitalista no solo tolera organizaciones terroristas como el Klan, sino que una vez que la lucha de clases de los trabajadores y el pueblo oprimido adquiere el carácter de un auténtico levantamiento de masas, el gobierno capitalista es más probable que nunca para alentar y promover a gente como el Klan y otros medios de represión.

“Es imposible llevar a cabo una política antifascista consistente a menos que se tenga en cuenta el factor clave y decisivo para abrumar y destruir la amenaza fascista; es la clase

trabajadora, el pueblo oprimido y sus aliados”. (Lea “The Klan & Government: Foes or Allies?” En workers.org/books)

Poco después del asesinato de Heather Heyer, los activistas en Durham, Carolina del Norte, respondieron derribando una odiada estatua confederada, elevando el movimiento a un nivel superior.

Activistas en Portland, Oregon, están pidiendo una acción Laborista por las Vidas de los Negros y Contra el Fascismo contra una protesta planificada de derecha allí el 26 de septiembre.

El 4 de septiembre, varios sindicatos que representan a millones de trabajadores pidieron paros laborales por justicia racial. “El statu quo, de la policía matando a negros, de los nacionalistas blancos armados que matan a los manifestantes, de millones de enfermos y cada vez más desesperados, es claramente injusto y no puede continuar”, decía la declaración conjunta. (tinyurl.com/y2erez23)

Los líderes sindicales están siguiendo el ejemplo de los atletas profesionales que organizaron huelgas a fines de agosto por el tiroteo de Jacob Blake, que obligó a posponer varios juegos de Grandes Ligas: “Nos recuerdan que cuando hacemos huelga para retener nuestro trabajo, tenemos el poder de poner fin a un status quo injusto”.

Ahora no es el momento de pasar a la clandestinidad o correr hacia la frontera. La amenaza de la derecha exige acciones audaces, antirracistas, unificadoras y con conciencia de clase. La lucha aún debe mantenerse en las calles. □



Para obtener un mapa de la caravana e información sobre Journey for Justice, visite www.nationaltpsalliance.org/journey-for-justice/

Caravana atraviesa el país para reclamar ¡Residencia, ya!

Boletín: La Corte de Apelaciones del Noveno Circuito de los Estados Unidos dio su fallo el 14 de septiembre en contra de los beneficiarios de TPS, sosteniendo que el presidente Trump puede rescindir el estatus legal de las personas de todos los países que ahora viven en los EE.UU. Bajo la protección del programa. El fallo deja a cientos de miles vulnerables a la deportación.

Por G. Lechat y Gloria Rubac

El 21 de septiembre, los activistas migrantes partirán de Los Ángeles hacia San Francisco, la primera de 54 paradas en 32 estados en el recorrido en autobús # TPSJourney4JusticeII, que finalmente llegará a Washington, D.C., a mediados de noviembre.

En 2018, la primera Jornada por la Justicia que pidió la protección de los beneficiarios del Estatus de Protección Temporal (TPS) atravesó el país después de que Trump terminó el programa. El TPS ahora finalizará después del 4 de enero de 2021 para 411.000 beneficiarios que luego perderán la autorización legal de trabajo, las licencias de conducir (en la mayoría de los estados) y la protección contra la deportación. (nationaltpsalliance.org)

En junio, la intensificación de la lucha #ResidencyNow atrajo una caravana de más de 200 automóviles a D.C. En medio de la rebelión Black Lives Matter y la pandemia de COVID-19, la movilización de verano centró la unidad multinacional de la comunidad Black and Brown TPS y sus contribuciones como trabajadores esenciales.

“Queremos ser legalizados”, dijo el activista de Massachusetts Julio Pérez a Workers World. “Hemos estado viviendo legalmente en los EE.UU. durante 20 años o más y no obtuvimos nada, por lo que también simpatizamos con los 12 millones de indocumentados en este país”.

Pérez conducirá la ruta de 13.000 millas Journey for Justice II, diseñada por National TPS Alliance, National Day Laborers Organizing Network (NDLON) y Centro American Resource Center (CRECEN). Las 300 horas de conducción le costarán todo su tiempo de vacaciones, más ocho semanas de licencia sin goce de sueldo, incluidas

dos en cuarentena, antes de volver a trabajar como conserje en la Universidad de Harvard. Reconociendo la urgencia de proteger a un gran número de miembros, el sindicato de Pérez SEIU 32BJ negoció el tiempo libre.

Los trabajadores de TPS ya han pagado sus cuotas a los EE.UU. Elmer Romero, Director de Asociación Estratégica de CRECEN, que se organiza en la comunidad salvadoreña de Houston con más de 36.000 titulares de TPS, explicó a Workers World: “La pandemia de COVID-19 ha demostrado que la comunidad de TPS está compuesto por trabajadores esenciales y necesarios para sostener y servir a la economía de nuestra nación. Es un acto inmoral e inhumano negar un estatus migratorio legal a las personas que nos cuidan y alimentan.”

Historias de violencia

Los residentes de EE. UU. son elegibles para TPS, si su país de origen se vuelve inseguro debido a un desastre o violencia. Al igual que la Acción Diferida para los Llegados en la Infancia (DACA), protege temporalmente a los destinatarios de la expulsión. El TPS no es un camino hacia la ciudadanía, aunque muchos beneficiarios tienen más de 20 años de extensiones de 18 meses. Los beneficiarios de TPS tienen 300.000 niños nacidos en EE. UU.

La cancelación de TPS por parte de Trump para los diez países actualmente designados: El Salvador, Haití, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, Sudán del Sur, Sudán, Siria y Yemen, es racista. Es notorio que etiquetó a estas naciones como “países mierda”, culpando a las víctimas de las condiciones que creó el imperialismo estadounidense.

TPS fue una concesión a los activistas salvadoreños de la década de 1980 que huyeron de la dictadura de

derecha, que el presidente Reagan estaba financiando con más de \$3 millones por día en dólares de hoy. La mayoría de “Tepesiana /os” [TPS] —la palabra que los receptores de habla hispana dan a su estatus — son salvadoreños que llegaron allí después del terremoto de 2001.

Las intervenciones de Estados Unidos en Honduras y Nicaragua también intensificaron la devastación del huracán Mitch antes de que esos países fueran designados. Estados Unidos ha impuesto una deuda debilitante a Haití durante siglos. Los detenidos de ICE también son desproporcionadamente haitianos.

Ningún desastre es completamente “natural” en países desestabilizados por la intervención de Estados Unidos. El imperialismo estadounidense y británico redujo a Nepal a “uno de los países más pobres del planeta” antes del terremoto de 2015. (Workers World, el 28 de abril 2015)

Varios “pretextos. . . encubrir los intereses geoestratégicos y económicos del imperialismo estadounidense” en el Cuerno de África y el Medio Oriente también. (Workers World, el 4 de febrero 2019)

Décadas de cambios en las políticas de inmigración reflejan la inestabilidad del capitalismo. Los migrantes mantienen la economía estadounidense en pleno auge cuando los negocios están en auge.

Se fomenta la inmigración para escapar de las secuelas de las políticas estadounidenses; el éxodo neutraliza la amenaza que representa la revolución que se desarrolla después de un desastre. En tiempos de inactividad, la clase dominante se desvía en sentido contrario: recortando trabajadores.

Muchos líderes sindicales negros y latinos, que están revitalizando el movimiento laboral estadounidense y beneficiando a todos, tienen TPS. Cancelar el TPS destruye a los sindicatos, purga a los líderes para socavar la resistencia al próximo ataque, ya sea el desempleo, el derecho al trabajo o la reapertura insegura. Wall Street es el beneficiario.

Viajes transformadores

La Alianza Nacional TPS se formó inmediatamente después de que la secretaria del Territorio Nacional, Kristjen Nielsen, anunciara la terminación en enero de 2018. En marzo, los activistas presentaron el caso Ramos v. Nielsen en el Tribunal del Noveno Circuito, argumentando que el racismo llevó a un corte de esquina procesal inconstitucional por parte de la administración Trump. Los jueces de la Corte Suprema, a la defensiva durante la rebelión de BLM en junio, admitieron el mismo argumento de los litigantes de DACA, aunque siguen sin camino hacia la residencia permanente. Y Trump atacó de inmediato a DACA nuevamente. Los beneficiarios de TPS aún esperan la decisión del tribunal inferior sobre Ramos.

A medida que los ataques inspiran activismo militante, #SaveTPS ha dado paso al llamado global para #ResidencyNow. Doris Reina-Landaverde, una líder nacional de TPS y SEIU como Pérez, un conserje de Harvard en Massachusetts, dijo a Workers World: “No queremos salvar a TPS. Queremos la residencia permanente. Cuando luchamos, es para todos ahora y para todas las personas que vendrán en el futuro. Es lo que necesitamos para nuestras familias. No se trata de salvar, [a la TPS] se trata de luchar.”

G. Lechat, Boston, activista de FIRE (Lucha por inmigrantes y refugiados en todas partes), es cofundadora de Harvard TPS Coalition, un esfuerzo conjunto entre los trabajadores de la Universidad de SEIU 32BJ, UNITE HERE Local 26 y AFSCME Local 3650.

Gloria Rubac, Houston, activista de FIRE, es una de las fundadoras del Centro de Derechos Humanos del Sur de Texas en Falfurrias, Texas, que trabaja para salvar vidas de migrantes en la frontera entre Estados Unidos y México.

¡Lucha contra los derechistas con la acción unida de los trabajadores!

El 12 de agosto de 2017, un nacionalista blanco enojado que participaba en un mitin de la Unite the Right en Charlottesville, Virginia, aceleró deliberadamente su automóvil y chocó contra manifestantes desprevenidos, golpeando y matando a Heather Heyer e hiriendo a docenas más. La respuesta inicial de Donald Trump fue condenar la “demostración de odio, intolerancia y violencia en muchos lados”.

Avance al 25 de agosto de 2020. El partidario de Trump, de 17 años, Kyle Rittenhouse, cruzó la frontera del estado de Illinois con un fusil estilo AR-15, a Kenosha, Wisconsin, donde disparó y mató a dos personas e hirió a otra en una manifestación por Jacob Blake.

La policía de Kenosha permitió que Rittenhouse se alejara de los tiroteos. Luego de su arresto pacífico, un juez de Illinois pospuso la decisión de extraditar a Rittenhouse a Wisconsin hasta el 25 de septiembre. El 31 de agosto, Trump sugirió que Rittenhouse “no hizo nada malo” y que “ejerció su derecho consuetudinario, constitucional, consuetudinario y estatutario”, “a la defensa”.

Mientras tanto, el 29 de agosto, partidarios de Trump fuertemente armados en cientos de camiones organizaron una manifestación violenta en Portland, Oregón, conduciendo sus vehículos hacia los contramanifestantes y atacándolos con gas pimienta, bates y palos. El activista Michael Forest Reinhoehl acudió en ayuda de un amigo que estaba rodeado de manifestantes a favor de Trump.

Sintiendo que estaba actuando en defensa propia, Reinhoehl confrontó y disparó al participante del mitin pro-Trump, Aaron J. Danielson. Una presencia nocturna en las protestas de Black Lives Matter en Portland, Reinhoehl había recibido un disparo en el brazo a

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principios de agosto cuando intentaba arrebatarle un arma a un manifestante de derecha. Explicó su decisión en una entrevista poco antes de que las fuerzas federales lo mataran, al estilo de ejecución, el 3 de septiembre. (tinyurl.com/y2rwh6ry)

No se habían presentado cargos formales contra Reinhoehl, pero agentes federales, bajo el liderazgo de la Fuerza de Tarea para Delincuentes Violentos del Noroeste del Pacífico, lo asesinaron en su casa en Olympia, Washington. Esta unidad estatal incluía la fuerza especial para fugitivos del Servicio de Alguaciles de EE.UU., la policía local, alguaciles del condado y guardias del Departamento Correccional del Estado de Washington, todos sin cámaras corporales.

El fiscal general de los Estados Unidos, William Barr, calificó a este acto del poder de una fuerza militar del gobierno como “un logro significativo en el esfuerzo continuo para restaurar la ley y el orden en Portland y otras ciudades”.

El asesinato estatal coordinado impidió que Reinhoehl llegara a escuchar su caso en los tribunales. Está muy lejos de cómo el estado trató a Rittenhouse.

Trump ha elogiado con frecuencia la violencia de las milicias de derecha, al tiempo que retrata a Antifa específicamente y a la izquierda en general como la “amenaza terrorista”. Está absolutamente claro que Trump no dudará en dar rienda suelta a las fuerzas policiales autorizadas por el estado y, cuando sea conveniente, a las fuerzas paramilitares cuya visibilidad está creciendo rápidamente.

Trump no está solo. La policía de los EE.UU. tiene una larga y notoria historia de apoyo general y extralegal de grupos terroristas supremacistas blancos. Un cántico

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